

**LOWER PROVIDENCE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
APRIL 28, 2010 MEETING MINUTES**

1. Call to Order:

A. Chairman Schlack called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call:

A. The following planning commission members were present: Mr. Brooke, Mr. Comroe, Mr. Endlich, Mr. Kuberski, Mrs. LaPenta, Mr. Rutledge, Mrs. Satterwhite, Mr. Schlack, and Ms. Zimmerman.

B. Additional attendees included: Mr. Chris DiPaolo and Mrs. Colleen Eckman, Board of Supervisors Liaisons, and Mr. Lonnie Manai, Township Engineer.

4. Approval of Planning Commission Meeting Minutes:

A. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes for March 24, 2010:

1. **MOTION** – Mrs. Satterwhite made a motion to approve the March 24, 2010 Planning Commission Meeting minutes. Mr. Endlich seconded the motion. The motion *passed* 8-0-1. Mr. Brooke abstained from the vote because he was not in attendance for that meeting.

5. Other Business:

A. Presentation by Shayne Trimbell, Project Manger of the Greater Valley Forge Transportation Management Association on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvement Study.

1. Mr. Shayne Trimbell of the Greater Valley Forge Transportation Management Association (GVFTMA) reviewed a PowerPoint presentation with the Planning Commission on the document “Lower Providence Township Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvement Study” prepared by the GVFTMA in November 2009.
2. Mr. Trimbell explained that the Township wanted to conduct this study because they have a great, but disconnected sidewalk network, and they wanted to provide the infrastructure so residents don’t always have to get in their cars to go somewhere. They want to promote walking and biking within the Township while reducing traffic by identifying areas that will benefit from the completion of sidewalk connections. This will also help improve air quality and access to transit.
3. In the course of this study they reviewed the following documents:
 - a) The 2002 Comprehensive Plan;
 - b) The 2002 selective update to the Recreation Plan;
 - c) The 2005 Open Space & Recreation Plan;
 - d) The 2005 Montgomery County Transportation Plan, plus existing ordinances for Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development.
 - e) Additionally, Appendix A of the study contains a complete table of all the sidewalks that they mapped and measured, identifies existing land uses, and signalized intersections for crossing signals and crosswalks.
4. Mr. Trimbell noted the most significant finding was that in 2002 the Township would no longer accept fee in lieu of for sidewalks. When sidewalks are installed they must be within 5’ from the cart way to create a buffer, and be at least 4’ wide to accommodate those with disabilities. The Township has also been working with the GVFTMA to expand the number of

