

**COLLEGE TOWNSHIP JOINT COUNCIL -  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, June 26, 2014**

**ATTENDED BY:**

**COUNCIL:**

Eric Bernier, Council Chair  
Mary Shoemaker, Council Vice-Chair  
Lynn B. Herman  
Carla Stilson  
D. Richard Francke

**PLANNING COMMISSION:**

Ray Forziat, P.C. Chair  
Janet Sulzer, P.C. Secretary  
Anthony Fragola  
George Khoury

**STAFF:**

Kent N. Baker, Township Engineer  
Michael W. Heath, Zoning Officer  
John J. Franek, Jr., Management Analyst  
Mark Holdren, CRPA Sr. Planner  
Mary E. Wilson, Asst. Township Secretary  
Louis T. Glantz, Township Solicitor

**ABSENT:**

Alfred Barbour, P.C. Vice-Chair  
Steven J. Lyncha, P.C. Member  
Adam T. Brumbaugh, Township Manager  
Robert T. Long, Jr., Finance Director

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council Chair Bernier called to order the June 26, 2014, College Township Joint Council-Planning Commission Special Meeting at 7:00 PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Council scheduled this joint meeting with Planning Commission for the purpose of pursuing in-depth discussion with interested citizens on the Hilltop area rezoning matter.

**OPEN DISCUSSION:**

None.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **OB-1 Hilltop Area Matters**

#### **a. Hilltop Area Development Matters; Workshop with Public**

This community meeting provided for an exchange of ideas relative to the Hilltop area rezoning request and gave the public an opportunity to learn more about the process involved in this, and any, rezoning request in College Township. Discussion among Council, staff, and interested residents resulted in comments reported below.

Mr. Mark Holdren, CRPA Sr. Planner, offered a PowerPoint presentation on potential Hilltop area densities with information on residential density expressed as number of dwelling units per acre. As of 2010, the former Hilltop Trailer Park had approximately 145 mobile homes; and the seven Hendricks properties contained 16 residential dwelling units. Combined, this offered a residential density of approximately 5.5 dwelling units per acre. This area, redeveloped under current regulations, would allow for 170 dwellings in this area, 154 being mobile homes and 16 being townhomes. Parking requirements would depend on the square footage of the dwelling units. Mr. Holdren provided a view of the existing zoning of the area, as well as a view of the proposed rezoning, as reflected in failed Ordinance O-14-07 now being reconsidered. Following this presentation, the floor was extended to open dialogue with all in attendance. Comments are highlighted below.

- Public concern was expressed on density increases and a question posed regarding the traffic report previously generated at Squirrel Drive and E. College Avenue. (Mr. B. Ceschini, Shamrock Avenue)  
Staff clarified that the noted traffic report was performed by Trans Associates, one of the Township's appointed engineering firms, and the study evaluation time went five years out. The report was in Council packets in 2013.
- Public concern was voiced about the potential maximum number of residents who could live in the redeveloped area, and mention made of influences affecting the development should underground parking be incorporated into the plan. (Mr. X. Hu, Cottonwood Ave.)
- Suggestion made to consider blocking off Squirrel Drive at the top (Mr. P. Ward, Uni-Tec Engineering); and public stated that one entrance to a residential area, such as that in Harris Acres, can be dangerous. (Ms. D. Taricani, Walnut Spring Lane)
- Township Solicitor Louis T. Glantz stated that the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania defined spot zoning as the arbitrary and unreasonable classification and zoning of a small parcel of land...with no reasonable justification for the differential zoning. It usually occurs when an ordinance creates an "island" in which a small area receives different zoning treatment than the surrounding properties. Singling out one lot or a small area for different treatment from that accorded to the similar surrounding land indistinguishable from it in its character for the economic benefit of the owner of that lot or to his economic detriment would be considered spot zoning. Changing the zoning of some of the Hilltop area to Open Space

Recreation Conservation Zoning is not spot zoning, as it is rezoned for non-use and for the benefit of everyone.

- Solicitor Glantz addressed restrictions on residential rentals, stating that, although students are not a protected class, College Township limits rentals in most zoning districts to three non-related persons, but makes no distinction as to student or non-student. It was Solicitor Glantz's opinion on rentals that a total prohibition on rentals would not be upheld by the Courts, as an unreasonable restraint on alienation. Also, it would not be consistent with other zoning districts in College Township. The real issue would be the desirability of such a restriction given the fact that College Township does not include any similar restrictions in other zoning districts. Solicitor Glantz added that, if student rentals were prohibited in the Hilltop area, there would be more commercial development at Hilltop, as there would be a lower demand for residences.
- Staff concurred with Solicitor Glantz's opinion that changing the appendage parcel to the Walters' property to R-1 would still be spot zoning. (Mr. K. Baker, Twp. Engineer)
- If College Township wished to protect the non-conforming parcels, it could apply a height restriction within 150 to 200 feet of R-1 Districts and R-1 uses. (Solicitor Glantz)
- Council offered the possibility of Gateway Commercial only going up to the Walters' property. (Ms. M. Shoemaker, Council)
- A suggestion was made to establish a greenway connection between Thompson Woods and bikeway and to develop a list of all of the community's concerns and a description on how those concerns could be mitigated. A preference was expressed for a more comprehensive review. (Ms. J. Ruback, Vallamont Bus. Assoc.)
- Regarding more comprehensive reviews, staff noted that Council's consideration of any rezoning is based upon existing regional and municipal studies of potential future development and area needs, studies such as the Centre Region Comprehensive Plan and Official Map. Sound planning cannot always accommodate a single individual. Elected officials review these documents, which have taken years to generate, give those documents weight, and follow through with those stated objectives in mind when considering a rezoning request. Council makes decisions based on the planning work that has already been done, as reflected in these documents. (Mr. J. Franek, College Twp. Mgmt. Analyst)
- In anticipation of this area having gone commercial in 20 years' time, Mr. Rodney Hendricks expressed his expectation of, and support for, all of his properties in the Hilltop area eventually going to commercial uses, which brings jobs into the area. He did not see it as appropriate to have a spot of R-2 in the middle of this commercial area.

