

# HARRIS TOWNSHIP

Planning Commission  
Minutes of December 20, 2004  
REGULAR MEETING  
7:00 PM

## MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Bob Potter, Edward Benner, Ronald Buckalew, Bob Igo, Charles J. Keener, and Paul Weener. Mary Ann Kresen was absent.

## OTHERS PRESENT:

Kristin Clark, Township Manager; Phyllis Favorite, Staff Assistant; and D. J. Liggett, CRPA Planner.

## CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Potter called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Keener, and seconded by Mr. Weener, to approve the minutes of November 15, 2004. The motion was approved unanimously, 6 to 0.

## CITIZEN COMMENT

Chairman Potter asked for public comment. None was received.

## PLANNING COMMISSION BUSINESS

### A. Review of College Township Official Map

Ms. Clark noted that College Township had submitted their Official Map (OM) to Harris Township, as required by the Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Code (MPC), to begin the 45-day review period. She pointed out that D.J. Liggett had inserted the Township's boundary on a map so the Commission could see

the proximate connections to College Township. Of those items on the proposed OM, the prime impacts include the South Atherton Bikepath, a proposed bikepath that would empty onto Warner Boulevard, as well as a small spur of land within the Township that will be a part of the new Oak Hall Park in College. She added that the Lowder tract was being considered for rezoning from Agricultural to R-1 by College Township in anticipation of developing it. This will have impact on the Township, as the development would exit onto Brandywine Drive, which now exits onto Warner Boulevard. She noted the other areas proposed on College Township's OM, especially the Brandywine Drive and Shiloh Road areas.

Ms. Liggett recalled that College's Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) initiated the proposed OM five years ago, and that the focus was on parks and bikepaths. They had identified two parcels, the Lowder and Spicer farms, for parks in their township. She added that there was so much put on the OM that it could not be adopted in a timely fashion, because it was confusing, involved a great deal of work, and had upset residents because of some items placed on it. Now, the Lowder tract may be rezoned to R-1, and the opportunity to have parkland is lost. She cautioned the PC from this example about the hazards of placing too much on the Township OM. Ms. Clark reiterated the significance of Brandywine Drive's completion through to Warner Boulevard, and that this might be an area for the PC to consider as a connection to the Township's bikepath system.

Chairman Potter observed that the interest in College Township seemed to be focused on bikepaths, yet there appeared to be a great need for roads to absorb the additional inhabitants. He asked if Harris Township should consider proposing more infrastructures, especially since there has been talk of major development within the Township. He asked how to proceed when the perception of traffic mitigation is needed, both on PennDOT roads and Township roads. Ms. Liggett stated that traffic studies can be requested for state roads, but the likelihood is that PennDOT will tell the Township it must bear the cost of improvement. Likewise, costs for any new roads within the Township itself would be born by Harris, unless a developer was forced to install them as part of a new development. Ms. Liggett added that the Township can look at future development, particularly east-west road needs versus north-south, but noted that the results will differ with ownership of the lands being considered. The Township could request a traffic study in anticipation of new development, overlay it with existing roadways, and determine what the overall traffic impact could be. Ms. Clark noted that the Township has an ordinance already in place that has a mechanism to require a traffic study as a determiner of need for road improvement.

By general consent, the Planning Commission recommended supporting the Brandywine Drive connection in particular, and College Township's OM in general. Mr. Weener stated he felt he could only comment on the Brandywine connection. Mr. Potter added that the Township would like to see a traffic signal

at the intersection of Brandywine and Warner Boulevard as part of the Lowder tract development.

Mr. Benner cautioned that he did not want Harris Township's OM to be too detailed or ambitious, and asked if the public would see the proposed OM. Ms. Clark said there would be a public hearing so residents can know what is planned, and Ms. Liggett added that this is also necessary so the residents can speak to the markings, particularly in light of how it may affect them as a resident. Mr. Potter commended the College Township Planning Commission for its efforts.

