

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES – NOVEMBER 24, 2014

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on November 24, 2014. Chairman Friedman called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Those present:

Planning Commission: Karen Friedman, Chair
John Pazdera, Vice Chair
Dean Dickson, Secretary
John Tracey, Member

Absent: William Clark, Planning Commission Member
Nancy Frick, Director Zoning, Inspection, & Planning
Dan McLaughlin, Supervisor Liaison

COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN UPDATE DISCUSSION OF SECOND DRAFT

Page 36 was noted, and Ms. Friedman suggested ending the first sentence on the page with "... (Upper Makefield and Solebury)" and deleting the rest of that sentence. The next sentence would read: "According to the 2010 census five-year survey estimate nearly 37% of working Lower Makefield residents commute to jobs outside the State, and the average cost of housing in the Township remains somewhat lower than in comparable suburban communities across the state border in New Jersey."

The next two paragraphs were deleted.

With regard to the following paragraph it was agreed to delete the first word, "while," and begin the sentence with "Direct."

Under Owner-Occupied Housing it was agreed to add "Lower Makefield" before "Township" in the first sentence and to eliminate the second and third sentences.

Page 37 was noted and Ms. Friedman suggested rewriting the paragraph under Table 16 as follows: "The overall rate of cost burden, which occurs when a household pays more than 30% of its income for home rental or ownership and related costs, was nearly 32% among Lower Makefield homeowner households." Second sentence will begin "This was according"

It was agreed to eliminate the next paragraph as well as Table 17 and the top paragraph on Page 38.

Under Renter-Occupied Housing, it was agreed to continue the first paragraph as follows, after "... 6.2 percent" add the last sentence from paragraph 4 and end the paragraph with "Table 18 provides 2010 data on median rents and proportion of renter-occupied housing for Lower Makefield, nearby townships, and Bucks County."

With regard to the second paragraph it was agreed to keep the first sentence and revise the remainder of the paragraph to read. "A rate in the range of 5 to 7 percent is considered a "normal" vacancy rate to allow for market turnover. The Township's rate is a normal vacancy rate."

Page 39 was noted, and Ms. Friedman suggested ending the second sentence under 5. Accessory apartments after the word "housing."

Page 43 was noted and Ms. Friedman asked if they should include something about the Shady Brook/Aria site and the potential O/R use although she noted this is currently in Court. Mr. Dickson stated he does not feel this should be included in this document as it may not come to fruition. Mr. Dickson stated they do mention the 180,000 square foot office which he understands is Capstone which has been approved, and it was agreed to change "Township Line Road" in that sentence to "Stony Hill Road" and to change the rest of the sentence to read: "has not been constructed and is still pending."

Under CURRENT PLANNING AND ZONING POLICIES it was agreed to change the first paragraph to read as follows: "The 2014 pattern of development has evolved largely in accordance with the policies and ordinances of the Township with few uncommitted vacant tracts of land left."

Page 47 was noted, and Ms. Friedman stated they need to make sure all the Appendices and the Maps correlate when it is all put together.

Also on Page 47 it was agreed to change "1. Office, commercial and industrial development" first sentence should end "... within the district." and eliminate the rest of the sentence regarding health care since this has not been solidified.

Last paragraph on that page, first sentence, should be changed to read "...in the range of 30 - 50 percent, now exist..."

Page 48 was noted and there was discussion as to whether the last sentence in the second paragraph regarding the Shady Brook farm site should be included. After discussion it was agreed that this should remain.

Under "3. Cluster development," Ms. Friedman asked if they need to include this as a recommendation and Mr. Pazdera stated it is in the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Tracey suggested that they change the beginning of the sentence to read, "Consider the cluster development option ..." and this was acceptable to the Planning Commission.

With regard to "4. Farmland preservation" Ms. Friedman stated she feels they need to consider this at a future meeting to see if action is needed to promote this. Mr. Dickson stated they need to discuss this with the Township solicitor to consider drafting an Ordinance they could recommend to the Board of Supervisors if they wish to do this. Mr. Pazdera stated the Conditional Use allows the Supervisors to say yes or no; while if it was a permitted use, the developer could just do it. He stated as a Conditional Use it gives the Board the opportunity to weigh in on it. Ms. Friedman questioned why they have included the statement shown in the Master Plan draft, and Mr. Pazdera stated it is probably a carry-over and was ignored because they did not want to change it. Ms. Friedman stated they may want to eliminate this in the Master Plan. Mr. Dickson stated they want to preserve farmland; and Mr. Pazdera stated while they do, the Township wants to have control over how it is done and have some say rather than just having the developer telling the Township how they are going to do it. Mr. Dickson suggested they discuss this with Mr. Koopman.

