

LOWER PAXTON TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
WORKSHOP MEETING

June 16, 2008

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Fredrick Lighty
Dennis Guise
Ernest Gingrich
William Neff
Richard Beverly
Douglas Grove
Roy Newsome

ALSO PRESENT

Lori Wissler, Planning & Zoning Officer
Dianne Moran, Planning & Zoning Officer

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Lighty called the workshop meeting of the Lower Paxton Township Planning Commission to order at 5:40 pm, on June 16, 2008 in Room 171 of the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, 425 Prince Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Mr. Guise led the recitation of the Pledge.

ROUTE 22 IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

The Planning Commission met using a printed map showing the parcel lines and zoning designations, as well as the overhead projector showing the aerial photograph map, in order to determine the Route 22 Improvement District boundaries.

Southern Boundary

At the intersection of Mountain Road and Route 22, the Paxton Square Shopping Center will be included. On the east side of Mountain Road, the bank and cleaners will be included, but the next three properties are residential. The boundary will follow Walden Road.

Mr. Guise asked if different zoning classifications should be assessed differently. Mr. Newsome suggested they are zoned differently, but are assessed the same. Mr. Guise stated that they are all commercially zoned, but some are Commercial General, and some are Neighborhood Commercial. The shopping center with Goodwill and Sofa Selections are zoned CN.

Fishbone is in at the intersection of Allentown Blvd and Jonestown Road. The following lots are included, one lot deep: the lighting store, the tanning salon, the Coleman office building, the beauty salon, Goodall Pools, the Nextel store, the chiropractor, the bank (not the district justice office), the Aamco, (not the flood plain lot between Aamco and the bank), and Paxton Towne Centre. Mr. Neff

asked if the lot should be included if the building is an investment building for someone who rents it out to an office use. The building is for profit as a rental, but the tenant is a not-for-profit activity.

On Devonshire Road, the food broker can be left out. The Catholic Shop and Domino's will be included, as well as Pizza Hut. The dry cleaners and tattoo shop will be included on Jonestown Road. Olde Liberty Square can be included. Behind that the accountant, nursing agency, and the bakery can also be included. The line will follow Queen, excluding the three houses.

Mr. Neff asked if the small lots along Fritchey Street can be developed individually, or if owned by the same owner can be developed together. Essis Carpet owns several lots on which their warehouse is situated.

Along the north side of Fritchey Street, the lots will be included from Houcks Road to Edwin Street. Cantone's parking lot was questioned, since the restaurant is included. By a vote of 6-1, the parking lot will be included because it is owned by the same owner, and it is part of the commercial operation of the restaurant. The art gallery will not be included (at Holbrook Street). Dale's Drum Shop and the parking lot for Applebee's will be included, and the next lots following the alley to Strouse Street.

Paxtonia

Mr. Newsome stated there are a number of businesses along Jonestown Road (beyond the Jonestown Road/Allentown Boulevard split). They front Jonestown Road and not Allentown Boulevard. The ones that front both are included with the Route 22 Improvement District. Ms. Wissler stated the Township may consider the Paxtonia area for Village status.

Presentation to the Supervisors

A map will need to be generated showing the "in" parcels in one color, and the "out" parcels in another color. A list of the "in" parcels will also need to be generated. The Planning Commission needs to make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors, and ask them how to proceed from there.

Mr. Neff suggested that, since there is no chamber of commerce for the area, that select merchants be approached to get their input and support. They could help endorse the project and minimize criticism. Mr. Guise agreed, but the Supervisors need to be updated first, because there is a chance the Board will decide the project is not worthwhile, or decide to put it on hold. Mr. Lighty agreed that key members are important to the success of the project, but not until the right time.

Mr. Lighty asked if there is a ball-park figure for the assessment, or an initial list of goals. Mr. Grove suggested keeping things very general until the Board gives further direction. Mr. Lighty suggested a pie chart of suggested improvements. Mr. Newsome didn't think that should be done yet either. Mr. Guise suggested a vision statement, showing broad general goals.

Mr. Newsome stated a main street is the vision. Mr. Guise asked if a goal is to make our main street more competitive with the others in the area. Mr. Newsome reminded the Commission there was opposition at the last regular meeting to increased customers. Mr. Guise thought they meant they didn't

want more customers and traffic to Route 22. Mr. Lighty thought they didn't want more or expanded businesses. Commissioners agreed traffic was his ultimate motivation.

Mr. Lighty stated that the three goals the Board gave the Commission, were beatification, advertising, and traffic improvement. Mr. Newsome stated that the resident was opposed to increasing traffic and felt there was plenty of business already. Mr. Grove stated that as this area develops, including surrounding municipalities, this road will get more traffic because it is a large retail outlet. Mr. Newsome stated that if there were a plan that would increase shoppers in Lower Paxton Township, there will be increased traffic. Mr. Guise felt that traffic improvement should be the main goal. The most prominent problem is traffic jams at the red lights, and when people come to shop and get stuck in the traffic they get frustrated. Mr. Grove noted that if there is an accident or problem on I-81 or I-83, Route 22 is flooded with travelers.

Mr. Neff stated that there are shopping centers with very large parking lots that are not nearly filled during the normal work day. He suggested a park-n-ride system, where the commuters could park their vehicle at the shopping center, and ride to work, and then come back to their vehicle, and are very likely to shop there. Mr. Neff suggested the Commission look at what is being done in other larger communities. He noted it is very important to get the support of the major merchants. He suggested involving the gas stations in the corridor.

Mr. Beverly suggested a trolley-type bus or shuttle that could operate during peak seasons like Christmas. It could transport shoppers between shops. Mr. Guise agreed the idea of parking once and getting to all of the shops could be very appealing.

Mr. Newsome suggested that another idea to think about is how to kick off the project and what would be the first physical improvements. Mr. Lighty suggested a welcome sign or monuments.

Mr. Lighty suggested that special events or exhibits could be held in the parking lots to draw interest to the area. Mr. Guise agreed and noted there have been special events at the mall. The events would be in slower seasons.

Mr. Newsome noted that the Hershey Auto Show busses the women from the Show to the Outlets, and suggested they could be shuttled to Route 22. A name for the corridor or a logo should also be thought about. Mr. Guise asked the length of the district. The consensus was that it is just under 3 miles from the Harley Davidson to the A-Plus at Colonial Road.

Mr. Lighty noted the improvements should benefit the large and small businesses equally. Mr. Neff suggested the smaller businesses would benefit from the park-n-rides as well.

Mr. Guise suggested a brochure, directory or map would be a great benefit, similar to the outlet maps.

Mr. Lighty stated that an improvement district has a limited life, and could easily morph into a chamber of commerce.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The next Route 22 Improvement District workshop is scheduled for Monday, July 21, 2008, from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm. There will be a light dinner available starting at 5:00 pm. The meeting will be held in Room 171.

The next regular Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 9, 2008, at 7:00 pm at the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, Room 171.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Hiner
Recording Secretary