## B. Official Map

Ms. Clark began the discussion by reminding the PC of the prior distribution of members' suggestions and information concerning the legal authorization for an OM. She also called attention to a map with suggestions Todd Shea and she compiled, as well as one with suggestions from Ms. Liggett. She noted that these might encompass items not considered by PC members before. Ms. Liggett distributed copies of both Ferguson and Halfmoon townships' recorded Official Maps, and Ms. Clark brought to the PC's attention the western edge of Ferguson's OM which shows Blue Course Drive being extended from the intersection at Whitehall Road to Route 45, which would impact the Shingletown area of the Township. This issue keeps rising, as Paul Rittenhouse has been trying to get his property developed for 10 years, and the Campbell Farm is a potential area of development. Ms. Liggett agreed, noting further development will be impeded because of lack of access, and a proposed road may not be opposed for that reason.

Mr. Keener left the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Following discussion, the Planning Commission determined that there should be four "goals" of the Official Map, as follows:

1. Provide the ability to cycle from State College to Rothrock State Forest.
2. Promote and provide walkability between neighborhoods.
3. Interconnect neighborhoods to facilitate the flow of traffic.
4. Provide parkland with ½ mile or a 10-minute walk to all neighborhood residents.

Using the four goals as a guideline, the following items, as compiled by Staff, are to be considered for placement on the Official Map:

1. A connector road from Misty Hill Drive to Windmill Road, down to Route 45. This would go across the Rittenhouse property and provide access to a development there.

2. Connect the end of Outer Drive in the Fairfield Subdivision to the end of Outer Drive in Harris Acres. Also, consider locating a park on this parcel of land, currently the Hendricks property.
3. Extend Lynnwood Drive across the Biddle property to connect to West Main Street.
4. A connector road from Bailey Lane to Crestview Avenue.
5. Create a pedestrian connection between Blue Spring Park and the Yoder Preserve.
6. Identify the desired bikepath connection along Warner Boulevard. This is PennDOT right-of-way, but College Township has identified this as a proposed bikeway to provide access to the new Oak Hall Park and the Township should consider identifying the same connection from the Township line to the end of the Atherton Street bikepath.
7. Continue the bikepath from in front of the Military Museum along Boal Avenue and up Route 45 to Ashworth Woods/Harpster Farm. This bikepath could then run along Spring Creek and connect to Fasick Park, and could run along the Mt. Nittany Expressway to the Oak Hall Park.
8. Connect a road from the end of Memorial Drive to the end of Belle Avenue through the Harpster Farm. Provide a connection to Route 45 from the Harpster Farm, preferably at a signalized intersection across from the Ashworth Woods entrance.
9. Provide a park in the northern corner of the Harpster Farm.
10. Connect a road from Academy Street through to Springfield Commons across the Weaver property.
11. Provide access to Rothrock State Forest from the end of Academy Street.
12. Provide parkland on the R-2 Aikens Tract that is adjacent to the existing Country Place Park.
13. Put a cul-de-sac or parking area at the end of Honeysuckle Drive for Country Place Park.
14. A connector road from Andover Drive (Willowbrook) through the McShea property to Route 45.
15. Extend Breton Circle (Willowbrook) across Route 45 into the Rockey Farm.
16. Provide parkland on the McShea property to extend Fasick Park.
17. Connect Montclair Lane (Kaywood) through the Homan property to Linden Hall Road.
18. Provide parkland on the Rockey Farm to adjoin existing Kaywood Park.
19. Connect the Aspen Heights and Kaywood neighborhoods with a connector road across the Rockey Farm.
20. Extend Jacks Mill Drive across Route 322 into the Aikens property.

Chairman Potter asked if it would be advisable to place items on the Township's OM for those parcels that are currently outside of the Regional Growth Boundary and Sewer Service Area. Ms. Liggett observed that those areas are also in the Agricultural Security Area and will likely not be developed.

In addition, the Township will want to avoid any appearance of willingness to develop these areas in the future by placing items on the Official Map, as it will encourage development pressure.

Mr. Potter expressed concern about the Warner/Business 322/Shingletown Road area, and asked about placing the widening or improvement of these roadways on the OM. Ms. Clark declared that was that it is one of three items the Township wanted on the TIP, although she is uncertain if it was added. Ms. Liggett said the PC could certainly put that it wants a road widened or added, but since these are PennDOT roads it is up to them to place signals, and it is not advisable to place these items on an OM. Ms. Clark added that she very recently received a letter from PennDOT agreeing that left turn arrows are warranted at that intersection; this is why the Township asked to have the intersection placed on the TIP. Ms. Liggett affirmed that the Township would request a traffic study should the Lowder tract be developed, since it would significantly impact that area further.

