

**Liberty Township, Adams County  
39 Topper Road, Fairfield, PA 17320  
Planning Commission Monthly Meeting**

**Aug. 20, 2019**

The Planning Commission of Liberty Township, Adams County, met on Tuesday, Aug. 20, 2019, at 7:30 p.m. in the Liberty Township Municipal Building, 39 Topper Road, Fairfield, for the regular monthly meeting:

**Present:** Judie Hogan, Chair; Barb Ruppert, Secretary; Geoff Grant, Rich Luquette

**Not Present:** Vince Gee, Vice Chair; Dominic Picarelli, Township Engineer; Nancy Wenschhof, Alternate

Chair Judie Hogan called the meeting to order at 7:42 p.m.

**Minutes:** The July meeting minutes were reviewed. There were minor corrections to note what public commenters said and who was on the Campground Ordinance Committee (it was Geoff, not Rich). Geoff Grant moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Rich Luquette seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

**Public Comment:**

**Township supervisor Walter Barlow** commented on the burn ordinance discussion that there is already a provision for burning in the SALDO, Article III, Section 303, Application Procedures and Plan Requirements, #38, item g. This prohibits construction debris burning. The reason having a burn ordinance was brought up was because someone was burning construction debris. DEP took care of this issue. There may not be a need for a township burn ordinance, then.

**Old Business:**

**Campground Ordinance**

The PC reviewed a clean copy of the proposed Zoning Ordinance Article IV campground section amendments presented at last month's meeting by Judie Hogan and Geoff Grant. They also reviewed a clean copy of the proposed separate Campground Ordinance that was presented last month. Members made minor revisions to these documents.

Geoff Grant made a motion that the PC recommend to the supervisors for adoption Zoning Ordinance amendments to Article I, Section 112 (definitions), and to Article IV, Section 412 (campgrounds), as changed per discussion at this meeting. Rich Luquette seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

Geoff Grant made a motion that the PC recommend to the supervisors for adoption a separate Campground Ordinance, as changed per discussion at this meeting. Rich Luquette seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

Barb Ruppert will use the recommendation memo form from Mr. Lisko and send out the two formal recommendations to Wendy Peck for the supervisors.

**Sign Ordinance**

Barb Ruppert and Vince Gee were tasked by the PC chair with researching and preparing recommendations on the township's sign ordinance. Barb presented their notes and recommendations, summarized here:

- The Sign Guide and Model Sign Ordinance from Montgomery County, Pa., are a clear explanation of the issues and all parameters and are a good basis for a sign ordinance. They can be found here:

<https://planningpa.org/resource-library/montgomery-county-planning-commission-model-sign-ordinance/>

- Per the Joint Strategic Plan for Southwest Adams County, created with citizen input, our region's goals are to retain the rural and historic character of the region and to enhance economic development based on this.
- In keeping with the above, a sign ordinance should ensure signs do not harm this character. Safety on winding, rural roads is also a consideration in a good sign ordinance.
- Defining all sorts of signs makes it clear what falls under this ordinance. Montgomery County's does this thoroughly. Their sign ordinance is content neutral, specifically designed to address current legal decisions in this area. We think it could easily be tailored to our township.
- It seems the sign ordinance should be separate because it is so lengthy, if it is comprehensive as in the model.
- We would like to ban billboards and digital signs entirely, since they are allowed in other parts of Southwest Adams County that participated in this strategic plan, and they are perhaps dangerous to rural traffic and not at all historic or rural in character. Our township solicitor, however, clearly stated his opinion that this would not hold up in court. Therefore, we recommend limiting them to the Commercial/Industrial District only.
- Hiring an expert would be the best way to draft a sign ordinance based on the above guidelines.

Barb noted it was hard for a volunteer citizen to tell what part of the township's current sign ordinance met township planning goals and current legal decisions, and so it seemed better to use the Model Ordinance as a foundation, since Montgomery County had done so much research. Walter Barlow noted that when the Sportsman's Club sign went up, the supervisors went into special session to approve the digital sign, but instead, he would like digital signs added to our Zoning Ordinance. He asked why we should pay to redesign the whole sign ordinance; instead, just decide what district digital signs should go in and add that. Rich Luquette noted that it's very complicated to talk about lighting, brightness, flashing time, etc., but we could add those details to a digital sign section in the current ordinance.

Judie Hogan recommended just adding this digital sign section to 313.5 b.

Members discussed just prohibiting certain types of signs and then addressing them when someone has an issue and dealing with it on an individual basis, like the supervisors allowed a digital sign along Route 16 for the Sportsman's Club.

For the next meeting, PC members will look at what the Sign Committee presented and decide if they should insert Montgomery County's electronic signage part into the ZO and where.

### **SALDO Review: Well Ordinance**

Rich Luquette reported that there was discussion at the supervisors' regular August meeting as to whether we needed a well ordinance in the township or not. He noted that in the Joint Strategic Plan for Southwest Adams County, Section 4, Water Resources Plan, it says, "Each municipality must be involved in managing water resources and contribute to addressing the recommendations above." One of those recommendations is protection of groundwater quality through stormwater management, wellhead protection areas around community wells, and well drilling ordinances. He noted that if we are committed to our plan, we should do this. He said the well ordinance is mentioned in our SALDO but it hadn't been put in place earlier because the township didn't want to tell well drillers how to drill their wells.

Walter Barlow noted that he talked to Dom and Gil Picarelli, who said this article in our SALDO has to do with more than one well, Section 410 b. Rich noted that we were talking about Section 410 a., which deals with both individual and municipal wells. Walter said it's mostly for subdivisions with multiple homes using wells, not an individual homeowner. He noted that they drew up a simple ordinance saying you must have a well drilled by a certified well driller, who must send the depth, etc., records to the township.

Rich Luquette made a motion to recommend to the supervisors that the township adopt a well ordinance, and that the supervisors should determine what the scope of this ordinance should be. Geoff Grant seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

Judie Hogan noted there are references in the SALDO to a nonexistent well ordinance, so we should have something added. Barb Ruppert will add the pertinent Joint Strategic Plan section to the memo with the PC's formal recommendation to the supervisors.

At 8:45 p.m., Geoff Grant moved to adjourn the meeting. Rich Luquette seconded the motion. All voted yes, and the motion passed. The next meeting is scheduled for September 17 at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barb Ruppert". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Barb Ruppert  
Planning Commission Secretary