

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES – FEBRUARY 25, 2013

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on February 25, 2013. Chairman Bush called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Those present:

Planning Commission:        Tony Bush, Chairman  
   Karen Friedman, Vice Chair  
   John Pazdera, Secretary  
   Mark Fried, Member

Others:                            Nancy Frick Director Zoning, Inspection, & Planning  
   Nathan Fox, Township Solicitor  
   Kristin Tyler, Supervisor Liaison

Absent:                            Dean Dickson, Planning Commission Member

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Friedman moved, Mr. Fried seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of December 17, 2012 as amended.

Mr. Pazdera moved and Ms. Friedman seconded to approve the Minutes of January 14, 2013 as corrected. Motion carried with Mr. Fried abstained.

COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN UPDATE DISCUSSION AND MOTION TO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Ms. Lynn Bush, Executive Director of the Bucks County Planning Commission, was present. She stated she has worked with Ms. Frick on two prior Master Plans, and Ms. Frick had called her about working on the latest Master Plan update. She stated in response to Ms. Frick's call, she put together some thoughts which were included in a letter which had been e-mailed to the Planning Commission members.

Ms. Bush stated some areas will require an update including the Census data. She stated she did review the Census data for Lower Makefield and noted that the population did not grow as much as they anticipated when they were in the height of the development boom. She stated the population numbers are fairly stable and are not projected to grow a lot in

the future depending on what land is available. She stated in terms of demographics, there are not a lot of people in the twenty to thirty-five year old age group which is different from the rest of the County. She stated the average age is still a little higher than the rest of the County, but there are also a lot of school-age children. She stated Lower Makefield has the second highest per-capita household income after Upper Makefield. She stated they will incorporate those numbers so that they have a picture of the population of the Township.

Ms. Bush stated also to be included would be anything that has happened since 2003 that is either the result of a recommendation of the Comprehensive Plan or part of the overall Township program such as open space preservation, park development, and the Farmers Market; and these would be reflected in terms of accomplishments.

Ms. Bush stated the floods that occurred in 2005, 2006, and 2007 were significant events for all of the River communities. She stated she was part of a River Task Force which included one of the Lower Makefield Township Supervisors, and they looked at some of the causes of flooding. She stated it was determined that the impact of the up-River reservoirs was felt in Bucks County. She stated in-depth studies were done which she feels should be reflected in the Comprehensive Master Plan to denote the fact that flooding continues to be an issue. She stated they should also include some of the recommendations that came out of that Task Force.

Ms. Bush stated she also feels that they should brainstorm about other issues that should be considered when looking ten years ahead including the older population, the Edgewood Village area, the Matrix site, the re-construction of I-95 and its impact as well as the re-building of the Scudder Falls Bridge, maintaining the economic strength of the Township's business base, and future trends of farming adding that the Township is in the forefront of the future of farming. Ms. Bush stated she also feels they should consider the cost of Municipal services and the components of the quality of life in the Township adding Lower Makefield is a very desirable place to live. She stated they need to consider what makes it that way, and what it is they need to protect to make sure it stays that way. She stated it is a safe community, and the quality of the Township services are excellent. She stated there is also a great mix of land uses and preservation, historic properties, and nice neighborhoods. She stated as they look ahead they need to consider some of the threats they might need to address.

Ms. Bush stated with regard to the economic strength of the Township's business base, she is meeting tomorrow evening with the Township's Economic Development Committee. She stated this is part of a major initiative of the County where they are reaching out to all the communities in Bucks County to see what they can do together to make sure that businesses remain vital. She stated she would like to incorporate some of these concerns into the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Bush stated some of the maps would need to be updated including the land use maps and the open space maps, but other maps could remain the same.

Mr. Bush stated there are things happening around the Township which will have an impact on the Township, and he noted specifically the eventual connection between I-95 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike; and he asked if this should be considered, and Ms. Bush stated it should. Mr. Bush stated he also feels they should consider the two big parcels of land in the Township – Patterson Farm and the tract where Aria Hospital is proposed. Ms. Bush asked about the other farms in the Township such as the Torbert Farm, and Ms. Frick stated they are still active.

Ms. Bush stated she was considering doing a re-examination and update of the Policies that need to be changed, but feels they should try to keep it basically intact. She stated while there have been some changes it is not the same dramatic growth that prompted the project that was done in 2003. She stated she does not feel they need to re-write the part about the natural resources although they may want to address what the Environmental Advisory Council has done in response to that. She stated she will want to discuss this further with the Township solicitor as to what would need to be done to meet the legal requirements.

