

June 1, 2016
7:00 PM

The regular meeting of the Monroe Township Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Nelson. The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all.

ATTENDANCE

Sharon Nelson, Chairperson	Mike Pykosh, Solicitor
Sheldon Brymesser, Vice-Chairman	Mark Bruening, Engineer
Dave DeNicholas	Holly Wood, Recording Secretary
Carl Kuhl	

MINUTES

On the motion of Mr. Kuhl, and seconded by Mr. DeNicholas, and by unanimous vote of the members it was duly RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2016 regular meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

Chairperson Nelson asked if there was any objections to moving discussions to after the presentations by the guest speakers for the evening. There were no objections to this suggestion.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Comprehensive Plan Review – Speakers David Maher & Brian VanSweden of the
PA Historical Museum Commission

Mr. Maher explained that he works within the State Historic Preservation Office, which is an office within of the PA Historical Museum Commission and gave a brief history of his organization and the things they manage. Beyond the State Museum and State Archives, his group manages the Historic Preservation Grant Program, Federal Rehabilitation & State Rehabilitation tax credits for preservation, public education and outreach, and offer assistance with historic preservation planning in comprehensive plan updates. Mr. Maher then turned the floor over to Mr. VanSweden.

Mr. VanSweden stated that history goes beyond buildings and offered suggestions and ideas on how to help facilitate preservation of historic properties. Mr. VanSweden suggested

that communities consider zoning incentives such as density bonuses and flexibility in lot sizing, as well as expanding allowable uses, as incentive to preserving historic houses and such. Tax abatement, loan and grant programs, and commercial revitalization programs were also mentioned. Mr. VanSweden referred to the County's Housing and Redevelopment Authority as a good resource for individuals and groups to find funds and assistance in applying for and managing preservation and restoration loans and grants. The Keystone Communities Program and the Keystone Renovate and Repair Program are just two examples of such programs that can assist individuals and communities.

Mr. VanSweden also discussed the value of historic preservation regulations such as a demolition ordinance that could deny or delay demolition of any building to allow for alternative options or solutions to be found. Mr. Pykosh asked for examples of communities with this type of ordinance and if a denial of demolish type ordinance would hold up in court. Mr. Maher and Mr. VanSweden said communities in Chester and Lancaster Counties and the Borough of Huntingdon have such ordinances. Mr. DeNicholas stated that public meetings, or a series of public meetings would need to happen to make sure the community was on board with such and ordinance. It was agreed that there would need to be a process to make sure the community was on board with such an ordinance for it to survive. The community would also need to maintain accurate lists of historic properties and the reason these properties are on the list.

Mr. Kuhl asked if there was any value in offering a tax incentive to those property owners that would voluntarily put their property on a historic preservation list. Mr. VanSweden said with it being your plan, you can make it as you want. Ms. Nelson asked if anybody else is doing anything like this. It was stated that preservation easements are an option. Mr. Kuhl then asked if Monroe Township had anything worth preserving, to which was answered that is up to the community. Mr. Maher did state that his group does project reviews based on the Federal and National Register to facilitate the preservation of those properties listed on these registers.

Mr. Kuhl went on to ask if barns and houses are equal when looking at preservation efforts. It was stated that barns are looked at based on the farm and agriculture significance, which is different than a historic home. A special barn preservation program in Adams County was offered as a source of information when discussing barns.

Ms. Nelson asked about "at risk" criteria, and if vacancy is a valid "at risk" criteria marker. It was stated that vacancy is a valid criteria item, and that there are state regulations with regard to this.

Mr. VanSweden then moved to marketing of historic properties as a preservation tool. It was noted that there are local, state, and national oriented websites that can match interested owners with historic properties. DowntownProperties.net, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation PA, and PreservationDirectory.com are just a few. A community can also look to the County Historic Preservation Plan and other local and regional partners for guidelines, promotion, and education programs.

Mr. VanSweden then introduced Katie Hess, Director of the South Mountain Partnership, to present the partnership's mission and offer assistance with planning for the future. Ms. Hess explained that the mission of her organization is regional conservation landscaping planning. It is the goal of her group to bring landscape resources such as agriculture, historical, natural, and recreational resourced together to make a community healthy. The partnership wants to fuse health care with the recreational community to improve the quality of life within the community. The partnership wants communities to answer the question of what are the physical limitations of development, and how will the next plan ensure healthy living, are trails or complete streets being considered? Ms. Hess said communities should consider forming Environmental Advisory Councils to gauge public interest in healthy living and partnering with other groups, such as the PA Association for Sustainable Agriculture and Young Growers Alliance to retain and attract farmers and the like.

Ms. Nelson thanked all the presenters for their time, presentations, and handouts.

NEW BUSINESS - None

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION - None

CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Nelson asked what kind of feedback was obtained on the home and farm based business questionnaire. Mr. Kuhl said that the only edit that was suggested was the removal of the building requirement reference. It was suggested to make it a zoning reference. It was also asked to have an email address and specific subject line title be added when published in the newsletter and/or on the website, so as to "flag" the results for printing and distribution to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Kuhl asked Mr. Stoner about the limitations of utilities, such as PPL, with regard to federally funded farms and easements. Mr. Stoner explained that there are specific limitations with regard to federally funded easements, and that PPL has hit a snag in their proposed route for transmission lines. PPL will now need to look for a new route and that could come back to effect some residents in Monroe Township. Mr. Stoner also supplied a handed out titled "Permitted Activities on Preserved Farms".

On the motion of Mr. Brymesser, and seconded by Mr. DeNicholas, and by unanimous vote of the members it was duly RESOLVED to recommend to the Board of Supervisors the placement of the home and farm based business questionnaire in the July 2016 edition of the township newsletter to obtain feedback from residents.

STAFF COMMENTS

Ms. Nelson stated that she wants to address and establish a time line for the Zoning Ordinance review memo with regard to intensive agriculture uses received from the Board of Supervisors. She would like to have this item added to the July agenda if there is no conflict with meeting attendees. Ms. Nelson would like to have Mr. Rogalski present for this discussion due to his position and understanding of the Zoning Ordinance. Ms. Wood will check to see if Mr. Rogalski will be able to attend the July Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Bruening stated that he will not be able to be at the July meeting due to vacation, but he will forward any materials he deems relevant in time for the packets to be prepared and delivered.

Mr. DeNicholas mentioned the Audit Review Workshop on June 29. Mr. DeNicholas feels it is worth attending. Ms. Nelson requested copies of the minutes from this workshop to be shared with the Planning Commission.

ADJOURN

On the motion of Mr. Brymesser, and seconded by Mr. Kuhl, and by unanimous vote of the members it was duly RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly S. Wood
Administrative Assistant