

**TOWNSHIP OF SALISBURY
LEHIGH COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

**PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

**7:30 PM
September 13, 2011**

A Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Salisbury was held at the Township Municipal Building located at 2900 South Pike Avenue, Allentown, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. Present were Commissioners Miller, Schreiter, Hebelka, Licht, McKitish and Beck. Also present were Ms. Sopka, Director of Planning & Zoning and Mr. Soriano, Township Manager. Commissioner Hassick was not present (excused).

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Beck called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On motion of Mr. Schreiter, seconded by Mr. Miller, the Planning Commission voted 6-0 to table the July 12, 2011 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes. All in favor.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Present were Mr. Charles Schmehl and Tom Palmer both from Urban Research Development Corporation (URDC).

Mr. Schmehl provided an update on land use, housing, transportation, community service goals and recommendations, and future land use mapping goals/plans and recommendations. He inquired if the Planning members had any comments or concerns.

The Planning members addressed their comments, concerns and what changes they would like incorporated into the plan. Mr. Hebelka expressed his concerns about wells and septic systems. Mr. Hebelka believes that the plan should state that there are areas of the township that rely only on private septic and wells. Small discussion continued and Mr. Schmehl suggested that the township consider adopting the Private Well Construction Standards.

Mr. Miller suggested reworking the wording in a portion of the update that relates to the School District, and the township's interest in purchasing the 50-acre tract of land located on East Emmaus Avenue. Mr. Miller believes that the wording sounds as if there is a bad relationship between the two. Mr. Soriano stated that the \$900,000 grant application for funding deadline is December 31, 2011 but believes an extension on the grant is possible. Mr. Soriano stated that the township and School District are still in "good faith negotiations".

The 50-acre tract is about 50 percent unbuildable because of the steep slopes and wetlands. Mr. Schmehl recommended a change in zoning district density for consideration of cluster housing for this portion of the district tract because it will give property owners fair use of their property. Mr. Schreiter expressed that he would rather see single homes rather than cluster homes. Mr. McKitish was in agreement with Mr. Schreiter that single family dwellings would be in better character at this location of the township.

Mr. Hebelka spoke about storm drainage and solutions, for example retrofits. The retrofit concept includes detention basins, etc., but stated there are other methods that try to promote infiltration. He asked if retrofits could be mentioned with the Best Management Practices (BMP) in the plan.

Mr. Hebelka reviewed source water protection programs. He explained the three (3) zones for surface source water and the three (3) zones of groundwater (wells). Discussion ensued on the requirements and what should be adequately addressed.

In that, Mr. Hebelka addressed water conservation and how to encourage it. Water conservation also consists of rain harvesting and rain barrels which saves the environment in so many different ways. Mr. Hebelka stated that he would like the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) noted in the plan because they are a good resource.

Mr. McKitish inquired about parks and recreational easements because there are very large lots adjacent to the parkway. He inquired if there is an appropriate use to get recreation easements for tax relief and/or provide opportunity for access. Mr. Schmehl stated that the State Trails Act does not provide liability protection for a person who provides a free trail access across their property.

Mr. McKitish addressed traffic levels and used Emmaus Avenue as an example. He stated there is a significant change on this road once the school year begins. He has seen every traffic study done on this road and does not agree with any of the results because the measurements are not done at peak travel times. He stated that he would like to have stronger language in the plan when it comes to traffic levels. A small discussion continued regarding transportation, curbing and cul-de-sacs recommendations.

Mr. Schmehl provided copies of the Future Land Use Map and the Natural Features Composite Map. He stated that since most of the township is developed, they have been concentrating on the remaining lands and researching ways to keep the existing natural features as is. He also stated there was not a need for a large number of proposed building changes in this township.

Mr. Schmehl referred to Lehigh Valley Hospital. He reviewed their base map they provided with current land, zoning and facilities. There are suggestions noted on how to address growth for the next ten years with different phases. He reviewed the zoning districts that the land is on and provided examples with the idea to get flexibility in improvements.

The land between the main access road, Fish Hatchery Road and the residential homes has been an issue. Mr. Schmehl stated that they are not recommending that be opened up, at least for the next ten years, and hope to keep any new construction away from the homes. Discussion ensued and Mr. Schreiter and Mr. McKitish expressed their concerns for the residents that live in that area around the hospital, especially in regard to any possible future construction. In conclusion, this area will have to be noted as a special exception.

There was discussion about Waldheim Park which consists of cabins and septic systems. Mr. Schreiter stated that those cabins are designed for summer use. Mr. Schmehl stated since Waldheim Park is in a zone R4 it would allow apartments but would not allow a manufactured home park; therefore, recommending it be changed to an R5 zoning district. Discussion continued and it was noted that steep slopes in that area would not be ideal for manufactured homes and installation of public water and sewer would be necessary.

Mr. Schmehl concluded that they are scheduled to have the plan and draft zoning completed at year's end; therefore, would like to continue to meet once a month.

City of Bethlehem requests the Planning Commission review the Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan Update for comment and action as referenced in the 8/12/2011 correspondence where it is stated a letter is requested of the Salisbury Township Planning Commission.

Ms. Sopka referred to the City of Bethlehem's correspondence dated August 12, 2011, in accordance with PA DEP requirements, inquired if the Planning Commission would review the Act 537 Facilities Plan Update and provide any comments or concerns with the plan content within 60 days or less. If there is no comment, they asked a letter be provided as stated.

Ms. Sopka suggested that the members refer to Mr. Tettermer's review letter. Mr. Soriano stated that Mr. Tettermer reviewed the components that dealt with Salisbury Township into Fountain Hill. Mr. Soriano stated that his correspondence letter to the City of Bethlehem, March 24, 2009, stated our review, referring to Mr. Tettermer's letter, has had no reasonable doubt in the report provided. The City of Bethlehem is ready to adopt the final version of Act 537, which requires the Planning Commission's approval with recommendation.

Discussion ensued in regard to the plan's time frame; gallons consumed daily, 2009 construction figures and cost. Mr. Soriano stated that the plan was prepared by Aero in 2009. Mr. Schreiter stated that the water consumption had to have grown since 2009. Mr. Miller inquired if updated information could be requested. Mr. Soriano explained why the plan is from 2009, stating that they went through the planning process that took three years for acceptance

based on the numbers; therefore, there are no recent updates. Mr. Soriano stated that the numbers will fluctuate but the plan is projected for the next 30 years; therefore, approval is required to implement the plan.

On motion of Mr. Licht, seconded by Mr. Miller, the Planning Commission voted 6-0 to authorize the letter by request of the City of Bethlehem, Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan Update revisions, stating there is no comment. All in favor.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

The Planning Commission voted to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned.