

**LOWER PROVIDENCE TOWNSHIP
VILLAGE COMMERCIAL COMMITTEE
MAY 8, 2007 MEETING MINUTES**

1) Public Meeting: Call to Order

- a) Supervisor DiPaolo called the public meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2) Pledge of Allegiance

3) Roll Call:

- a) The following committee members were present: Mrs. Bateman, Mr. Comroe, Mr. DiPaolo, Mr. Hager, Mrs. Maris, Mr. Ozoroski, and Mr. Stemple.
- b) Mr. Ferraro arrived late.
- c) Mr. Borai, Mr. Kuberski and Mrs. Satterwhite 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 because of a scheduling conflict, the Recording Secretary would not be available until after the Park & Recreation Board meeting.
- b) Mr. DiPaolo explained that they would go over the geography of the district to determine if the districts should be expanded or contracted, or zoned differently.
- c) Review and Discussion on the March 6, 2007 PowerPoint presentation:
 - i) Mr. DeSa reviewed the VC district boundaries again.
 - ii) Review of Evansburg National Historical District, and the various zoning districts mixed into this area.
 - (1) Mr. DeSa noted that the PBO area could be zoned VC or they could create another district that is more of a neighborhood commercial district.
 - (2) The lands owned by Superior Tube were discussed.
 - (3) Mrs. Maris noted that three years ago Superior Tube sent letters to the residents that they would pay for residents hook-up to public water because they wanted to sell their land (that had been used for baseball fields.) She questioned how you could put VC in an industrial district?
 - (4) Mr. DeSa noted that PBO would create new office buildings. Mr. Hager questioned residential areas, which Mr. DeSa indicated should have the institutional overlay on them.
 - (5) The group discussed the zoning of various parcels within the district, particularly around the St. James Church area, and the scope of the VC district in this area.
 - (6) Mr. DeSa stated that they would only want to zone this area VC or PBO.
 - (7) Mr. DiPaolo asked that, for the parcels already zoned VC, should they stay zoned VC? The group concurred that they should remain VC.
 - (8) Mr. DiPaolo asked if the group felt the institutional overlay should be on St. James Church and the cemetery? The church has 11 acres and is currently zoned R2. The group felt that the church should be zoned VC.
 - (a) Mr. Siegel suggested that they have VC with a historical overlay district for sections that they want to ensure is preserved or kept to certain standards.
 - (b) The group liked this idea, however Mrs. Maris noted she would not want this on her house. Mr. Siegel indicated it would be an option.
 - (c) Mr. DiPaolo noted that it would be used as an incentive for builders, to give them an incentive to preserve historic buildings, and prevent them from demolishing buildings.

- (9) Mr. DiPaolo summarized the preferences for this area as breaking it into two sections. One section VC and one for properties that are historic, use a historical overlay. They would come back for the design standards and work on the VC ordinance later.
 - (10) The St. James parcel would be VC.
 - (11) Mr. Hager expressed concern over areas that are large enough to be subdivided. He thinks that VC might protect this. It was discussed that R1 would actually better protect from subdivision.
 - (12) Mr. Ferraro arrived at this point in the meeting.
 - (13) The group refocused on the Superior Tube lands
 - (a) Mr. Hager felt that controlling the land with VC is less invasive than PBO.
 - (b) Mr. Comroe thinks that rezoning the land with stricter zoning opens this up to a legal challenge.
 - (c) Mr. DeSa thinks that a 30,000 sq. ft., single-story office building could be constructed there with 100 parking spots.
 - (d) The group speculated about various zoning options for this area and potential uses. Mr. Ozoroski noted that the zoning should be consistent with the surrounding area so it would be less open to legal challenges.
 - (e) At this point the tape cut off, and the recording secretary was not present until 20 minutes further into the discussion.
 - (14) **ACTION ITEM** – Mr. DiPaolo requested that everyone take a trip to the Cranberry Park area and make recommendations on what they would like to see there.
 - (a) Mrs. Maris expressed concern that rezoning that area to VC effects many existing businesses and restricts them to VC standards. Mr. DeSa explained that the area is more of a gateway or town center and the rezoning would make the property more valuable, however existing businesses are grand fathered.
- iii) Review of the Perkiomen Bridge District:
- (1) Mr. DeSa noted there was just a small VC district in this area. There are some issues with the Collegeville Inn.
 - (a) Mr. Stemple remarked that this was just before the Township to combine lots. Mr. DiPaolo explained that the zoning district did not match parcel lines, which was why they combined the lots.
 - (2) Mr. Ferraro suggested putting a band shell in Cranberry Park with a walking path along the river and to the VC area.
 - (a) Mr. Stemple suggested making all the Township land VC and then extending it to the Superior Tube property. Mrs. Maris remarked that the distance was too long to walk from the river into Evansburg; there is no lighting and a lot of traffic.
 - (3) Mr. DiPaolo asked if the group would keep the currently VC parcels zoned VC? The group indicated that they would.
 - (4) **ACTION ITEM** – Mr. DiPaolo asked everyone to take a trip to that area and look at everything from Evansburg to the bridge and make recommendations.
 - (5) Mr. DeSa noted that there are no historic properties in this area.
- iv) Review of the Ridge Pike & Parklane Drive Area:
- (1) The zoning of various parcels in this area was discussed.
 - (2) Mr. DiPaolo asked if the group would eliminate the VC district from this area? The group concurred that VC should not exist at this location. RPBD and R1 should be applied as is appropriate.
- v) Review of the Betzwood District:
- (1) Mr. DeSa questioned if anyone considered this area a village. He remarked that the front area could be folded into the industrial park, but it is such a small piece of land so this might not work.

- (2) There was a lengthy discussion regarding the pros and cons IP or PBO in this area, and what the land would be used for under various zoning options.
- (3) Mr. DiPaolo suggested that since the Township has a consultant working on the redevelopment of the industrial park, they should solicit the consultant's recommendation for this area. Mr. Siegel will ask the consultants to look into this.
- (4) Mr. DiPaolo asked if the group wanted to keep this area VC? The group is not in favor of keeping the area VC.
- (5) **ACTION ITEM** – Mr. DiPaolo asked that the group visit the other areas not already discussed and bring their recommendations for these areas to the next meeting.

vi) Discussion of the Valley Forge Thumb:

- (1) Mr. DiPaolo noted that this is the area on Pawlings Road where the American Revolution Center (ARC) will go
- (2) There was a discussion of how the ARC will draw traffic from various surrounding areas and the road infrastructure to support the traffic.
- (3) Mr. DiPaolo noted there are existing non-conformances in the area already. If the area is rezoned to VC it could control the businesses.
- (4) Mr. Siegel remarked that this is a gateway to the Township so they should be cautious as to what is permitted.
- (5) The area is currently R2.

d) Future Discussion:

- i) The remaining districts to discuss are Audubon and the Pinetown & Egypt Road area.
- ii) Mr. DiPaolo would like to wrap up the geography portion of the discussion at the next meeting and then discuss any other areas that the group brings to the meeting.
- iii) Mr. DeSa will put together a map of the changes discussed to date.

8) Adjournment:

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

Next Meeting: June 5, 2007