

**DERRY TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND
PLANNING COMMISSION
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN JOINT PUBLIC WORKSHOP MEETING NO. 3
MINUTES
MARCH 17, 2015**

CALL TO ORDER

The Tuesday, March 17, 2015 Derry Township Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission Comprehensive Plan Joint Public Workshop Meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. in the meeting room of the Derry Township Municipal Complex, 600 Clearwater Road, Hershey, PA, by Board of Supervisors Chairman John Foley.

ROLL CALL

Supervisors Present: John Foley, Chairman; Marc Moyer, Vice Chairman; Justin Engle, Secretary; Matt Weir; Sandy Ballard

Commission Members Present: Ned Wehler

(Absent: Joyce St. John, Chairwoman; Gregg Mangione, Vice Chairman; Glenn Rowe, Secretary; Matt Tunnell)

Also Present: Chuck Emerick, Director of Community Development; Brandon Williams, Assistant Director of Community Development; Jenelle Stumpf, Community Development Secretary; Chris Brown, Derck & Edson Associates, LLC; A.J. Schwartz, Environmental Planning & Design

Public Registering Attendance: Jeff Gelbaugh, Hershey; Linda Crandall, 964 Carter Cove, Hummelstown; Todd Decker, Realty Management Association; Trish Foster, Middletown Road Coalition; Phil Friedrich, 440 West Chocolate Avenue; Lynn Knepp, 2141 Carey Way; Jamie Pascotti, RMA; Steve Ramis, 2015B Southpoint Drive; Lou Mione, Titan; John Coleman, 2033A Raleigh Road; Carl and Cathy Donough, 713 Stag Court, Hummelstown; Ken Gall, Hershey Trust Company; James Roxbury, Roxbury News; Dale Holte, Deer Run

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion made by Supervisor Ballard and seconded by Supervisor Engle, the January 13, 2015 Joint Workshop Meeting minutes were approved as presented.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Overview of agenda and anticipated outcomes of tonight's meeting

A.J. Schwartz, Environmental Planning & Design, explained that the consultants will present ideas and information, piecing together a lot of the work that has been done to date and the consultants' field work.

B. Highlights of Visual Preferencing exercise

Mr. Schwartz displayed the results of the approximately 35 opinions that were submitted at the January Comprehensive Plan workshop meeting. A series of questions, accompanied by examples, had been asked at the January meeting. Based on those responses, the aspirations appear to be higher density

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development, more traditional development, a focus on “urban core”, street sidewalks, an emphasis in terms of place, and connectivity.

C. Summary of key issues/opportunities

Mr. Schwartz noted that some of these issues are downtown, traffic, Chocolate Avenue, model community.

D. Vision/Mission/Goals

Mr. Schwarz reviewed the adopted Mission and Vision statements, the goals that have been drafted to date, and smart growth principles.

E. Comprehensive Plan Conceptual Framework

- 1) *Nature of Place* – Mr. Schwartz stated that they have broken this down into “Places to Grow”, “Places to Reinforce”, and “Places to Conserve”. Every acre within the Township should fit under one of these categories in some form. Mr. Schwartz gave an example of “Places to Grow” as a green field that one would anticipate will see some form of new development. “Places to Reinforce” are probably those urban areas that have already been developed, but there are opportunities for infill and redevelopment. “Places to Conserve” are environmentally-sensitive areas and areas that people do not want to see developed.

Mr. Schwarz displayed the Nature of Place Diagram, which categorizes the Township by color in a simplistic manner based on existing development and where development patterns seem to be leading in regards to where people live, shop, eat, recreate, work, and learn, and which areas should be conserved. Mr. Brown asked the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission if they think the 4 zones shown on the diagram reasonably represent the Township at a “macro” level. The response was yes.

- 2) *Planned Development Districts* – Currently the consultants envision that there are 5 “Places to Grow”, broken into North, East, South, Central, and West. Mr. Schwartz displayed the Growth Nodes Diagram. This diagram gives a framework to start with in terms of how zoning works in these areas. He stated that the current zoning map has 19 districts, which is a lot for the size of Derry Township. It is also very intricate. He recommended that the existing districts be consolidated somehow.
- 3) *Mixed Use Districts* – Mr. Schwartz displayed the Mixed Use District Diagram (*Middletown Road, Hershey, Palmdale, and Park*). The consultants questioned how the existing mixed use districts work, and they see the possibility of starting to consolidate some of the zoning districts within the mixed use areas.

Supervisor Moyer commented that on the Nature of Place Diagram, it appears to him there are only 2 small sections of ‘Conserve, Recreate’, and they are in the northeast and southeast portions of the Township. He asked if designating other portions of the Township precludes, under mixed use,

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concepts of conserve and recreate. Mr. Schwartz responded that it does not. The green area (“Conserve, Recreate”) is largely a reflection of where infrastructure is already in place, so the consultant started where there was not infrastructure. There are lots of areas that most likely will be developed because infrastructure exists. Can we use the tools in the MPC (such as a municipal service boundary) to temper how much development can occur in those areas? That’s the question the consultant started with, hence the green areas that appear on the Nature of Place Diagram. Going back to Supervisor Moyer’s question, Mr. Schwartz stated that the Township can absolutely introduce some conservation as part of the mixed use.

