

LOWER PAXTON TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
WORKSHOP MEETING

September 20, 2010

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Fredrick Lighty
Roy Newsome
Douglas Grove
Robin Lindsey

ALSO PRESENT

Dianne Moran, Planning & Zoning Officer
Watson Fisher, SWAN Representative

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Lighty called the workshop meeting of the Lower Paxton Township Planning Commission to order at 5:34 pm, on Monday, September 20, 2010 in Room 174 of the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, 425 Prince Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Mr. Lighty led the recitation of the Pledge.

COLONIAL CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Preliminary Plan Budget

Salaries & Benefits

Mr. Grove stated that the proposed budget starts with \$375,345 from the assessments only. That amount would be collected during the first year, but would not necessarily be available to use during the first year.

Ms. Lindsey asked about the salaries. Mr. Grove stated the salaries are only estimates. Ms. Lindsey asked if that is similar to what is paid for the Harrisburg Downtown Improvement District's Executive Director. Mr. Grove stated he doesn't know what Mr. Vander Woude is paid, but guessed that he is probably paid more than that. He noted that \$65,000 seemed reasonable. He suggested the administrative assistant would probably only need to work part time.

Ms. Lindsey asked what sort of qualifications the executive director would need, and suggested they should have experience in an improvement district. Mr. Lighty stated that it would be very difficult to find someone with experience specifically with a business improvement district (BID), but suggested they could be experienced in marketing, or public administration. Mr. Newsome suggested someone could have a background in chamber of commerce.

Mr. Newsome suggested that \$5,000 is low for benefits. Mr. Grove agreed and suggested that they might be able to buy into a large group plan to get it cheaper. Mr. Lighty asked if they could buy into the Township's plan. Mr. Grove stated that a part time position wouldn't have insurance.

Mr. Lighty suggested the executive director be part time and the administrative assistant be full time. Ms. Lindsey agreed it would be better to have the staff person work normal business hours to provide general information. Mr. Newsome agreed with the director being part time and the assistant being full time.

Mr. Newsome suggested a consultant could be used instead. Mr. Lighty suggested Mr. Newsome meant an independent contractor. Mr. Newsome agreed noting he is on a board that has a contract with a woman who takes care of all of the things for the State, but she is not an employee, she is probably an independent contractor. Mr. Lighty stated that the difference between a consultant and an independent contractor comes down to a right to control. An independent contractor is hired and told what the results must be, and that person has control of their own time and means to get the job done.

Ms. Moran asked if that person would bring their own administrative assistant along. Mr. Newsome stated that the administrative assistant would be hired by the board of directors.

Mr. Lighty asked what sort of hours would be expected of this executive director. He suggested it would be busy early, and at the holidays, but in between less time would be needed. Mr. Newsome suggested 20 hours a week is reasonable. Mr. Lighty stated that he would get a lump sum for the year's work, and not an hourly rate.

After some discussion, the Commissioners agreed on a \$40,000 salary for a part-time executive director, and \$35,000 for salary and benefits for a full-time administrative assistant.

Brochures/Maps

Mr. Newsome noted there should be some money in the budget for distribution of the brochures. It could be designed to fit in one of the brochure racks. They have the racks in the welcome centers and other places. Mr. Grove stated that some advertising firms own the racks and fill them with the publications they print. He noted that businesses inside the district would want to have them available at their locations, but they should be available outside the district too. Mr. Newsome suggested \$2,000 more be added to the brochures to cover distribution.

Advertising: All Media

Mr. Lighty stated someone was going to check prices of radio ads. Ms. Lindsey stated radio is very expensive, around \$2,000 to run a very short, infrequent ad.

Mr. Grove noted that advertising is probably going to be the biggest expense other than personnel. It will be especially important in the first year. Mr. Newsome suggested raising the amount budgeted for advertising, especially for the first year.

