

**BENNER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
September 26, 2013**

CALL TO ORDER

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Benner Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Nate Campbell, Chairman, at the Benner Township Municipal Building.

ATTENDANCE

Members present: Nate Campbell, Paul Kurtz, Genevieve Robine, Jim Swartzell, Lee Copper, and Willis Houser

Members absent: Mike Anthony

MINUTES

The minutes from the August 22, 2013 meeting were presented for approval. Mr. Swartzell, seeing no changes to be addressed, made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Kurtz seconded the motion.

Vote:	Mr. Campbell-yes	Mrs. Robine-yes	Mr. Kurtz- yes	Mr. Swartzell-yes
	Mr. Copper-yes	Mr. Houser-yes		

PERSONS TO ADDRESS THE BOARD: No persons were present to address the Planning Commission

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mrs. Robine attended the **Spring Creek Watershed Commission Meeting** where Mr. Todd Giddings discussed all of the unique projects done along I-99 corridor where it passed through the Spring Creek Watershed. One of those projects are separation tanks to catch water coming from the road, separating the tar and other toxins from vehicles, and then releasing clean water to the ground. Another project was wetlands/bog areas along the roads with plants rather than only drainage basins. Mrs. Robine indicated that Mr. Giddings would be happy to share his thoughts with the Planning Commission if we are interested.

Mr. Swartzell gave an update from the **Centre County Airport Authority**, indicating that flights are now approved from the University Park Airport directly to Chicago, starting in January, and they Authority is close to having flights directly to Charlotte, North Carolina.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Comprehensive Plan Update-Review of Draft Goals and Objectives

Mrs. Schoch provided the Planning Commission with a list of updated Goals from the last meeting of the Nittany Valley Joint Planning Commission. The new list of 18 Goals has been cut down from 109 Goals. Most of the Goals from the 109 have been completed or removed from the list since they are no longer relevant. The new list represents what the NVJPC has been discussing since the beginning of the year.

One item to add to the list is to improve the safety of intersections throughout the Region, this could be done by improving sight distance and getting those projects on Penn Dot's 12-Year Plan and the County's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Houser noted that the intersection at Valley View Road and Fillmore Road has poor sight distance, but mostly due to weeds.

Mr. Swartzell noted the area between the University Park Airport and the Fed Ex property. The Airport Authority has plans to shave that hump in the land down to clear the sight distance there and is currently working with the Township Road Superintendent and Township Engineer in doing so.

Mrs. Schoch noted the Township has submitted a candidate project to Centre County for their review and placement on the TIP. The area of concern is at Rock Road and Buffalo Run Road and the goal is to improve the site distance there.

The Recreation Authority Creation and the Shared Fire Services are similar and both underway. Only the Shared Fire Services Goal is shown on the new list. Mr. Campbell feels that they should both be included since they are still in progress. Keeping them on the list of Goals will allow for the municipalities to keep them in mind and not let them fall to the wayside.

Mrs. Schoch will bring these items to the next NVJPC meeting and ask that they be included in the Goals.

2. Comprehensive Plan Update-Review of Future Land Use/Zoning

The Planning Commission was asked to review again the Inconsistencies between Future Land Use and Zoning Maps provided by the County Planning Commission in relation to the Nittany Valley Joint Planning Commission and Regional Comprehensive Plan Update.

The question is if we want those maps to be consistent, what we foresee on the Future Land Use Map and any changes to our Zoning Map.

Mr. Swartzell and Mr. Campbell asked for the maps in digital format, Mrs. Schoch projected the map for the Planning Commission Members.

The Planning Commission felt that the maps should be consistent and would like to take the maps to study them for discussion at the next Planning Commission Meeting.

Mrs. Schoch indicated that she would have 11 x 17 maps printed and mailed to the Planning Commission members for them to review. And also the Centre GIS has a public site the members can get on to look at Land Use as it existed in 2010.

Mrs. Schoch will also email the files to the Planning Commission members.

This issue will be tabled for the next meeting.

3. Zoning Ordinance Amendment-Initial Review

The Planning Commission members had a list of 6 items in their packets to consider for the first review of the Draft of the Zoning Amendment, a discussion of those items follows:

Mrs. Schoch indicated that she went through all of the definitions first and took out the ones that are not contained within the Zoning Ordinance. She also noted that some items dealing with Subdivision and Land Development, Floodplain Management, and Stormwater Management should be eliminated from the Zoning Ordinance and left for the existing stand-alone ordinances to regulate those issues.

It was agreed that Mrs. Schoch would review the ordinance and come up with some proposed changes, give those to the Planning Commission members for their review and then discuss at the next meeting.

