

**Benner Township Planning Commission
October 11, 2018**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Benner Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Chairman, Nate Campbell with members Paul Kurtz, Sherry Dawn Jackson, Willis Houser, Lee Copper, and Anthony Gallucci present. Mr. Swartzell was absent. Also in attendance were Andrea Murrell, John Kostas, Shirley Gryczuk, Howard Grove Jr., Brian Grove, Randy Moyer, David Flynn, Ed Dunkelberger and Sharon Royer.

MINUTES

The minutes of September 27, 2018, were presented to the Board for their review and comments. Mr. Kurtz moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Gallucci seconded the motion.

Vote: Mr. Campbell – yes Mr. Kurtz – yes Mrs. Jackson – yes
Mr. Houser – yes Mr. Copper – yes Mr. Gallucci - yes
Mr. Swartzell – absent

PERSONS TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Howard Grove, Jr.: Mr. Grove (1425 Buffalo Run Road) noted that he was present to discuss the proposed Zoning Ordinance and how it would affect his family’s property. Mr. Grove noted that he feels that the farmers should have more of a say about what they can do with their properties due to the amount of money they pay annually in taxes.

John Kostas asked the Planning Commission to give him a quick history of Zoning, the Roth Plan and how the Board got to the point where they are now.

Mr. Campbell noted that the Roth Plan is the Zoning Ordinance. It was noted that it is called that because of the individual that drafted it, Harry Roth. When Lindsay Schoch was employed as the Zoning Officer, she, along with the Planning Commission, went through the Roth Plan and deleted over 100 pages from the Ordinance in order to make it less confusing. This was not the changes that the Board of Supervisors was looking for so then the Board hired Chuck Herr to prepare a draft zoning ordinance. Mr. Herr’s version was used as a templet and the Planning Commission along with Chris Anderson (then Zoning Officer) went through that draft document and made changes. This draft was then handed off to the Board of Supervisors to review. During this review period several amendments and deletions to the draft took place. This brings us to the present. These Zoning revisions from the beginning has been going on for over 4 years. It was noted that the Township has had some version of Zoning since the 1970s.

Ed Dunkelberger: Mr. Dunkelberger noted that he disagrees with the Roth Plan way of development in the Ag districts. He noted that he feels that it is entirely too restrictive and that when that plan was adopted that it essentially robbed him. He noted that when he purchased his property that he was zoned R-1 and paid R-1 prices. The Roth Plan then changed his property to AG which he feels is worth much less. He noted that the development needs to take advantage of public water and sewer. He also noted that he feels that open space equals wasted space and that farmland should be developed to its maximum.

David Flynn: Mr. Flynn noted that he is in favor of tasteful development. He noted that he feels that the development that was done next to the Township property was tastefully done.

Discussion was held concerning the public water systems and how three of the Township's larger developments sunk community wells in order to achieve the smaller lot sizes only then to ask that the Township's Water Authority take them over. There is now some mounting issues with the Grove Park water system having the acceptable limits coming close to needing further treatment that will be expensive. It was also pointed out that a good majority of farm land is not far from existing sewer lines. The Planning Commission noted that they are not against development but that they feel that it should be asked to be rezoned when the need arises that it needs rezoned. They also noted that they don't necessarily believe that the 20 to 1 ratio is a good fit for our township but feels that a compromise should be reached from what is currently proposed. It was noted that development is inevitable but thought needs to take place about the schools, water supplies, sewer limits, public transit and the demands for more services with higher populations.

Ed Dunkelberger: Mr. Dunkelberger noted that if the community wants open space then they should have to pay for it. He noted that the doesn't feel that it is the responsibility of the farmers to provide the open space that others want. He noted that they could donate funds for permanent Ag preservation through the county programs and could also allow the Township to purchase land for parks.

Randy Moyer: Mr. Moyer noted that the 1/3 acre lots are not a done deal but that what the Roth Plan had in it will not get approval by the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Campbell noted that the challenge is to allow development without changing the character of the Township.

Andrea Murrell: Ms. Murrell noted that she is very concerned with the current proposal. She expressed a major concern with the township having and being able to provide clean water to it's residents. She noted that she feels strongly that the Water Authority should be involved in reviewing this draft. She also noted that she feels that the environmental aspects must be reinserted back into the document and feels that the document shouldn't be further advanced until this is completed.

Mr. Kurtz noted that he agrees that the water source needs to be protected. Some issues once they occur isn't an easy fix, if it can be fixed at all.

David Flynn: Mr. Flynn noted that he feels that public infrastructure (water and sewer) is necessary for responsible development.

Mr. Moyer provided a copy of College Township's Parking requirements for the Planning Commission to take under consideration. He noted that Spring Township is also considering adopting these regulations.

Mr. Moyer noted that the Board would like to keep within the timeframes that they have established. The Planning Commission noted that they would look for a compromise and get it sent out for everyone's review prior to their next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Keystone Payroll: Mrs. Royer noted that the final plan for Keystone Payroll is now ready for signatures. It was noted that from the previous version that the Planning Commission saw, that the building has been turned allowing for additional room on the lot should at some point the building would need to be enlarged. Mr. Kurtz moved to approve the Keystone Payroll Land Development Plan as presented. Mr. Houser seconded the motion.

Vote: Mr. Campbell – yes
Mr. Houser – yes
Mr. Swartzell – absent

Mr. Kurtz – yes
Mr. Copper – yes

Mrs. Jackson – yes
Mr. Gallucci - yes

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned the time being 8:40 p.m.

Sharon Royer, Recording Secretary