Chairman Potter asked where the Planning Commission should go from this point. Ms. Clark responded that the next step would be to evaluate what it has done, then there can be a draft made for the PC January 10, 2005 meeting. From there the PC can present it to the Board at the January 26 work session. Ms. Liggett added that it is important to communicate to the Board that a goal of the OM is to connect neighborhoods and make logical connections. Mr. Buckalew noted that it was part of the 2004 Work Program to add wetlands, waterways, and protect streams. Ms. Liggett noted that the concerns from development outside the RGB and SSA consumed the attention of the CRPA, and stated the Township could accomplish this itself by adding such to the OM, or creating a Riparian Buffer Ordinance, or a combination of both. She recommended developing an ordinance, and said she would look for a model ordinance for riparian buffers to help develop a draft.

### C. 2005 Work Program

Ms. Clark commended the Commission for completing half of the items on their Work Program (WP), and suggested that, since it was an ambitious schedule, the PC may wish to modify the 2005 WP. Ms. Liggett stated that the concerns from the development outside the RGB and SSA consumed the attention of the CRPA, and advised the PC that the Township could accomplish this itself by adding such to the OM, or create a Riparian Buffer Ordinance, or a combination of both. She recommended developing an ordinance, and said she would look for a model ordinance for riparian buffers to help develop a draft. The PC reviews the list, noting those items accomplished and pending, and suggested the following:

1. Stream Corridor Protection – as per previous discussion; Ms. Clark will modify the narrative, and encouraged the PC to keep this active. Mr. Buckalew asked that well protection be added.
2. Agricultural/Open Space Land Preservation – while the Park and Open Space Plan has been adopted, there is still the need to investigate Farmland Trust and implementing Act 153 to protect Ag land.
3. Village District Study/Demolition Delay Ordinance – Chairman Potter said this should remain as an ongoing need to develop.
4. Housing Density – Ms. Clark reported that she has heard that the Harpster Farm initially was identified as a development for affordable housing, but that now interest is in developing it for higher end housing. Ms. Liggett said the need of affordable housing for work force has been documented, and that affordable housing is not only about those with low income or who are elderly. Ms. Clark said that the Township would look at reducing the lot size in R-1 zoning from its current minimum requirement.
5. Sewer Service Area (SSA)/Regional Growth Boundary (RGB) – Ms. Liggett recommended keeping this item on the WP, as the CRPA will want input from the PC, particularly in light of the possible rezoning requests of two parcels out of the RGB and SSA: the Aikens property and the Rittenhouse property.
6. Change narrative and combine the *Official Map and Greenway Connections and Tree Ordinance* into one item, as they are each related and partially completed.

#### D. Selection of Officers

The Nominating Committee, comprised of Mr. Buckalew and Mr. Weener, stated that they were working on the matter, but the Committee has no recommendations for the two positions at this time. Recommendations will be made at the January meeting.

#### E. 2005 Meeting Schedule

Ms. Clark noted that she had received a letter from PennDOT asking for citizen comment about the pending work on Route 322 and their intent to detour traffic onto Business Route 322. She noted that the Board is concerned about the decision's impact, and has scheduled to meet with the PC at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 26, and then hold a public hearing with PennDOT at 6:00 p.m. that day. They will discuss the impact of that project and the concurrent project at Bear Meadows/Elks Country Club Road with the PennDOT representatives at the hearing.

The proposed 2005 meeting schedule is as follows:

January 10	July 18
January 26, at 4:00 p.m.	August 15
February 22	September 19
March 21	October 17
April 18	November 21
May 16	December 19
June 20	

Mr. Buckalew moved to approve the 2005 Planning Commission meeting schedule. Mr. Igo seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously, 5 to 0.

#### REPORTS:

*Zoning Permits:*

The Permit Approval report for November was circulated.

*CRPC:*

Ms. Liggett presented a report for Mr. Buckalew. She noted that Penn State had presented an excellent report about construction activities on campus, albeit these are not new projects. In particular she noted there is graduate housing being rebuilt off Hastings Road. CRPC has recommended rezoning of the Lowder/Corneal tract to R-1, and there will be a hearing in February.

*Village District Study:*

No Report. Mr. Potter stated that the group would reconvene in 2005.

#### Adjournment

Mr. Buckalew moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Igo seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was approved unanimously, 5 to 0. Chairman Potter adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by

Kristin Clark, Secretary