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) was discussed in great length during the process of preparing the existing Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Swartzell and Mrs. Robine agreed that they liked the TND section of the ordinance, but it wasn't clear as to where in the Township it could work.

Mr. Kurtz asked for a clearer understanding of Traditional Neighborhood Development.

Mr. Swartzell said a mix of residential and commercial with an old small town feel, with Mr. Campbell adding it was a development option.

Mrs. Schoch included that TND can also be a district placed next to a more traditional neighborhood, such a Bellefonte Borough or even something like Pleasant Gap, using the same building requirements and densities to keep that type of development extending.

Mrs. Robine indicated that if a farm was sold off of Spring Creek Road/Barns Lane, the proposed development would be consistent with what exists nearby now.

The Village of Nittany Glen could have been a TND if commercial uses were there as well as recreational opportunities.

Mr. Swartzell said he was still thinking about metal fabrication and welding and the differences there.

Mrs. Schoch indicated to the Planning Commission that the man who is proposing a new building and business in Airport Park is not opening a welding shop; he is proposing a metal fabrication shop with welding to be an accessory to that shop.

The overall goal of a zoning amendment is to get rid of gray areas. Knowing that an ordinance cannot be perfect

OLD BUSINESS:

Septic Management Ordinance-Sewer Authority Members attending the Board of Supervisors Meeting on October 7, 2013.

The Sewer Authority Members will be coming to the Supervisor's meeting to discuss what Spring Benner Walker Joint Authority can do for the Township, just as Chuck Herr came and discussed with the Township a few months ago.

Mrs. Robine asked about a deadline to have a plan in place for septage management.

The unofficial deadline is the beginning of next year, but that may be due to potential Sewer Enforcement Officers submitting their fees to the Township for consideration.

If DEP sees that a Township is working towards a Plan, then they will not be mandating anything soon, but the overall feeling is get something in place sooner than later.

Although the Act 537 and Sewage Planning is not the direct responsibility of the Planning Commission, a presentation was made to them by our Township SEO (Chuck Herr).

Mr. Houser asked if Spring Benner Walker Joint Authority came to any Planning Commission meetings to discuss their Plans.

Mrs. Schoch said that Mr. Warren Miller did attend a meeting early in the year to discuss the Plans Spring Benner Walker Joint Authority had for the Township.

Chuck Herr attended Planning Commission and a Town Hall Meeting (where a majority of the Supervisors were in attendance).

Mr. Kurtz proposed the Planning Commission to write a letter to the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Swartzell noted that we are an advisory board to the Board of Supervisors and we have to put our thoughts on paper to advise them to start with the process, and that they are not in favor of the state coming in to mandate something.

Mrs. Schoch asked if the Planning Commission wanted to draft a letter to the Supervisors, Mr. Swartzell will write the letter and get it to Mrs. Schoch before the October 7 Board of Supervisor's meeting.

Planning Commission members are encouraged to attend the meeting.

Also, the Township received a letter from the Centre Region Planning Agency indicating that sewer service to the Shiloh Road area is part of their Act 537 (Sewage Facilities Plan) to work with Spring Benner Walker Joint Authority to bring sewer to this portion of Benner Township.

So at this point, it is up to the Board of Supervisors (Spring Benner Walker Joint Authority being an agent of the Township) to make the final decision on sewer to this area.

The Sewer Authority Members should be able to discuss this at the October meeting as well.

FEMA Maps changes-Levee Systems Update

Mrs. Schoch informed the Planning Commission that she spoke to a representative from FEMA regarding changes to our floodplain maps. The change is to a levee that the Fish and Boat Commission own and maintain. It was shown that this levee no longer supports a 100-year flood and has been discredited. The Fish and Boat Commission decided not to work to have the levee accredited so it will be shown now as an area that will flood in the 100-year flood, just as the levee never/doesn't exist.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Centre County Planning Office waived their review of the Bridleridge Subdivision (a small portion in Benner Township) as per a request by the Township.

NOTES:

County Planning is attending upcoming October 7, 2013 Board of Supervisor's meeting to discuss the option of an Official Map.

An Official Map can also open more grant opportunities.

Mr. Swartzell informed the Planning Commission that he introduced the idea of an Official Map to the Board of Supervisors when he was a Supervisor, but it nothing ever came of it.

Creating an Implementable Comprehensive Plan will be the discussion at the next Nittany Valley Joint Planning Commission Meeting, Kim Wheeler, who has worked with plans of this type in the past, will be present to discuss this up and coming option to Community Planning! The Next NVJPC Meeting is November 21, 2013 at the Walker Township Building.

ADJOURN

With all business complete, Mr. Swartzell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:
Lindsay Schoch, Zoning Officer