- bus shelters within the Township to improve conditions for transit riders, and made Ridge Pike a posted shared roadway for bicycles.
5. The study included the area between Trooper Road, Ridge Pike and Park Avenue, which includes residential and business uses.
 - a) Sidewalks are located primarily in the residential areas.
 - b) PA bicycle route “S” runs from Pawlings Road up Egypt Road to Trooper Road and up to Worcester Township. This is the longest part of 10 routes in the State bicycle network. They are not always bicycle friendly, but usually run on a Penn DOT right-of-way for the bikes.
 - c) Four SEPTA routes in the Township – 91, 93, 99 & 131 were also reviewed. A quarter mile buffer that was overlaid on these routes contains a lot of the study area where sidewalks or further sidewalk connections are recommended.
 - d) Mr. Trimbell reviewed sidewalk recommendations and bicycle routes.
 6. Mr. Trimbell discussed the point system used to “score” the improvement list. This gave the highest weight to those connections that would complete the network (10), followed by those within 1/10 of a mile from a SEPTA stop (5). Lower weighted items include connections to shopping centers (3), access to office parks, recreational facilities, or neighborhoods (all 2).
 7. Primary areas to focus on installation of improvements include:
 - a) Audubon Square between Shannondell Blvd. and Trooper Road – This is the best location for network improvement, providing the most benefit for the cost. There are a lot of sidewalks coming into this area, plus transit stops. Additional sidewalks plus demarcated crosswalks would be installed, as well as bicycle parking areas. A bonus to this location is that it will tie into the trail network proposed in the Valley Forge Corporate Center master plan.
 - b) Ridge Pike – There is an overlay district in this area. While traffic is heavy, there are wide shoulder areas. “Share the Road” signs should be added along this corridor. Mr. Trimbell also recommended improvements to the Park Avenue & Ridge Pike intersection by installing demarcated crosswalks.
 - c) Southern Park Avenue – The area near Audubon Elementary and Egypt Road would benefit from sidewalk connections. The shoulders are wide, and sidewalks would enable people to walk to school or ride bicycles in this area. Mr. Trimbell also discuss the benefits of installing sidewalks up to the Audubon Village area and over to the regional trail in Mill Grove.
 - d) The Valley Forge Corporate Center (VFCC) – This is subject to recommendations in the 2008 Master Plan. The GVFTMA proposes a 10’ wide multi-use path down the north side of Audubon Road. This would create significant access to the VFCC, encouraging employees to bike to work. They could also investigate a connection to the Schuylkill River Trail. Demarcated crosswalks along Adams Avenue are also recommended.
 8. Mr. Trimbell provided example photographs of demarcated crosswalks. These can be stamped to look like brick. Pedestrian countdown timers would be installed to show how much time is remaining to safely cross the road. Bicycle lanes should be marked with “Share the Road” signs to alert motorists that bicycles will be in the area.
 9. Regarding implementation of the plan, Mr. Trimbell explained that this plan could be adopted as is, or the PC can provide comments. The Township could continue to not accept waivers on sidewalks, and require them to be installed. They can also pursue grant funding to cover improvement costs in areas where there is no proposed development.

10. Mr. Manai noted that the 4' sidewalk width is in the Township ordinance. However a new ADA requirement for 4' wide sidewalks over 200' in length requires a pull-off. They have been asking for 5' sidewalks, which get around that requirement.
11. Ms. Zimmerman commented that it makes sense to complete sidewalks where they are absent.
12. Supervisor Eckman asked Mr. Trimbell to review the Audubon Road requirements again.
 - a) Mr. Trimbell discussed the rationale behind recommending a 10' multi-use pathway instead of sidewalks on both sides of the road. Unfortunately this would require right-of-way acquisition. Ultimately this would allow connections to existing trail networks in the area, and provide for the safest route, as it is off-road.
 - b) Mrs. Eckman suggested having the pedestrian connection come up through Lantern Lane, which Mr. Trimbell noted could be an option.
13. Mr. Trimbell asked if there was an official road map for the Township, showing areas they want to acquire? Mr. Manai noted there is nothing official. Mr. Trimbell indicated they might want to consider this.
14. Mr. Kuberski asked how this would be extended to the rest of the Township? Mr. Trimbell noted they originally asked for DCED grants with Representative Vereb, however there was not funding for this. Based on what was budgeted for the study, they opted to look for benefits in the older, more populated areas of the Township.

6. Other Business:

A. Old Business –

1. None

B. New Business –

1. Mr. Manai noted that they might be looking at the Shops at Audubon development at the corner of Egypt & Pinetown Roads at the next meeting. Reviews have been coming in for this development, so it may be ready to go at that point.
 - a) Ms. Zimmerman asked if they had leased stores for this development? Mr. Manai does not believe so; this is just a plan.
2. Mr. Manai stated that Terra Landscaping should be coming in over the next few months. That developer is currently seeking Zoning approval from Worcester Township.

C. Comments:

1. Mr. Comroe asked where the ID cards stand? Supervisor DiPaolo indicated he would have to ask Mr. Dunbar about that.
2. Supervisor DiPaolo requested that if anyone had comments on the Bicycle and Pedestrian plan, they should forward them to Mr. Trimbell as soon as possible. This plan will be presented to the Board of Supervisors at the May 20, 2010 meeting.

7. Adjourn

- A. **MOTION** – Mrs. Satterwhite made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Comroe seconded the motion. The motion *passed* 9-0. The meeting ended at 8:25 p.m.

Next Meeting: May 26, 2010