Supervisor Moyer commented that as it currently stands, much of the land to the east of Middletown Road is farmland and infrastructure exists. There is a concern that there will be no part of the Township that is not developed, and he asked if the use or non-use of this area will be addressed as the process becomes more detailed. Mr. Schwartz responded that they need to go back and adjust the boundary of this layer based on information from the sewer authority regarding where sanitary sewer service currently exists. The consultants had designated the south central area of the Township as “Live” because there is sporadic development through that area so there has already been disturbance. The consultants had to make a judgement call on some of these areas, and that can be adjusted. Mr. Schwartz also suggested the possibility of things like cluster development principles that are trying to preserve open space.

Mr. Schwartz stated that the consultants saw an opportunity to build on the “Places to Grow” concept regarding a special approval process. His initial thought is that it could be a two-step process (master plan approval and site development approval) because there are larger blocks of land. It is not dramatically different from the whole notion of a land development approval, except for the master plan sets the underpinnings of what happens down the road. For example, if there is a project that has multiple phases, the property owner or developer would come in with the overall master plan approval, and then every time they come in with an individual phase, as long as they are being consistent with the master plan approval, there should be more of a streamlined process.

Mr. Brown added that also within that master plan approval process, the opportunity exists to address design guidelines so that a developer can ensure their project is consistent with the character and the nature of place. This would establish a mechanism where the Township can start to incentivize to get people to come forth and grow the type of development that the community wants.

- 4) *Public Realm Overlay* – Mr. Schwartz stated that “public realm” is public space. He listed the development characteristics that affect the experience someone has when they are walking, biking, and/or driving within the public realm, such as setback distances, street trees, and sidewalks.

F. Questions

Jeff Gelbaugh stated that he is a stakeholder in the properties that run north of Derry Road up to Northeast Drive. He is in the process of trying to rezone his properties from Neighborhood Commercial to General Commercial to allow for a wider variety of building use. Part of that would be

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giving up right-of-way so that the Township could widen the road and add sidewalks. That is his goal and he wants to keep a dialog open to further that goal. There are a lot of older houses there that are too close to the road, so they would be torn down and maybe replaced with a drugstore, gift shop, or small restaurant. Mr. Gelbaugh would like to see sidewalks that would connect the downtown area to the Outlets and the offices on Northeast Drive.

Supervisor Weir commented that the consultant made some color statements in regards to the location of sewer infrastructure, and there was discussion about the south end of the Township being a very sensitive environmental area because of the steepness of the slopes. He asked if this would be handled with an overlay district. Mr. Schwartz responded that the brown area (“Live”) on the Nature of Place Diagram is generally where service could be achieved. There may not be a pipe there, but it is within a drainage area of a pipe. The classification of the area can be adjusted on the diagram from “Live” to “Conserve, Recreate”; however, people have development rights, so there has to be some value to the property. There are some issues in terms of large lot zoning legality. It could be tied to some of the environmental issues as a way to justify that type of thing. If the consultant is so directed, they can start looking into what other options are there.

Commissioner Wehler stated that when he saw the 4 colors on the Nature of Place Diagram, he thought it was too broad of an interpretation and there was not enough green (“Conserve, Recreate”). He suggested that the large areas of floodways, floodplains, steep slopes, and sensitive environmental areas be designated as “Conserve, Recreate” since their existence and location are already known. Supervisor Engle agreed and added that a lot of times Township staff has to make the determination of what is and is not a sensitive environmental area. Mr. Schwartz stated that this can be done as part of the Comprehensive Plan, but noted that they would then have to figure out how to translate that back to the Zoning Ordinance, whether it is through a district that has a lower density or by making the existing formula (development intensity) even more rigorous.

Supervisor Ballard commented that the smart growth goal about conserving is very important in regard to the sand hills, steep slopes, and floodways. The community faced very devastating flooding because of these sensitive environmental areas, so she thinks that the community will expect this issue will be addressed. She referenced the Nature of Place Diagram and suggested that the green “Conserve/Recreate” area should continue behind the current Township building location so that there is more of a greenway along the Swatara Creek. Supervisor Ballard also thinks we should look more closely at the steep slope ordinance and make that more rigorous.

Supervisor Weir stated that he thinks open space is what makes Derry Township unique, and it will be hard to preserve. Mr. Schwartz responded that if we are able to fold in a focus on the Public Realm within Places to Grow, that could help to preserve open space in the form of parks.

Supervisor Engle noted that there is an existing buffer along Route 322. Mr. Schwartz stated that it makes sense to do things and put controls on the Public Realm. The Comprehensive Plan could design what that buffer is, depending on what the road is. Supervisor Engle clarified that when he says 'buffer', he means nothing is done there and the area is left as open space.

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Supervisor Engle commented that none of the Board members saw this presentation before the meeting, and as they look at it they might have more questions and comments; however, one of his thoughts is that the overlay districts being able to handle different streets in different ways is a good idea. Mr. Schwartz noted that what has come out in a lot of the discussions is that it is not so much the specifics in the ordinance, it is the reality of the way review processes are structured. The consultant's goal is to come up with a faster, more seamless way to conduct the process but at the same time raise the quality.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Submitted by:

Jenelle Stumpf, Community Development Secretary