

East Fallowfield Township
Planning Commission Comprehensive Plan meeting
Approved August 18, 2014 minutes
6:30 p.m.

Attendees:

Dennis Crook, Chairman, Planning Commission
John Schwab, Vice Chairman, Planning Commission
Richard Agatone, Planning Commission
Garth Monaghan, Planning Commission
Joe Perzan, Planning Commission
Jim Durborow, Planning Commission
Mark Toth, Board of Supervisors
Joe McCormick, Historical Commission
Jan Bowers, Chester County Water Resources Authority
Ray Ott, Ray Ott & Associates
Ralph DeFazio, Chester County Health Department
Dave Porter, Herbert E. MacCombie Jr. P.E.
Susan Elkins, AICP, Chester County Planning Commission

Not Present:

Jim Weeks
Jeanne Berlin
Jim Petro
Arthur DeLeo

Dennis Crook called the meeting to order.

Review/clarification of maps and information from Chester County Health Department:

1. Septic System Failures: Ray Ott reported that Jan Bowers, Executive Director of Chester County Water Resources Authority, had volunteered at a previous meeting to talk to the Chester County Health Department in regard to well water, sewer, and sewer service areas. These areas impact both the Future Land Use Map and Resource Protection Map which are part of the Comprehensive Plan and will be discussed later tonight. Ray Ott showed a county generated map from Dave Porter of Herbert E. MacCombie Jr. P.E. This map shows septic system failures, septic certification failures, and sewer service areas. Jan Bowers reported that she worked with the Chester County Health Department to get clarification on the septic part of the Comprehensive Plan. She explained that the maps at the last meeting had misleading language and she presented new maps with more accurate language. She said the areas highlighted on the maps do not reflect septic failures or areas where septic can't be used. These highlighted areas on the map are septic systems that have needed to be repaired or replaced in the past. The lots in which the on-site septic has already been replaced once may not have enough space to be fixed again if they fail. This will need to be considered in the Comprehensive Plan. Jan Bowers reported that the Chester County Health Department has identified four small localized areas in the Township with septic system failures with on-lot systems that can't be replaced. The Chester County Health Department has no concerns for on-lot septic being an appropriate alternative in general areas of East Fallowfield Township that are currently developed.

2. Act 537 Plan: There was a discussion about implementing the Act 537 Plan. The Act 537 Plan will include an assessment of other local conditions, slopes and soil suitability. A septage management system will need to be part of the Act 537 Plan or DEP will not approve it. A septage management

system includes three things: education of citizens on how to treat their systems, basic maintenance and periodic township inspections. The Chester County Health Department does not know how many cesspools are in East Fallowfield. Dennis Crook asked if the Chester County Health Department has records of a cluster of homes in the Township that have been abandoned mostly due to failed septic. Ralph DeFazio, Environmental Health Supervisor with Chester County Health Department with individual on lot sewage and individual well program, said that they would not have records of those failures because no permit action has occurred. Dennis Crook requested data on how many issues the Township has had in the last 20 years.

Ray Ott asked for a lot size guideline for the Comprehensive Plan. Ralph DeFazio said to use $\frac{3}{4}$ acre as the guideline. A lot less than $\frac{3}{4}$ acre with a well and on-site sewage system would be very difficult to repair due to lack of space. Ralph DeFazio said that for purposes of the Comprehensive Plan, the Act 537 Plan will identify wetlands, types of soils and hydric soils, steep slopes, and rocky conditions which would all need to be considered. The Comprehensive Plan should identify these areas and discourage development. Dave Porter reported that a major component of the Act 537 Plan is an analysis survey which tests water quality and conditions on each lot. Tier 1 is a questionnaire by property. Tier 2 is a field survey of a percentage of completed questionnaires. They put well water quality into four categories: no malfunction, potential malfunction, suspected malfunction, and confirmed malfunction. This survey was done in 2010. Dave Porter will give his data to Ray Ott for the Comprehensive Plan.

There was a discussion about the water and sewer franchise area. Jan Bowers said the maps needed for the Comprehensive Plan are: existing waste water service area, existing water supply service area, waste water franchise area, and water supply franchise area. Ray Ott asked how we would find out what the franchise area is in the Township. Obtaining a franchise area map is extremely difficult. This information is restricted. There was a discussion about extending the sewer service area around the South Brandywine Middle School. Dennis Crook said that the application to request expansion of the franchise area has been withdrawn. There was also a discussion about sewer service areas and determining what factors impact expansion of franchise areas.

Susan Elkins, of the Chester County Planning Commission, said you don't need to specify every part of the Township as having public sewer or on-lot septic for the Comprehensive Plan. You can include more detail in the Act 537 Plan.