*At 8:51 PM, Council Chair Bernier called for a five-minute recess and reconvened the Special Joint Council-Planning Commission Meeting at 9:02 PM.*

**b. Oak Ridge Avenue/Shamrock Avenue Traffic Safety; Discussion**

To begin this community discussion, Mr. Kent Baker, Township Engineer, presented the average daily traffic count information for vehicles entering and exiting Centre Hills Village (CHV), entitled *Centre Hills Village Cut-Through Analysis*, dated June 23, 2014. Counts were taken during normal weekdays from January 2014 through March 2014. There are approximately 120 homes within CHV; and the average house generates about 10 vehicle trips per day. Therefore, the expected traffic entering and exiting CHV should be 1,200 vehicles per day. Actual counts entering and exiting CHV is 4,926. Subtracting the expected 1,200 trips from that total leaves 3,726 extra counts. Since a cut-through trip would count as both an enter and an exit trip, that extra count is divided by two, resulting in 1,836 cut-through trips. This equates to 61% of the current, total traffic being cut-through traffic. Mr. Baker recommended staff's continuing use of its speed message display boards, more police enforcement, and recommended that Oak Ridge Avenue be center- and side-line striped, as seen on Gerald Street. Mr. Baker added that, as part of the E. Branch Road Bridge Replacement Project at the Country Club Road intersection, PennDOT has agreed to realign Country Club Road to make it safer. This project is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2016. The Township has a Local Traffic Advisory Committee (LTAC), which takes Council-remanded traffic issues and follows the *College Township Traffic Calming Study and Approval Process* handbook, updated February 6, 2003, in its evaluation of and recommendations for traffic safety improvements. As this is a very lengthy process, Mr. Baker stated that there were traffic control measures that could be instituted without having to go through the full LTAC review.

Ms. Sulzer, Planning Commissioner and appointed LTAC member, advised that the LTAC study on First Avenue culminated in the residents themselves not being able to come to a consensus on what measures were acceptable, as some were opposed to noise that would be generated from speed bumps or other such devices. Therefore, no traffic-calming actions were ever undertaken. Ms. Sulzer recommended that, as a start, it was probably better to consider measures that did not require LTAC involvement, as the LTAC process was not as clear cut as it might seem.

- It was noted that totally diverting traffic, such as closing the top of Squirrel Drive, would negatively impact emergency responders' access. (Mr. A. Fragola, PC)  
    Mr. Baker advised that the Township would not be able to inhibit emergency vehicles from access.
- Questions were posed and concern expressed about the development's impact on increasing traffic on Country Club Road and on the safety of the community. (Mr. S. Smith, Cottonwood Ave.)
- Speed bumps were suggested to aid in reducing vehicular speeds on Oak Ridge Avenue. (Mrs. H. Simkovich, Oak Ridge Ave.)
- Staff clarified that, when evaluating a proposed plan, College Township requires a developer to perform a traffic impact study and that the Township requires a developer to mitigate any deficiencies the development causes.
- Council inquired about vehicles parking on striped roadways; and Mr. Baker replied that it would not be illegal, although, the roadway could be posted for no parking.
- Public comments supported the roadway striping. (Mr. G. Johnson, Shamrock Ave.)

- Left-turn lane suggested off of E. Branch Road onto Country Club Road. (Mr. B. Ceschini, Shamrock Ave.)  
Mr. Baker advised that this probably would not meet warrants but staff would inquire.
- A suggestion was made to consider a three-way stop at Dublin. (Mr. B. Burns, Oak Ridge Ave.)  
Mr. Baker reported that this definitely does not meet PennDOT warrants.
- Whatever traffic-calming measures are initiated on Oak Ridge Avenue should also be applied to Shamrock Avenue. (Mr. B. Burns)
- For comparison, staff was asked for the traffic counts on Hamilton Avenue, where speed bumps were constructed. (Mr. B. Ceschini)  
Staff agreed to research this and get back to Mr. Ceschini.
- Members of the public extended their appreciation for this open forum.

This agenda item came to a close, and Council recessed into Executive Session. Planning Commissioners were excused from the meeting.

*Chair Bernier recessed Council into Executive Session at 9:53 PM for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter and reconvened the meeting at 10:20 PM.*

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

No *New Business* matters came to the table.

#### **COUNCIL/STAFF OTHER MATTERS:**

##### **1. Appointment to Planning Commission**

**Mr. Francke moved to appoint Mr. Robert H. Hoffman to the unexpired term on Planning Commission vacated by Mr. D. Richard Francke, with a term expiration of Dec. 31, 2016.  
Mr. Herman seconded the motion.  
Motion carried unanimously.**

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Hearing no further matters for discussion, Chair Bernier called for a motion to adjourn.

**Ms. Shoemaker moved to adjourn the June 26, 2014, Joint Council-Planning Commission Special Meeting.  
Chair Bernier seconded the motion.  
Motion carried unanimously.**

Chair Bernier adjourned the College Township Joint Council-Planning Commission Special Meeting at 10:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Mary E. Wilson*

Mary E. Wilson  
Asst. Township Secretary