Last paragraph on Page 48 it was agreed to change the first sentence to read, "Local agriculture plays a role in maintaining a sound and diversified economy." and eliminate the rest of that first sentence.

Ms. Friedman asked if anyone has any other recommendations that should be added under Future Needs and Recommendations for Actions under Land Use. Mr. Pazdera stated Mr. Dwyer has been present a number of times regarding the Capstone property and possibly looking at other uses there that tie more into the Edgewood Village and the TND. Mr. Dickson stated he has heard that the Supervisors may be considering changing this to R-4, and he does not feel that this should be done. He stated if Capstone were changed to R-4, the Flemings attorney could request that property be changed to R-4. Ms. Friedman stated that would result in a huge amount of development. Mr. Dickson stated this would result in a significant increase in traffic. Mr. Dickson stated he feels it should remain O/R.

Mr. Pazdera stated Mr. Dwyer has indicated that one of the reasons a lot of office developments are failing is because the companies cannot attract a young workforce because there is no place for them to live in the area; and this is probably where the recommendation to change the Zoning to R-4 is coming from.

Ms. Friedman noted "Community Facilities and Services" and Services on Page 49 and suggested "recycling" be added as another bullet point. Under "Police Protection and Emergency Management" the first sentence of the second paragraph should be changed to read, "The facilities include a clerical area ..."

Page 50 was noted, and Ms. Friedman asked if a Master Plan should discuss the workload of the Police Department. Mr. Tracey stated he feels they are referring to the fact that increased workload would cause them to consider the facilities and manpower. After discussion it was agreed to change the first sentence of the first full paragraph to read as follows: "Following a feasibility study in 2001, the department expanded and renovated its facilities in keeping with State and Federal mandates that carry requirements that affect staff, record keeping, and facilities. These include" and then keep the listing but delete the next paragraph.

Under "Police Protection" at the bottom of Page 50 under "1. Staff" it was agreed to change the last sentence on the page to read "This approach takes into account ..."

Page 51 was noted and it was agreed to delete the fourth sentence "The police department now has six police officers trained in basic life support." under "Emergency Management."

Ms. Friedman stated she does feel it is important to leave in at the bottom of that page that there are fifty-five volunteer firefighters as that is an interesting statistic. Mr. Dickson agreed adding that they had discussed the fact that there has been trouble attracting volunteer firefighters.

Page 52 was noted and it was agreed to add the following sentence to the end of the second paragraph; "Public donations provide some additional financial support."

Page 53 was noted under "1. Fire company staffing" and it was agreed to start that section with the sentence from the second paragraph "The township should partner with the fire company to educate the community about the importance and need for volunteer firefighters."

It was agreed to change the second paragraph to read as follow: “The township retains a paid consultant to review building plans for fire safety compliance and has two part-time fire inspectors to inspect commercial properties in the township. Most of the operations and administrative...”

Ms. Friedman stated with regard to the sentence regarding the Township partnering with the fire company to educate the community about the importance and need for volunteer firefighters, she asked who they are delegating this to. She stated she feels the Planning Commission should consider who they feel should put this in motion.

Page 55 was noted, and after discussion it was agreed to delete the first paragraph of that page since it is speculative.

Page 56 was noted and there was discussion about conflicting numbers throughout this page regarding the average water use per person whether it was 30, 48, or 50 gallons per day; and it was agreed to discuss this with the Bucks County Planning Commission.

It was agreed to delete the paragraph on Page 56 beginning “PAWC in the late 1990s took...”

Page 57 was noted under “Recommendations for Action,” and Ms. Friedman asked if there should be a statement included at the end of “1. Groundwater” that a Stormwater Ordinance has been enacted. Mr. Tracey stated the first sentence could be changed since the fact that there is an Ordinance in place demonstrates the fact that the Township has been attentive to conservation of groundwater supplies. Mr. Pazdera noted four pages later in the document there is a full-blown Stormwater Management Ordinance description. After discussion it was agreed to leave that section as stated.

