

**BELLEFONTE BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
April 25, 2016**

**Present:** B. Dannaker, K. Clark, J. Mills, D. Gallo, C. Dickman,  
**Excused:** C. Dickman,  
**Staff:** Vana Dainty  
**Guests:** Doug Johnson; Joanne Tosti-Vasey; Al Jones; John Sepp, PennTerra Engineering; Bob Jacobs, Centre County; Randy Brachbill; Barry Pearce

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**Call to Order**

- Mr. Dannaker called the Bellefonte Borough Planning Commission meeting to order on Monday, April 25, 2016 at 5:00 PM.

**Approval of the Minutes**

- Mr. Clark made a motion to approve the Planning Commission meeting minutes of March 28, 2016. Mr. Mills seconded the motion. Under Planning & Zoning issues in the first paragraph the last line should say "Highway Commercial". In the third paragraph it should say 2015 instead of 2025. A voice vote was unanimous to accept the minutes as corrected.

**Land Development Activities**

- Willowbank Land Development Plan – Mr. Dannaker found minutes where it was approved by the Planning Commission and sent on to Borough Council who then approved it on conditions that were established, including the EMS plan. They got their EMS plan approved. The Borough Engineer reviewed things on August 23, 2015. He had some comments, but it was recommended for approval once they were satisfactorily addressed. Ms. Dainty has, in the file, that PennTerra answered all the comments from the County she will send it to the Planning Commission members tomorrow. The ENS approval is out of date so a new one would need to be obtained. Mr. Clark said the flood maps need to be checked because they have changed significantly since the County had them redrawn. It was determined after some conversation that the flood map in that area had not changed.

Ms. Dainty informed the audience that the plans they were going to be reviewed had been approved and a final approval was already in place. The Planning Commission members are just reviewing what the plans are and just what they did in 2010 – 2011.

**Planning and Zoning Issues**

- Future Land Uses – Ms. Dainty wanted to discuss the Land Use Map. She said it isn't zoning, but the Planning Commission is involved in more than just planning. They are involved in planning for the future and what would people like to see in Bellefonte. The map is one the County designed w from what there is now and would or could there be changes. Ms. Dainty invited everyone to come to the middle and review the map. The idea is just to make comments. It doesn't mean that they will actually ever happen. She asked them to look and see if there is somewhere a suggestion could be made about what to do with a piece of land. Part of the problem is that Bellefonte is pretty much built out so there are not a lot of places to go. The area that is not developed was purchased by the School District. The members could offer suggestions of what could be done if the school district doesn't develop it. The area is currently zoned R2. Ms. Dainty didn't know Bellefonte had rowhouses, but there are a few. There are some multi-family dwellings mixed into the R2 that aren't necessarily appropriate, but were grandfathered in because they were already existed. Governors Park is located in Spring Township but the Borough

owns it. Dallas stated, A lot of Bellefonte used to be in Spring Township. Ms. Dainty asked for the Planning Commission members to email her with any suggestions they see for the map. The Reynold's Avenue dog park is all in the flood plain.

### **Old Business**

-Mr. Dannaker stated that Ms. Dainty sent an email saying this would be a joint meeting regarding the Centre Crest property. The Planning Commission will listen to what is said, ask questions, and then at the end of the meeting the option is there to stay with the previous recommendation to Borough Council to change the zoning or if there is some other obvious thing the motion needs to be rescinded; you can make a new motion; or you can let it die.

Mr. Clark said a property owner came to Council and said that some of the things that had been said to him are: Centre Crest indicated this would be a parking lot and they would use a shuttle service to take employees to another facility that the county operates. The parking lot would not be just for Centre Crest. He was not in favor of this change. He did not want the storm water system and the parking lot in his back yard. He was concerned about it. The County did not convey this. If the zoning board chooses to allow a variance they can impose certain conditions that have to be met. Parking has been allowed on that property for years. When they were doing construction the Borough allowed them to park there temporarily but they never quit parking there.

-The Planning Commission is reconvening from a short recess. It is past 6:00. The Planning Commission is waiting for residents who said they would be at the meeting. A letter was being reviewed. Ms. Dainty said it is all new. The letter is a wider view than what they were asking for.