Ms. Bush stated in the past they have done interviews with the various Department Heads in the Township which was productive, although she added that Lower Makefield is the only Township that does it in this way. She stated she would be willing to speak to whomever they wish. She stated in other Townships they get most of their information from the Township Manager. She stated the purpose of speaking with the Township personnel is to get a feel for future needs. She stated in the past she met with Mr. Hoffmeister regarding the sewer, the Police Chief, and Fire and EMS personnel. She stated sometimes they can get this information from the Township Manager or Planning Commission.

Ms. Bush stated this will be an opportunity for the Planning Commission to discuss things that they do not normally discuss at the general Planning Commission meetings. She stated it is an opportunity to brainstorm about what is facing the Township and what activities they want to consider in order to maintain the quality of life. She stated it is also the basis for the Township's Ordinances. She stated it is a policy document; and in certain circumstances there is a requirement that if you are changing the Zoning, it should be reflected in the Comprehensive Plan Policy so it is an important document.

Ms. Tyler asked how they break this project up, and Ms. Bush stated she will go through and identify things she feels need to be updated or changed. She stated they may need to make changes because it is old information that needs to be updated, it is something that was a recommendation or concern that they have addressed, or it is something that no

longer makes sense. She stated she will then present this list to the Township of what she feels needs to be addressed, and she would do this in conjunction with Ms. Frick. She stated they can then have a brainstorming session to consider the future.

Ms. Frick stated in the past they kept the second Planning Commission meeting of the month open for the Master Plan.

Ms. Bush stated she will e-mail Ms. Frick the materials they would like to have the group review prior to the second meeting of the month, and they can work on a few chapters at a time. Ms. Bush stated she does have up-to-date land use information for the Township already.

Ms. Frick stated the Planning Commission should make a Motion to the Board of Supervisors recommending proceeding with Ms. Bush's proposal, and they could then begin work.

Mr. Fried asked Ms. Bush if she would be able to provide the Township with an overview of major development activity around the Township that they may not be aware of that might have an impact on the Township, and Ms. Bush agreed she could provide this. Mr. Fried stated he feels they need to have time when they can talk more globally about some issues. Ms. Bush stated it may make sense to gather information and start out with this global discussion.

Mr. Fried moved, Ms. Friedman seconded and it was unanimously carried to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that they favorably consider the services offered by Lynn Bush of the Bucks County Planning Commission to assist in the update of the Township's Comprehensive Master Plan, in accordance with the outline provided in their letter dated 1/17/13.

Ms. Frick asked if anyone needed a copy of the 2003 Master Plan, and Mr. Fried stated he would like to have another copy.

Ms. Friedman asked if the Planning Commission could be provided with the Minutes from the other Committees when Ms. Bush meets with them; however, it was noted most other Committees do not have recorded Minutes. Ms. Frick stated Ms. Bush will report back to the Planning Commission what was discussed at meetings with others.

Mr. Fried asked if there are other stakeholders that are not part of the Township that should be considered to be interviewed. Ms. Frick stated this was not done in the past, and they did not receive any complaints.

Ms. Bush stated last time they did do an extensive survey, and 38% of the residents responded.

Ms. Tyler stated if something comes up at one of the other Committees Ms. Bush meets with, she feels the Planning Commission could invite them to attend the Planning Commission meeting to discuss a particular issue.

Mr. Pazdera stated when they worked on the 2003 Update, the first meeting was held in April, 2001 so it was a two year process to get it done. Ms. Bush stated she does not anticipate that it will take as long this time.

Mr. Fried asked if there was ever a review looking back to see how successful the planning was between 2003 and now. Ms. Bush stated she feels Lower Makefield has a clear vision of what they want for their Township and they make it happen. She stated there are other Counties in Bucks County which are much more haphazard. She stated Lower Makefield has had very few changes in Zoning and that is not the case in other Townships. Mr. Fried stated he feels this should be noted and commended that the Plan was actually executed.

Ms. Bush stated she will provide an update to the Board of Supervisors of what was discussed at the Planning Commission and what they would like to have considered in the Update.

Ms. Tyler asked if they should have an end-date goal, and Ms. Bush stated she feels they should have a timeline so that it would help them keep on track. Ms. Frick stated she was hopeful that they would be able to get it completed by the end of the year since what is anticipated is not as extensive as it was in the past.

Mr. Fried left the meeting at this time.

Ms. Frick stated they will try to keep the second meeting of the month open for this discussion or add it to a light Agenda.

There being no further business, Ms. Friedman moved, Mr. Pazdera seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Pazdera, Secretary