

**LOWER PROVIDENCE TOWNSHIP  
VILLAGE COMMERCIAL COMMITTEE  
MARCH 6, 2007 MEETING MINUTES**

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**1) Public Meeting: Call to Order**

- a) Supervisor DiPaolo called the public meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

**2) Pledge of Allegiance**

**3) Roll Call:**

- a) The following committee members were present: Mrs. Bateman, Mr. Comroe, Mr. DiPaolo, Mr. Hager, Mr. Maris, Mr. Ozoroski, Mrs. Satterwhite.
- b) Mr. Borai and Mr. Ferraro arrived late.
- c) Mr. Kuberski and Mr. Stemple were absent.
- d) Also present were Tolson DeSa from the Montgomery County Planning Commission, and Director of Community Development Michael Siegel.

**4) Discussion:**

- a) Supervisor DiPaolo explained that this would be a working session, and the committee would begin to look at maps and generate ideas for the Village Commercial (VC) district.
- b) Mr. DeSa provided the following hand-outs to the committee:
  - i) A 6-page copy of the March 6, 2007 PowerPoint presentation for the meeting, entitled "Identify Village Commercial Boundaries Throughout Lower Providence";
  - ii) A 5-page copy of the VC District Code, Sections 143-75 – 143-79, dated January 15, 2000;
  - iii) A 45-page booklet from the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) entitled "Creating a Small Town Character, Model Ordinance for Mixed Use Development."
- c) Mr. DeSa noted that the booklet was written with a wide scope for use by all Townships and municipalities within the County. This booklet can be used as a guide when making changes to the Township's VC ordinance.
- d) Mr. Borai and Mr. Ferraro arrived at this time.
- e) Review and Discussion on the March 6, 2007 PowerPoint presentation:
  - i) Mr. DeSa identified the existing VC Districts within the Township, noting that there are inconsistencies between these districts.
  - ii) A significant amount of time was spent discussing slide 4, the Evansburg National Historical District, and the various zoning districts mixed into this area.
    - (1) Within this area is a large PBO zoned parcel owned by Superior Tube.
    - (2) The St. James parcel is primarily zoned R1, with the cemetery zoned VC. The church is surrounded by VC, and the anomaly of this situation was reviewed.
    - (3) Mr. Comroe noted that in the early to mid 1980's, the Planning Commission (PC) looked into the zoning discrepancies and identified a lot of parcels that could be re-zoned, however the Board of Supervisors at that time did not act on this matter.
    - (4) Mr. Borai questioned the PC's position on the day care facility that is proposed for construction within this district? Mr. Siegel noted that this has not yet been before the PC.
    - (5) Mr. DeSa indicated that there was potential to rezone the areas identified on this slide by the two left circles. He noted that whatever happens to the Superior Tube parcel (the left circle) should be consistent with the surrounding parcels.
    - (6) Mr. Ferraro questioned what was occurring with Superior Tube. Mr. DiPaolo noted that Superior Tube wanted to have some of their IND land rezoned to allow construction of 250 age-restricted housing units, which was denied by the Board of Supervisors (BOS).
    - (7) Mr. Borai noted that the Superior Tube parcel is divided into 13 lots with mixed zoning.

- (8) Mr. DeSa noted that PBO is a nice district, but questioned if that land should remain PBO, sandwiched between R3 and VC, or should it be VC? He recommends the large middle circle of land on the slide be zoned VC. If St. James Church remains R1, an institutional overlay should be placed on the parcel.
  - (9) The characteristics of the Evansburg District were discussed.
- iii) Slides 6 & 7, The Audubon Village District and Pinetown & Egypt Roads, were reviewed:
- (1) The mix of zoning along Egypt Road near the Audubon Inn was reviewed.
  - (2) A law office for Richard Sheehan is zoned R2, but the use falls within permitted VC uses. Mr. Sheehan is not interested in rezoning his parcel. The auto tag business across the street is zoned VC, while the parcel next to this, a flag business, is not VC.
  - (3) Mr. Hager explained that in the past the BOS had discussed rezoning of the Egypt Road corridor from Trooper Road down to Pinetown Road, down Pawlings Road to the Anderko subdivision all to VC. This was not done.
  - (4) Mr. DeSa noted that in November 2005, the MCPC looked at the Egypt Road corridor and recommended rezoning to PBO. The characteristic of PBO allows similar, more suitable uses to GC, which adjoins this area down Egypt Road near the intersection with Trooper Road.
  - (5) Mr. Borai noted that when he was on the BOS, all of the properties near the intersection of Egypt, Pawlings & Park, as well as properties along Egypt Road from the elementary school up to the gun club, wanted to be zoned VC.
  - (6) Mr. Ozoroski questioned how this would work with smaller lot sizes? Mr. Hager noted that people would purchase several parcels and develop them together. Mr. DeSa noted that at the time he thought PBO was a better option than VC.
  - (7) Mr. Ferraro noted that the large open parcel at the corner of Pinetown & Egypt Roads is filled with concrete and other filler, and should not have an office building constructed on the land. He remarked that if they dig down too far they would hit the flood plane. He recommended using the land across Pinetown from this parcel for a boat launch, and have parking on this parcel, which is zoned VC.
  - (8) Mr. DiPaolo noted that most entrances to the Township seem to be zoned VC, and it is important to identify how they want these entrances to look & feel.
  - (9) Mr. DeSa identified an odd mix of R3 housing next to the park area on slide 7. The park has a recreational overlay on it so it cannot be developed. Mr. DeSa thinks that the corner parcel at Pinetown & Egypt should be zoned PBO; this is a gateway to the Township.
  - (10) Mr. Borai noted that the home adjoining the park parcel is in litigation. The attorney who owns the parcel, Mr. White, requested that the property be rezoned to VC and was turned down. If he wins his appeal, all the other R3 houses will want to be rezoned VC.
  - (11) Mr. DeSa commented that this area was disjointed, as VC as there is no place to walk to and too much traffic in that area.
- iv) Slide 8, the Betzwood District, was discussed:
- (1) Mr. DeSa noted that the PECO substation is zoned VC, adjoined by HC parcels for Harley-Davidson and a gas station on one side, and more VC on the other.
  - (2) Mr. Hager began a discussion of why sidewalks should be installed throughout the Township to allow people to walk around the community.
    - (a) Mr. Maris noted that sidewalks used to exist along one side of Evansburg Road, however as these fell into disrepair, they were not replaced.
    - (b) Mr. DeSa indicated that sidewalks along Audubon Road would feed off of the Industrial Park and could lead up to the trails.
    - (c) Mr. Siegel noted that the VC ordinance could be crafted so that sidewalks are not an item that the BOS can waive, but rather require a zoning variance.
    - (d) Mr. Ozoroski noted that sidewalks are traditionally a BOS issue, and asked if they would want such a change? Mr. DiPaolo noted that they want a walkable community; he can ask the BOS their thoughts on this matter, as it has not been discussed.

