

**MINUTES  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OCTOBER 22, 2019**

Attendees: Sherri Glantz Patchen, Patrick Doran, Vince Manuele, Peter Cornog, Bob Dambman, Charles L. Guttenplan, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning, Krista Heinrich, Township Engineer, T&M Associates, Amy Grossman, BOS Liaison and Dave Sander, Township Solicitor

1. Call to order: 7:00 PM by Chair Manuele
2. Announcements & Correspondence

**Announcements:**

- None

**Correspondence:**

- Memo from Whitemarsh Township Shade Tree Commission re: Comprehensive Plan

3. Approval of Minutes:

- Mr. Doran moved to approve the minutes from the September 10, 2019 meeting; seconded by Mr. Dambman. Vote 4-0-0 (Mr. Cornog abstained, not present at that meeting)
- Minutes from September 24, 2019. Ms. Patchen suggested minor revisions; the meeting minutes were then tabled due to inadequate members present who were at that meeting.

4. Zoning Hearing Board Appeals: None
5. Subdivision & Land Development Applications: None
6. Conditional Use Applications: None
7. Old Business:

- Comprehensive Plan (Selective) Update; Completion of Action Plan and Plan Text Review

**Quality of Life Goal 4 (Open Space Network, Policy 1):** Comments from Commission Members include: Would like to see clearer definition of “quality of life”; Township needs to buy property along the river and build a “beach head”; seems like a lot of the goals are planning for a plan, feels like a grab bag of miscellaneous items that should fit somewhere else; 4.4 sustainable design is really important and that concept should be in land use; not sure if the “quality of life” title fits the goals/policies, maybe come up with a different title; Would like to see an action plan to develop East 33, should be made a park and Township should build something along the river (Mr. Guttenplan stated a site analysis to determine what could be done on East 33 has never been done; will write up a suggested revision to incorporate requiring an analysis of East 33 as well as other Township-owned open spaces to determine what each is best suited for; he and Ms. Grossman also explained that open space does not have to be “used” or “improved”, it can just be a respite from development or passive open space); it’s great to acquire open space but hard to maintain; does not support 4.1.1 as an action item, doesn’t think it’s a priority for the Township to do a needs analysis but instead use money available to make physical improvements to lands owned; we should come up with a new title for Goal 4, thinks the term “quality of life” is a problem (Sydelle Zove suggested “sense of place” as a

title); Mr. Guttenplan and Ms. Baptiste will work on a revision of 4.1.1 and distribute to the Planning Commission members for review but all agree it should be short-term.

- Steve Kaufman, Harts Ridge Road, Chair of Open Space Committee, stated East 33 is part of a network of preserved land of Fairmount Park. Sydelle Zove, Harts Ridge brought up other parcels owned by the Township – 10 acres near bottom of Joshua Road (Joshua Knoll) and another 10 acres behind “Haub parcel” to Woodbine Way; wants to make sure we are looking at all properties not just East 33; thinks 4.1 needs to be tweaked, we have to look at what we have, where do we fall short, and how do we make up the shortfall. Eli Glick, 7 Whitefield Dr., having trouble with the discussion of Goal 4 because the quality of life is the heart of the document; this should have been the first thing discussed; quality of life issues were decided by the Steering Committee and Stakeholders both of whose members were less than half Whitemarsh Residents. (Ms. Grossman disagreed with Mr. Glick’s description of the membership of these groups.)
- **Quality of Life Goal 4 (Parks & Recreational Programming and Facilities, Policy 2):** Comments from Commission Members include: clarify intent of 4.2.1 because there was confusion about whether this is too similar to 4.1.1; 4.2.3, how does a “community center needs assessment?” differ from a “recreation needs assessment?” (Mr. Guttenplan explained that a community center assessment would be to determine if a physical facility like the Plymouth Community Center, is needed); 4.2.6 was changed to ‘long-term’.
- Steve Ziegler, Chairman Shade Tree Commission, why were we encouraged to send the recommendation letter, any opportunity to strengthen the Shade Tree Commission and integrate it with other ordinances (Mr. Guttenplan explained staff has discussed the need to coordinate all ordinances dealing with trees/tree replacement).
- **Quality of Life Goal 4 (Open Space Preservation, Policy 3):** 4.3.1 – should end with “to reduce development potential” instead of “to reduce the density of...”; 4.3.2 to change per an e-mail Mr. Guttenplan has from Ms. Patchen regarding Act 153 Funds and change to ‘on-going’; 4.3.3 change to ‘near-term’; add a 4<sup>th</sup> bullet “partner with land trusts...to pursue opportunities including stewardship and educational programs,” priority “on-going”.
- Steve Kaufman asked that 4.3.1 be modified per the Open Space Committee recommendations that “retain the services of a dedicated professional or develop the in-house capacity to ...” be added to the beginning of this action, and that 4.3.2 be modified per Ms. Patchen’s e-mail.
- Steve Ziegler pointed out the benefits of trees for water quality and for stormwater control.
- **Quality of Life Goal 4 (Sustainable Design and Environmental Stewardship, Policy 4):** 4.4.2 recommended changing “including” to “prioritizing”; 4.4.3 change to ‘near-term’; 4.4.4 change to ‘short-term’; 4.4.6 to be changed to require these green infrastructure techniques instead of ‘encourage’ them, and change responsible party to ‘Township Engineer’.
- Eli Glick suggested hiring a Land Steward with expertise in land science, ecology, etc. to help teach staff proper treatment of land (Mr. Doran asked if he knew of any other Townships that have this, no). In response, Mr. Manuele suggested adding an action item, to evaluate staff needs including the evaluating the suitability of hiring a land steward
- Eli Glick recommended EAB review plans again like in the past. Ms. Grossman explained that this is not their role; they have other responsibilities—identifying environmental issues to address, recommend programs for conservation of resources, improve the quality of the environment in the Township by education and awareness, including the 100% renewable energy initiative.
- Sydelle Zove – 4.4.1 & 4.4.5 need strengthening with regards to wetlands; wetlands under 10,000 square feet need to be regulated (large ones are); Mr. Manuele indicated that Mr. Quitel is working on some environmental language updates for the Plan, will wait to see what he has written.

8. New Business: None

9. Public Comment:

- Sydelle Zove – asked if the Corson Estate (K Hovnanian Townhome project) would be on the November 12<sup>th</sup> agenda; Mr. Guttenplan responded ‘yes’. She questioned the time extension the applicant provided and asked if another one would be requested since this review may take more than meeting since there are extensive plans and documentation. Mr. Guttenplan responded that he is not in a position to address that at this time.
- Mr. Guttenplan followed up by indicating that due to this development and some other applications, that the Comprehensive Plan update may not be back on the agenda for a little while. Mr. Manuele confirmed that the Commission intends to be thorough in its review; once we see where we are with it after changes have been made, if we need more time to address additional changes, we will take it.

10. Adjournment:

- There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 9:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Charles L. Guttenplan, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning

The Planning Commission is appointed as an advisory group to the Board of Supervisors and the Zoning Hearing Board with respect to comprehensive land use planning, existing land use, and various land use and zoning applications in Whitmarsh Township. No formal decisions are rendered by the Planning Commission. Formal decisions are rendered by the Board of Supervisors or Zoning Hearing Board, as prescribed by law, based on the type of application.

All written or graphic material that is presented to the Planning Commission at a public meeting shall be kept in Township files and is subject to examination under the PA Right-to-know Law.