Ray Ott said we can use a $\frac{3}{4}$ acre as the threshold for septic that can be fixed and make a note of this on the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan can identify areas that have lots under $\frac{3}{4}$ acres with potentially failing septic that can't be fixed. These areas would be identified as potentially needing public sewer in the next 30 years. Ralph DeFazio stated that if you identify an area as having public water, then you don't need to worry about lot size other than how it is zoned. Areas of public water allow for more potential to fix failing septic systems.

3. Ground Water Nitrates: There was a discussion about a map showing nitrate levels in East Fallowfield Township. The map shows 150 wells permitted. 69% of the wells have below 5 mg/liter nitrates. Only 9% are over 10 mg/liter at drill time. The Health Department recommendation is less than 10 mg. These wells were then corrected to bring the level of nitrates down. Nitrates fluctuate over time. East Fallowfield's ground is inconsistent. You can successfully drill down to water for a well in one area and not in another spot in close proximity. Priority of the Comprehensive Plan will be effective waste water technology and septage management.

4. Hazardous Waste: There was a discussion about a contaminated site map which showed a dozen sites identified on it. Ralph DeFazio explained that the sites marked on this map mean that there has been some sort of contamination at the site at some point in the past. It does not mean that those areas are currently contaminated. Those sites have been cleaned up. These areas are not of significant management concerns that would affect the environmental planning for the Comprehensive Plan purposes.

Future Land Use Map:

Ray Ott presented the Future Land Use Map that he prepared along with a Township zoning map. Ray Ott explained that he used the Township's existing zoning map to do a build out map. He has three areas on the build out map: a conservation area, residential infill, and high/low density residential with mixed use growth areas. The higher density areas line up with public water and sewer service areas. Residential infill is an already developed area which has a few lots that can still be built on or subdivided. Similar building styles would be required. Mixed use means a combination of residential and industrial. Mixed use areas would have various types of residences and as well as commercial. The proposed Hope Community is an example of mixed use. The area in the Township proposed for the Hope Community is where the old Prang's Junkyard site is located. This area is currently zoned as office/industrial and is currently converting to a light industrial site with a slag recycle site. The Township zoning map would be changed to be in agreement with the Future Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan. There was a lengthy discussion about what this office industrial site could be used for. The area has a lot of building constraints due to steep slopes and much of the land in that area is unbuildable. There was also a discussion about what exactly mixed use means. A percentage of residential can be specified in an area zoned as mixed use. Jan Bowers asked what the advantages of changing the office industrial zoned area to mixed use are. The advantages of mixed use are: live and work opportunities, no rush hour traffic surges, more small businesses, and possible access to the train station. This area is near Coatesville so it's a logical area for mixed use. Ray Ott asked for feedback from the Planning Commission. The overall consensus of the Planning Commission is that they don't want to make much change in the Township. They feel that part of East Fallowfield's charm is that it isn't built up. Ground water quality is also a concern.

Village Commercial: Ray Ott suggested the Ercildoun area as a possible mixed use area which is currently zoned village commercial. There was a discussion about village commercial zoning and, Ercildoun, the area around the Big Apple and Triple Fresh. There was a concern about problems with traffic in this area as village commercial. The village commercial would have to be defined properly to avoid traffic problems. There was also a brief discussion of about the small area of abandoned properties and that they could be considered blighted properties.

Resource Protection Map:

Ray Ott discussed the Brandywine Greenway and where the Planning Commission wants the pedestrian trails to be located. The Commission said they would like the trails to connect to a destination and that they would most likely run along roads. Suggested areas to connect trails to: the elementary and middle schools, covered bridge, Brandywine West Branch, Township owned parcels, the historic fallout shelter, and the two historic zones.

Next Comprehensive Plan:

Ray Ott set the next Comprehensive Plan for Monday, September 15, 2014 at 6:30 pm. He will have a new draft version of the Future Land Use Map and Resource Map incorporating the Planning Commission's feedback. They briefly discussed recommending a policy for on-site septic systems and a sewer service area. As an alternative to making recommendations, Jan Bower suggested stating that the areas with small lots with septic concerns will need to be addressed at some time in the future with alternatives.

Ground Water Quality Research:

Dennis Crook stated that he is searching for grant money programs for researching ground water quality. He said he found a many that is doing this research in other areas with fracking like East Fallowfield has. Dennis Crook reported he has just sent this man an email in regard to possible ground water quality research in East Fallowfield.

Brandywine Greenway Gateway Kiosk:

Jan Bowers reported that the Brandywine Conservancy possibly has an Eagle Scout interested in putting a Brandywine Greenway Gateway Kiosk in East Fallowfield Park. Ms. Bowers asked for feedback from the Planning Commission on moving forward with this potential project. The Park and Recreation Committee would maintain the kiosk. The Planning Commission stated the approved of this project. This kiosk project will be discussed at the next Park and Recreation Committee meeting and then brought to the Board of Supervisors.

Dennis Crook made a motion to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 9:33 pm. Motion was seconded. Vote: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Valaitis
Township Secretary