

## **PROPOSED ZONING ORDINANCE MEETING**

### **SUMMARY NOTES**

A public meeting was held on March 26, 2014 at 7:00 PM, Glenside Hall, 185 S. Keswick Avenue in Glenside, the third in a series of public outreach meetings on the Proposed Draft New Zoning Ordinance and Map Change.

#### Welcome and Introduction.

Cheltenham Township Manager Bryan Havir opened the Community Meeting at 7:04PM on the proposed new Zoning Ordinance and introduced Commissioners Rappaport and Norris, as well as the Ad Hoc Zoning Sub-committee members and Montgomery County Planner Joseph Nixon who provided a power point presentation.

Mr. Havir noted that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss proposed amendments to the Township's Zoning Ordinance. No decisions will be made at this time; the goal is just to solicit comments from citizens.

Mr. Nixon gave overview of the amendment process and noted that the guiding principles were based on a comprehensive plan, informational session, and input from residents, which will be passed on to the Commissioners for review.

Mr. David Cohen encouraged residents to submit emails to [cheltenham@cheltenham-township.org](mailto:cheltenham@cheltenham-township.org), and took questions from the citizens.

#### Questions and Answers

Q1: The Zoning change doesn't seem to cover a holding basin facility or retention flooding for Storm Water Management, as seen in other townships.

A1: When developing a property, these issues are generally addressed as part of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO). The Zoning process is largely different from the Land Development process, which is where the details are worked out. MS4 requirements, best management practices, and conservation district review are always part of the Subdivision and Land Development process.

A Citizen opined that most larger developments have this system underground where it may not be seen, and designed for 100-year flood zone and are better and less unsightly than above ground systems.

Q2: If this is required by the state, why should we include it into the new ordinance?

A2: This issue is covered and addressed as part of the SALDO and also covered as part of the Riparian Ordinance, which is part of the Zoning Ordinance. We could potentially incorporate it into Zoning as well.

Q3: Are there design elements in the C2 District?

A3: C2 are generally smaller-scale developments that may not be as extensive. If they are larger and more intensive, it would be required.

Q4: When this process started in 2005, the Wyngate development was just a golf course and the Zoning changes may not have taken the new development into consideration. C1 might be better Zoning for the Wyngate area.

A4: The Zoning review process started 10 years ago when none of the Wyngate improvements were slated.

Q5: What happens to the emails?

A5: They will be disseminated to the Commissioners.

Q6: I have sent emails but have not heard anything back. It seems like a black hole.

A6: Emails are still being gathered but will not be responded to. They will be shared with the Commissioners, who will in turn follow up.

Q7: I brought up a question about a not wanting a bar and again this should be critical enough to respond to but have not heard anything back. I am concerned with the lack of synergy and inability to get any feedback.

A7: This is being addressed internally and emails will be forwarded to the Commissioners.

General Comment: Commenter had problems with their dialysis, as they produce lots of water and sewage and are working on reducing waste, and hopes this will address the problem concerning the Township's development moratorium with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Q8: What is the process for collecting and getting information to the Commissioners? How about placing the emails on a site that would be open to the Commissioners and citizens and give comments a fresh view where by anyone can look at them.

A8: No comments have been received by email to date.

Q9: Can design standards in the code be matched up with some of the sustainability standards?

A9: Zoning code and design standards could have sustainable standards added. The trade off is that this could drag out its approval and adoption process. They could be done in a concise way versus constant changes. Guidelines by the Army Corps of Engineers should be added to the zoning.

Q10: Shouldn't storm water management and best practices tie in with the standards and guides by the Army Corps of Engineers and be included in the zoning?

A10: Not a good idea because the Army Corps of Engineers is still working on their watershed-wide, flood reduction feasibility study for the Tookany Creek basin and their conclusions could override the Township's ordinances.

Q11: Will the draft be changed before going to the Commissioners based on the input from residents?

A11: Options include giving it to the Commissioners as-is with the citizen comments attached or reconvene the Ad Hoc Committee or other group as designated by the Commissioners, to review all comments. Or the Commissioners could provide broad recommendations and highlight sections needing another look by the Ad Hoc Committee. Or the whole Ordinance could be rewritten. Nothing has been decided yet.

Q12: Shouldn't the Township be able to utilize the existing billboards in the community to advertise these meetings?

A12: The Township uses several media for communication that include email blasts, newsletters and the website and has that outlet as well.

Q13: Do we have a timeline as to when this will go before the Commissioners for formal public comment?

A13: May or June is the proposed timeline but the Ad Hoc committee needs to reconvene at some point to consider the comments. The timeframe may be later in the fall.

Q14: The Commissioners need to think through this process and slow it down. It's best to wait and get it right than pass something that doesn't work. Glad there was legal representation for the opponents of the Super Wawa convenience store.

A14: It may be best to have this approved and adjusted as needed rather than let proposals and land uses continue to come through under existing zoning. There is a need to have a balance.

Q15: What is the timeline and adoption procedure? What is the relationship between the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners?

A15: The Planning Commission makes recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. Other committees and boards also contribute, including the Zoning Hearing Board, which is appointed by the Commissioners as a quasi-judicial board that has authority in its own right beyond the Commissioners. The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC), Montgomery County Conservation District, Shade Tree Advisory Commission and other agencies also review proposed uses.

Q16: What is going to be the financial impact of this zoning change on assessed values, resale values and tax revenue/base?

A16: This question has been brought up before and will be looked into. Ultimately, anyone who comes in asking for relief falls under purview of the Township who will determine if the use is permissible.

Q17: Need to take a close look at financial ramifications to determine whether this will work or not.

A17: Agreed.

Q18: Do buffer zone requirements extend to other districts as well, or are they just in developments that are adjacent to residential areas?

A18: It's limited to residential areas, as it may not be needed in commercial property areas adjacent to one another.

Q19: Is a riparian buffer included?

A19: The Township has a fairly new ordinance that addresses riparian buffers.

Q20: Looks like the existing zoning map is from 1964 and is in black and white. Can't really decipher it to compare it with the proposed map. Need to go back to the MCPC for new and clearer maps.

A20: That solution would not work because the districts will not be the same. A better solution would be to show before and after renditions of the different changes placed side-by-side and placed on the website.

Q21: What is the land use map, and how different is it from the proposed map?

A21: The land use map shows uses as they exist currently. Current uses will be grandfathered in, and proposed zoning will only affect new or future uses.

Q22: What is the timeline and adoption procedure, and how will this evolve?

A22: The Commissioners have not finalized anything yet, but a description of what may be entailed if the process becomes a public process was provided.

Q23: There are concerns about some of the districts and buildings coming up to the sidewalk. Would rather have or see more green space. What is the thinking and trade off?

A23: The thinking among planners is that this is much better design for pedestrians, as it hides parking lots and creates a main street feel (e.g. Downtown Glenside). The trade off is that it makes it harder to expand streets, for snow removal and tree placement. It can also make it unsafe for pedestrians and impossible to expand widths for bicycle lanes.

Bicycles are legally not allowed on sidewalks in Pennsylvania and would fall under the purview of public works. It would be hard to get easements from property owners, but some of the improvements on Easton Road did require permanent easements.

On April 23, 2014 will be the next meeting to discuss the proposed Overlay Districts, allowing developers to do additional developments.

Respectfully submitted,  
Henry Sekawungu

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Bryan Havir  
Township Manager