Under “3 Water Conservation” it was agreed to add the following sentence at the end: “The Township residents should be made aware of available conservation measures and Building codes that support water conservation.” Ms. Friedman stated this would educate the residents on conservation measures given the large amount of water they are using per person.

The first paragraph of Page 59 was noted and Mr. Pazdera reminded the Planning Commission that at the last meeting there was a development that could not proceed until an issue was resolved so he does not feel what is shown is a truly-accurate statement. It was agreed to discuss this situation with the Bucks County Planning Commission.

With regard to the second paragraph under “Future Needs and Recommendations for Action 1. Septic system failures” it was agreed to change the second sentence to read “In 2012, public sewerage service was provided to many properties...”

Page 61 was noted and it was agreed to add “rain gardens,” after “pervious pavement in the fourth paragraph under “Stormwater Management Ordinance.”

Page 62 was noted and it was agreed to remove “every few weeks during the winter months” from the second sentence at the top of the page.” Also in that paragraph it was agreed to end the fourth sentence with “...suggested plantings.” and remove “primarily a mixed meadow of native or naturalized grass species and compatible wildflowers.”

Page 65 was noted and under “Future Needs Ambulance Services” it was agreed to eliminate the second sentence “This increases the financial commitment of the squad.”

It was also agreed to eliminate the beginning of the fourth paragraph and to start that paragraph with “Under state and county guidelines ...”

With regard to the fifth paragraph it was agreed to eliminate the second sentence. Mr. Pazdera stated they should discuss with the Bucks County Planning Commission where this paragraph would fit better as the Emergency Alert messages have nothing to do with Ambulances

With regard to the sixth paragraph it was agreed to take out the end of the last sentence, “and may take up to seven years to pay with minimal interest charges.”

Page 66 was noted, and it was agreed to eliminate the beginning of the last sentence on this page “For example, the lower level” and then eliminate the rest of that sentence that carries over to Page 67 at the top.

Also on Page 67 it was agreed to delete the sentence in the second full paragraph beginning, “User friendly...”

Page 68 was noted, and it was agreed to take out the second sentence under “3. Ice and snow removal”

Page 70 was noted under “Future Needs” There was discussion about the sentence regarding the year “2014” as it is already 2014, and it was agreed this should be discussed with the Bucks County Planning Commission to consider what would be next. It was agreed to change the fifth sentence to read as follows: “Act 101 also requires that mandated municipalities such as Lower Makefield Township establish a curbside program...”

Page 71 "Library Services" was noted, and it was agreed to change the first sentence fourth paragraph as follows: "While geographically located in Lower Makefield, as a county branch this library serves the following communities, Lower Makefield, Upper Makefield..."

It was agreed to add an "s" after "pre-schooler" in the first sentence of the last paragraph.

Mr. Pazdera noted the top of page 72, where the sentence refers to 2013 and feels this should be updated since it is already 2014; and it was agreed to discuss this with the Bucks County Planning Commission. Mr. Pazdera stated his comment also refers to the use of the date 2013 in the next two paragraphs as well and this should all be updated.

It was agreed to eliminate the third sentence in the second paragraph beginning According to the Pew Research Center..."

Under "Future Needs and Recommendations for Action" on Page 72, Ms. Friedman stated they are referring to this as a Community Center, and they are not going to have the Township Community Center at this location. It was agreed to change "1. Role as Community Center" to "Changing Uses" and to re-write that as follows: "Library and township representatives will jointly explore ways in which library facilities can be expanded and made multi-purpose, in order to address diverse patron needs and technological change."

Table 25 was noted on Page 73, and it was agreed to add the following under Man-Made Hazards: "Compromised electric grid, water sources, and natural gas due to an act of terrorism."

It was agreed that Comprehensive Master Plan Update Discussion should be included on all future Agendas. It was agreed that the presence of the Bucks County Planning Commission representatives would not be required at the next meeting.

There being no further business, Mr. Dickson moved, Mr. Tracey seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dean Dickson, Secretary