- (3) Mrs. Bateman asked if the PECO facility is in VC, does the Township have the option of making them do additional plantings etc. for buffering?
  - (a) Mr. DiPaolo explained that they can only request changes if the landowner comes in to request a change to their parcel.
  - (b) Mr. Ferraro noted that this slide is an overhead view, but from the ground level there is a lot of buffering at the PECO property.
  - (c) Mr. DeSa noted that PECO has been very cooperative with the cross-access agreement with Harley-Davidson, allowing for the eventual Rt. 422 off-ramp. Mr. Siegel noted that the Township wanted this second access to the Harley-Davidson property in case emergency access was needed.
- v) Slides 9 & 10, Ridge Pike & Parklane Drive, were reviewed:
  - (1) The area zoned VC does not follow parcel lines, and is depicted in the rectangular area on slide 9. Mr. DeSa noted that this could perhaps extend to include the Eagleville Hotel. The parcels in the circle on slide 10 could be rezoned to VC. There is a lot of Township land in this area.
  - (2) Mr. Ferraro thinks this should all be zoned GC.
  - (3) Mr. Siegel identified the areas zoned RPBD, and the extension of RPBD up through the Township owned parcels were discussed.
  - (4) Mr. DeSa reviewed the intent of RPBD.
- vi) A significant amount of time was spent discussing slide 11, the Perkiomen Bridge District:
  - (1) There was discussion regarding past and possible future plans for a second bridge crossing, where that would be placed, and its' impact on traffic.
  - (2) Next to Cranberry Park is a cluster of four homes zoned VC. Mr. Hager questioned the possibility of extending the VC district across the road to Superior Tube lot 11.
  - (3) Mr. DeSa noted that this is a small area to zone VC. Most of the area leading up to this is RPBD. Mr. DeSa sees three possible options here: 1) keep the homes VC, 2) rezone the homes RPBD, or 3) keep the homes VC and expand VC to other surrounding parcels.
  - (4) Mr. Hager remarked that the entire area is conducive to VC. Mr. Borai noted that Superior Tube is all zoned IND.
  - (5) Mr. Comroe questioned if the overlay on the Collegeville Inn parcel goes away once it is sold?
    - (a) Mr. DeSa indicated that the Township would have to remove the overlay, and they should do this if they do not want age-restricted housing in that area. The underlying zoning is GC.
    - (b) Mr. Siegel noted that the Township Comprehensive Plan calls for the overlay to be removed. There was a discussion of the Collegeville Inn and potential uses.
    - (c) Mr. Borai suggested that Superior Tube lots 10 & 11 be rezoned VC.
- f) Future Discussion:
  - i) Mr. DeSa indicated that he would like to role-play with vacant parcels using various scenarios next month to see what the existing code can do. He discussed various aspects of the ordinance. Mr. DeSa noted that they need to get an idea of where the ordinance should go with these six districts. The committee may decide to add or remove districts, then they can move on.
  - ii) Mr. DiPaolo stated that he would set up a Google discussion group for on-line discussion of ideas.
  - iii) **ACTION ITEM:** He would like everyone to come to the next meeting with four ideas or concepts for each of the identified districts. The committee will work through each of the districts and map boundaries at the next meeting to finalize them.
  - iv) Mr. Ferraro noted that there was discussion at the last meeting to possibly create a new district on Pawlings Road close to Schuylkill Township. Mr. DiPaolo asked Mr. DeSa to add this to the other districts for consideration. He asked the group to bring up any area they think should be considered for VC to the next meeting so this is done right the first time.

- v) Mr. DeSa questioned if they would review the ordinance at the next meeting. Mr. DiPaolo indicated they would concentrate on the maps, and requested that Mr. DeSa get blown-up copies of the tax maps for all districts being considered. Once the maps are set they can begin on the design standards.

**8) Adjournment:**

- a) The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** April 3, 2007