

Minutes of the Perry Township Planning Commission Meeting of June 9, 2010

The Perry Township Planning Commission meeting was held on June 9, 2010, at the Perry Township Building on Big Shannon Run road.

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM by Chair Bill Bennett. Present were Jan Ditzian, and Kathleen Namolek.

Also present was Township Supervisor Ron Howard.

Old Business

1. **Weight Limits and Speed Limits on Township Roads.** Bill Bennett told us that he found Perry Township Ordinance 1-2005 that establishes the right of the Board of Supervisors to establish weight and/or speed limits for Township roads. A discussion between Bill and Ron Howard revealed that all roads have weight limits, but not all roads have speed limits. Further, some roads with weight limits do not have all the legally required signs to permit enforcement. We discussed this issue and decided that we or the supervisors should prioritize which roads should first get signs. These are expensive, and we cannot afford to post every road.

Another issue is that some roads have inappropriate limits. For example, Calvert Hill Road has a ten (10) ton road weight limit, but has a bridge at one end with a three (3) ton posted limit. Since this road, like most of our rural roads, has no side streets leading to other means of ingress and egress, it would be appropriate to post the lower limit at both ends of the road. This is Township Road #357.

2. **Thank You Letters to Township Residents for Publicly Visible Property Improvements.** Jan Ditzian passed out copies of letters that he wrote thanking some township residents and business owners for improvements to their properties. These met with general approval, and he was given permission to send them out over his own signature, with the title of Secretary, Perry Township Planning Commission. These letters have no formal status, they are simply recognition from the Planning Commission of the positive efforts of our residents. The impetus for these letters came from Patty Lemley, a Township resident.
3. **Noise Ordinance.** Jan passed out copies of a draft noise ordinance. This work is in anticipation of the development of Marcellus Gas extraction. News reports suggest that some of the required extraction and/or processing equipment is fairly loud, and may run continuously for months or years.

Jan made the point that the intent of this ordinance is to reduce the nuisance aspect of noise. Our Township does not have the resources to evaluate and protect the health and safety of our residents from the side effects of gas extraction; we must depend on the State of Pennsylvania and Greene County for those laws. However, we can establish levels of permitted noise that are even lower than those established by the State or County, since we are responsible for the happiness of our residents while the State and County will base their laws only on endangerment of health or safety.

Jan will pursue the development of this ordinance.

4. **Zoning.** Following a suggestion by Robbie Matesic, Executive Director of Economic Development for Greene County, Bill investigated the feasibility of our Commission taking the initiative to develop an initial zoning law and map. This map was supposed to be provided as part of our participation in a consortium to develop a Township Comprehensive Plan. The Plan was developed, but a funding shortfall resulted in the failure to develop the zoning map. Bill's conclusion is that it looks like we can do the job ourselves.

Upon further discussion, Bill recommended that we first develop the rules and structure of zoning, and then apply these guidelines to Township properties. The actual mapping can be broken into smaller parts to be done by the members separately, following the rules that we set out at the beginning. Then, after all the initial maps have been drawn, our Commission will get together to look at the results and reconcile differences until we have a plan that is internally consistent. We can then offer this to the Township Supervisors, along with any other recommendations that we feel are appropriate.

During this discussion, Jan brought up the fact that a previous public meeting on zoning revealed very strong opposition to it by our rural population, used to living without such rules. We discussed the reasons for this, and the pros and cons of zoning. It was decided that we need to state exactly what the benefits of zoning are, so that we can make a case to the residents of the Township. Jan stressed that specific examples would be most beneficial, such as, "We were unable to apply for a specific grant in 2010 because we lacked a zoning ordinance; or a specific company decided not to build their new building in our township because they are not sure that future zoning in that area will remain appropriate for the intended use."

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Ditzian, Secretary, Perry Township Planning Commission