Beautification

Mr. Newsome suggested alternating the flags and flowers. Mr. Lighty agreed that there are a lot of poles very close together, but felt that the more symmetry added, the better it would look. Ms. Lindsey suggested flags should be hung in the fall and winter, and then flowers can be up for spring and summer. Mr. Newsome stated they should be on every pole. Mr. Lighty agreed with the idea. Mr. Newsome asked if a decision was made on real or fake flowers. Ms. Lindsey stated it has to be real flowers. She noted that the prices are based on real flowers. Mr. Newsome suggested rounding the numbers up.

Traffic Improvement & Other Budget Items

Mr. Lighty stated that there is \$165,345 left and there is still traffic improvements needed, and a reserve fund for dissolution.

Ms. Lindsey asked about traffic improvements. Mr. Newsome stated that it was discussed to work on the timing of the lights and left turn issues. Mr. Lighty stated the possibilities are great, but many are big-ticket items. He suggested hiring a traffic engineer to determine what can or cannot be done. Even though traffic is a high priced item, and cannot be done in year one, it can be saved up for.

Mr. Lighty stated that this has to be a not-for-profit corporation, and not-for-profits cannot just go out of business, it is a complicated legal nightmare, and will cost a minimum of \$10,000. Mr. Grove asked if there should be a percentage or flat dollar amount set back each year. Mr. Lighty stated that the going out of business fund has to be established in the first year or it will never get done, and the Township will end up footing the bill. He suggested \$20,000 to be safe.

Ms. Moran asked about other legal fees, such as collections and liens. Mr. Lighty added that office set-up needs to be established. Even if the rent is free, things like phone, internet, computers and basic supplies will need to be paid for. Mr. Lighty asked what office Mr. Wolfe had in mind when he agreed to office space. Ms. Moran didn't know, but suggested there is an empty office in Community Development. There may be other options in the building as well.

Office expenses should be included in the budget in the amount of \$10,000.

The streetscape beautification is an expensive project, and can be saved up for. PennDOT prepared a plan for West Hanover Township for Route 22, and it could be expanded to the Lower Paxton section of Route 22.

Mr. Newsome suggested a line item for a reserve fund for streetscape improvements and traffic improvements. There should be \$5,000 set back as a general fund. Mr. Lighty stated there is

\$130,345 left, to share between those funds. The fund will be for “traffic control and streetscape beautification reserve fund”.

Once the website is up and running, the letter to the business owners could include a link to it. The website could be set up to accept information as well.

The name of the district was discussed, and Colonial Corridor Improvement District).CCID was agreed on

Mr. Newsome made a motion to adopt the budget, as edited, to be included in the draft plan. Ms. Lindsey seconded the motion, and a unanimous vote followed.

Preliminary Plan Bylaws

Mr. Grove stated that the Township can create things initially, but when it is turned over to the BID, it becomes their own, and they can change things to suit their needs. Ms. Lindsey asked if the Township would set up guidelines or parameters for the board of directors. Mr. Lighty stated that is what the by-laws are for. Mr. Newsome stated he is unclear what happens when it is turned over. He thought that the Township would have very little control over these types of things once it was turned over to the District. Mr. Lighty stated that half of the issue will be controlled by the by-laws. He'd like to see the by-laws created in such a way that some things are difficult to amend without the Township's authority. He also noted it has to be decided if board members are going to be appointed for a long or short period of time. Since the districts sunset after five years, he suggested terms should be kept to one year. Ms. Lindsey asked who selects the new members every year. Mr. Grove stated it is up to the members of the district. Ms. Lindsey asked if anyone from the Township Planning Commission will be on the board. Mr. Grove asked if it should be a Planning Commission member or a member of the Board of Supervisors. Ms. Lindsey thought it should be someone from the Planning Commission since it has spent a lot of time working on this. Mr. Newsome stated that the State College BID has one person from the municipality and the rest are from the district. Ms. Lindsey asked if the board members are residents of the Township. Mr. Grove stated that they have to be parcel owners within the district. Mr. Lighty stated he would like to see the Township appoint a majority. Mr. Newsome asked if Mr. Lighty meant initially or permanently. Mr. Lighty stated he would like it to stay that way. Mr. Newsome disagreed, and stated it would not sit well with him if he were a business owner. They could see that as just a way to get more tax money and not really get a say in how things are operated. Mr. Grove agreed with Mr. Newsome. Mr. Newsome stated the Planning Commission's role is to create a cohesive organization of businessmen. The Township is only the catalyst to make it happen, it will be up to the district to take it from there. He added that he would not be pleased with that scenario if he were a business owner. The big selling point of the district is that the businessmen would have some money to make real decisions to improve things. Creating something that the government still controls is not going to be received well but the business community. Mr. Grove stated he thought the Township should have representation on the board, but the district is being created to assist the businesses. He noted that if there are more than 2 Township representatives on a board of 9 members, it would take the flexibility away from the people who are

