

SUMMARY NOTES

SECOND PROPOSED ZONING ORDINANCE PUBLIC MEETING

A public meeting was held on February 26, 2014, the second in a series of public outreach meetings on the Proposed Draft New Zoning Ordinance and Map Change.

Welcome and Introduction

Township Manager Bryan T. Havir opened the Community Meeting on Residential and Mixed Use Districts at 7:00 p.m. and introduced Joseph Nixon the County Planner who provided a Power Point presentation.

Mr. David Cohen facilitated the question and answer session and suggested that citizen's questions be emailed to cheltenham@cheltenham-township.org directly.

Questions and Answers

Q1: What stage are we in?

A1: We are in the public outreach stage. The Board of Commissioners will determine when the hearings for adoption will be held.

Q2: In layman's terms, would overlays allow a developer to develop more intense units without the need for other approvals?

A2: A developer would be able to develop by right based on the underlying zoning or by the overlay districts, if adopted, as long as the development complied with all provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.

Q3: Suggestion to match up the districts and spell out the differences between the proposed and the existing.

A3: This will be taken under advisement for a future meeting.

Q4: Why is there a requirement to go through the land development process for a Bed and Breakfast establishment if there are no proposed site improvements?

A4: This is a valid question that will be taken under advisement.

Q5: Why is R-4 proposed for Wyngate instead of R-1? It appears that churches would be allowed in the R-4, which would not be in the best interest of the Township or the Wyngate community.

A5: R-4 is more appropriate based on what is currently on the site. All uses must be allowed somewhere in the Zoning Districts within the Township and it was the Committee's suggestion that churches be in the R-4.

Q6: What recourse do residents have to proposed Zoning changes that we think are detrimental?

A6: Concerns may be addressed to the Commissioners during the public hearing process for consideration of adoption of the new Zoning Ordinance.

If zoning for a proposed development is permitted by right, citizens that do not want it will have no recourse. The Ad Hoc Zoning Committee tried to consider locations and impacts to properties when devising recommendations. The committee will probably make improvements to the draft.

Earl Stamm distributed his personal suggestions.

Q7: Were other areas considered for the mixed use zoning since there are other areas in the Township with properties of similar size?

A7: The proposed area near Montgomery Avenue was picked because it is already a bit of a mixed use area, with the train station and other resources nearby. Mixed use in that area would allow the Township to expand on economic development and the tax base.

Q8: Does the proposed Ordinance allow for a higher density, and if so, how does this help the Township? The overlays seem to allow for significant additional density based on the cluster concept.

A8: The Committee views cluster zoning to be a positive since it establishes open space with it.

Q9: Would R-4 allow commercial development?

A9: The commercial uses envisioned would be personal service in nature, like a barber, nail salon or dry cleaner, for example. They would be accessory in nature for the support of multiple dwellings and apartments. Therefore the overlay would allow for commercial development in residential districts.

Q10: How was the 10-acre requirement determined for the overlay? Is it arbitrary?

A10: The Committee looked at maps and identified what properties would benefit from the overlay and contribute to the economic development and tax base of the Township. The Committee focused on 10 acres. It may have been somewhat arbitrary but with a purpose.

Q11: Are parking garages permitted for the Wyngate area in the new Ordinance?

A11: Parking garages are not permitted in the R-1, R-2, R-3 and R-4. An applicant would need to obtain a variance if they wanted to build a parking garage in any of the R districts.

Q12: Where would parking garages be permitted?

A12: In C-1 and C-2.

Q13: On taxable properties like Lynnewood Gardens, where zoning would be expanded and property values would be enhanced, will the assessments increase?

A13: Assessments are at the discretion of the Montgomery County Board of Assessment.

Q14: It appears that the School District property zoning is going to be improved. Is Cedarbrook School changing to the C-2 zoning? If so, this would be a concern.

A14: The Cedarbrook property is currently zoned residential, but based on property size, proximity to Rt. 309, and nearby commercial, the committee thought commercial zoning seemed appropriate.

Q15: Why is the Cedarbrook School in the C-1 and not in the C-2?

A15: It seems most appropriate for C-1.

Q16: Allowing a bar next to Wyngate seems like extreme zoning. Was sustainability taken into consideration?

A16: The Committee tried to balance responsible development opportunities with sustainability. Sustainability was addressed by increasing setbacks and buffering.

Q17: What percentage of our current land use is commercial versus residential? And will this increase under the proposed zoning?

A17: About 10% is currently commercial. It would increase under the proposed zoning but not by much.

Q18: This is a long process. Will these questions and comments made be given to the Commissioners?

A18: Notes taken by volunteers and staff will be put on the website and the Commissioners will have access to that information. Residents should post their questions and comments to Cheltenham@cheltenham-township.org.

General Comment: The Zoning should include at least one more Commercial Zone, and there should be a buffer between C-1, which is a more intense use, and residential properties.

Q19: Why won't notes be presented to the Commissioners?

A19: The Commissioners will determine how and in what form questions and answers will go to them.

Q20: Why include separation distances from existing businesses for bars and taverns?

A20: The requirement tries to limit the number of bars in one area to avoid negative ramifications.

Q21: Is there a definition of a bar in the proposed Zoning ordinance?

A21: Tavern/Bar is defined under E-36.

Q22: How do you police the 25% limitation referenced in C-36?

A22: Point is well taken.

General Suggestion: Don't allow bars in the C-1, and use C-1 as a buffer.

Q23: Is there anything in the ordinance addressing BYOB restaurants?

A23: No, nothing is proposed in the Zoning Ordinance on this.

It was suggested that specific questions and concerns be emailed to Cheltenham@cheltenham-township.org.

The schedule for future outreach meetings are as follows:

- March 26th for Commercial and Industrial Districts.
- April 23rd for the Overlay Districts.