

MINUTES
HOPE TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MEETING
NOVEMBER 27, 2017

A special meeting of the Hope Township Planning Board was held on Monday, November 27, 2017. Chairman Fish called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and he announced that notice of the meeting was given in compliance with the “Open Public Meetings Act – This meeting has been advertised in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975.”

Roll Call:

Members present: Betsy Peterson, Mayor Timothy McDonough, Robert May, Christopher John Kruk, Matthew Kosk (arriving at 7:34 p.m), and Chairman Fish.

Members absent: John Koonz, Chris Maier, Tom Toohey, Neil Rosenberg, and Steve Larena

Also Present: Board Attorney Roger Thomas, Board Engineer Ted Rodman, and Board Secretary Alfia Schemm

Other Business:

Master Plan Discussion

Chairman Fish thanked everyone for coming this evening and providing input. He noted the various areas that are taken into consideration in reviewing the Master Plan. He stated that Board Attorney Thomas will be taking notes, which will then be forwarded to Board Planner Heyer, for his input. He reviewed the procedure for this evening, where the meeting will be opened to the public, after the discussion of each major topic.

The first topic was the preservation of the existing rural character of the Township. Mr. May reviewed that the Township has preserved 15 farms and there is another one closing in January for a total of 1,146 acres.

The next topic discussed was the promotion of compatible economic development and the difficulty with the lack of water and sewer. Mr. Kruk addressed the POP zone and perhaps approaching the property owners, in that zone, to see what their interest may be. Mayor McDonough provided some history in regards to past interest, development at the Interchange and the center of Town, studies done, and the largest taxpayers being homeowners. Ms. Peterson addressed the Environmental Commission's Agri-Tourism proposal and the use/development of existing historical buildings. Board Attorney Thomas recommended that the proposal be shared with the Planning Board. Mr. Kruk addressed the WC Economic Development Advisory Committee, determining what the Township may want, and the process. Chairman Fish opened the meeting to the public.

Lucas Kropywnyckyj asked if the Township can try and advertise/solicit to attract low impact businesses. Board Attorney Thomas addressed the function of the Planning Board and establishing a vision, for the Township, in the Reexamination Report.

Tom Gabel commented on the potential of the Village area and promotions to attract and expose interest. Mayor McDonough commented on the number of people that visit the Land of Make Believe and the lack of infrastructure and water and sewer in Hope. The Board continued to discuss the emotional discussion that occurred in Blairstown in regards to water and sewer.

Robert Romano stated that water and sewer is the basis for development and not all Township Residents want to pay for those types of improvements.

Kelly Thompson suggested that the Township consider holding events in the Summer to take advantage of the local resources and the warmer weather.

Stephen Flynn stated that not many people know about Hope and he suggested that the Township revitalize the area and existing structures. He also commented on how quiet and serene the POP zone area is and perhaps development there would not be appropriate.

Monica Sobon, the Environmental Commission Chairperson, asked that the Township incorporate the essence of Hope in the Plan. She stated that sustainable development is the future of the Township and utilizing the local organic farmers producing local organic crops and products. The funding was discussed and how to encourage investment in a Plan that would replicate something that the Moravians have done in the past. Chairman Fish stated that he does not feel that anyone would object to the proposal; however, it is a question of how to accomplish the proposal and deal with the issues.

David Gagne commented on focusing on an economic zone and developing a plan that would encourage development and some incentives to encourage development in the Village area.

Tom Gabel stated that there is tremendous potential if there is the right exposure and based on own his personal experience it can work. Board Attorney Thomas reviewed the permitted uses in the HMH zone.

Amy Hovell questioned the goals of the Township and the process to encourage and attract desired uses, which was discussed and reviewed by the Board.

The Board then went on to review the permitted, compatible, and appropriate uses in the POP zone, which was discussed with the Board and the Public, at great length. Concerns were raised about whether the area is environmentally sensitive. The lack of parking in the Village Area was also discussed.

John Norcross questioned the permitted uses, which was again reviewed by Board Attorney Thomas. Also conditional uses were reviewed and discussed, with the Board and the Public. It was agreed that there needs to be more thought on what should be permitted and not permitted.

The next topic of discussion was bike and pedestrian paths. Mayor McDonough stated the Township has no control over the County Roads and there has been no way to limit truck traffic. He stated that the Township may need to get the County involved with discussing safety and possibly bike paths and pedestrian paths.

It was noted that stormwater runoff is governed by the Township Ordinance and the State Standards.

The next topic discussed was Farmland Preservation. Mr. Kruk stated that the voters of Hope have voted to make it an Open Space Program, just not Farmland.

The next topic brought up was Sustainable Energy, Solar Farms, and Renewable Energy which was discussed with the Board and the public.

The next topic addressed was groundwater protection and whether there are ordinances available in other municipalities. It was agreed to research the issue.

Chairman Fish questioned the comment made about the DEP exploring water and/or wastewater management in regards to the Village and Silver Lake Areas. Mayor

McDonough stated that he is not aware of anything other than the monitoring of some wells in the Village Area. Chairman Fish also brought up the comment that was made about new generations not being able to afford to buy/live in the Township. Mr. Kruk commented that the school is under populated.

The last topic brought up was the concept of Clustering, which was discussed by the Board and the Public.

Ms. Peterson asked if the Township can give the Environmental Commission a stronger voice, which was discussed. Board Attorney Thomas stated that the Environmental Commission is an Advisory Board by State Statute. The process and procedure was reviewed and discussed in terms of getting and giving input. Mr. Gabel also stated his concern over getting input from the Historic Commission.

Open to the Public:

The meeting was opened to the public.

A member of the public commented about all of the individual ideas, brought up this evening, in regards to the growth of the Township and prioritizing those ideas and working together.

Stephen Flynn commented on sustaining what presently exists along with planning for growth.

With there being no further public comment, the meeting was closed to the public.

Adjournment:

With there being no further business a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Alfia Schemm
Board Secretary
1/29/18