paying for the district. He suggested that State College has only one, and the City of Harrisburg only has one. Mr. Newsome noted that the municipality does have ultimate control in that they must authorize the continuation of the district after five years. Ms. Lindsey read "...one director shall be appointed by the Board of Supervisors of Lower Paxton Township and shall serve..." Mr. Lighty stated that it is a minimum of one member to be appointed by the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Grove suggested that if the Township makes up more than 20-25% of the BID board, the BID would see it as the Township trying to put undue influence on the district to achieve Township goals. Mr. Lighty agreed the members of the district should have ownership in it and a feeling they are responsible for it, however he has experience where local governments set up agencies and they go rogue, and there are no tools in place to reel them back in. Mr. Grove stated the ordinance says the Township has the authority to shut it down, so that should be the mechanism to do so.

Ms. Lindsey asked if a treasurer has to be hired. Mr. Lighty stated the board of directors would select officers of the corporation, and the officers would have their work prepared by staff (executive director and assistant). The executive director would keep the books, and write checks. The checks would be signed by the treasurer who is elected by the board of directors. Ms. Lindsey noted the language needs to be clear because it says now that the treasurer deposits the money.

Mr. Lighty stated the NIDMA has to have a written agreement with the Township. The Township also has to adopt an enabling ordinance, in which they would spell out the things that cannot be changed.

Mr. Newsome wanted to understand how the first board of directors is created.

Mr. Newsome stated this group of businesses could get together and do these things, except they couldn't create an assessment. Mr. Grove agreed and stated they could have a Colonial Corridor Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Lindsey stated that the Lions Club or Rotary could water the hanging baskets. Members discussed vehicles: carts, pick-up trucks, on foot, to water the flowers. She noted that how the flowers get watered isn't important, but real flowers are a must and fake flowers will not be acceptable.

Mr. Newsome stated the beautification section totals \$38,000: \$20,000 for flags/banners; \$8,000 for flowers; and \$10,000 for street addressing.

Ms. Lindsey stated it has been a long time since the Planning Commission has met with the business owners. She suggested they may think the idea has died or that they have been forgotten. She suggested notifying them that it is still on the table. Mr. Lighty stated it is a lot of work to meet with them, and suggested a letter be sent out to keep them informed of how things are progressing.

Mr. Newsome asked if the Board of Supervisors will appoint the first board of directors. Mr. Lighty stated that is what the statute says. Mr. Newsome asked if the Planning Commission should recommend individuals to the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Grove agreed that was a good idea. Mr. Lighty stated when it gets to that time, the Board of Supervisors will have to decide how to proceed.

Ms. Lindsey stated she thought there should be someone from the PC on the board of directors. Mr. Lighty stated the statute says there must be business and municipal representation, but it doesn't say what the balance should be.

Mr. Lighty stated that the Lower Paxton Sewer Authority is a separate entity, but probably buys into the same healthcare package as the Township.

Mr. Lighty stated that he thought Mr. Guise should be present to discuss the bylaws.

Map

Ms. Hiner explained that the map has been prepared on two sheets of 11x17 paper. It doesn't fit well on three pages. It was suggested the labels should include "East" and "West" to clarify, and that the scale should be the same on both pages.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no additional public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The next Planning Commission workshop session regarding the Colonial Corridor Improvement District is scheduled for Monday, October 18, 2010, at 5:30 pm in Room 174 of the Municipal Center.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Hiner
Recording Secretary