Mr. Jones said the original application made, in the form of a letter, two requests were made. One was for the addition of nursing homes in the R4 zone, which doesn't presently provide for that, was the data that the ordinance requires for parking and the parking that exists today. Maps that they shared with the Planning Commission showed spaces. The letter is different, but it is not. Ms. Dainty does not remember the last paragraph on the first page being in the other letter. Mr. Dannaker said the thing that is added is the change to zoning in the Willowbank Building area. This is something that was not dealt with before or considered. It is a little different from before.

Bob Jacobs, Centre County, wanted to follow up on Mr. Dannaker's comment. The only addition in the letter is the request regarding government offices. He did research looking at the R4 districts in the Bellefonte Borough. All the properties are developed with multi-family housing with the exception of Centre Crest, the Willowbank Office Building and the Sieg property, which has the family home and approximately 28 acres undeveloped. Ms. Dainty said they were originally turned down for the R4 and she wanted to clarify that they are bringing it back with additions to it. Mr. Jacobs said when they had the discussion with Council on April 4<sup>th</sup>; there were a couple Council members that brought up the question as to why nursing homes aren't permitted in the R4 district because it's an existing use that has been there for a long period of time rather than leaving it as a non-conforming use. Mr. Jacobs said if you look at all the zoning ordinances within the Nittany Valley region the only ordinance that allows for nursing home facilities is Benner Township and if you look at where they have their multi-family zoning districts there are two of them that are very small that do permit nursing homes. One area is behind Natures Cover off the Benner Pike. The other parcel is approximately 17 acres that is tucked behind the Robinson septic facility on the Benner Pike and has very limited access. The only place that makes sense and exists is in Bellefonte Borough with the Centre Crest facility. Mr. Jacobs also threw in examples of off-street parking and what would be required for various uses. Regardless of the use or different activity, particularly for nursing homes and government offices Centre Crest is clearly under-parked. There would be 300 some spaces that would be required. If Centre Crest would be converted to multi-family housing you would get about 18 units on the Centre Crest facility.

Centre Crest wants to be a good neighbor and make the uses consistent and conforming within the R4 zoning district. He realizes there are concerns about adding nursing home to the R4 district because of the potential development activity, but has he mentioned the only other location to develop a nursing home is the Sieg property.

Barry Pearce lives on 130 North Wilson Street. He has had some discussions with Centre Crest on the parking and how it will affect the residents. In regards to the zoning he said that is their issue, but there is a tremendous amount of trouble and problems with water. The house that used to be there got totally flooded. His house was flooded. His neighbor's house was flooded. They are right across from the cemetery. When the Borough did some work on High Street and took the bank out it has been very, very problematic. Can he stop what anybody is going to do? He doesn't think so, but he wants to make sure that their concerns are addressed and what will this do to their property values. Is there going to be a fence? Is there going to be lighting? Are the property owners going to get relief from the flooding? Will they be able to sell their houses years down the road? He feels if the culvert isn't fixed there will be problems. That culvert is falling apart. It can't hold the water as it is, without private citizens going in and digging it out. The drain is at least 50% blocked. That culvert must be replaced. He has been flooded three times since 1990. If the concerns of the neighbors are addressed Mr. Pearce would not have an issue with this.

Mr. Gallo asked if people are currently parking on the lot that is zoned R2. The answer was yes and Mr. Gallo stated they should not be parking on that lot at all.

Mr. Clark asked if anyone from the Borough has examined the pipe that Mr. Pearce mentioned, but they have. Mr. Clark will follow-up with it.

Mr. Brachbill asked Mr. Pearce what his location is to the culvert. The culvert is not on his neighbor's property. It is approximately 4' from the neighbor's property line. The property line pins are very visible.

Ms. Tosti-Vasey asked about the concern with a pipe coming out of the collection pond to the street. Mr. Pearce said the concern is if the pipe breaks who is responsible for it? He asked what relief a property owner will have if there is a water leak from the pipe.

John Sepp, PennTerra Engineering, said when Al came to see them about this last year the first thing they did was talk to Don Franson, the Borough Engineer, about the project. He said the main issue is storm water. When they started the first thing they did was meet with Don and look at the whole situation. It is a unique situation and there are challenges there. They decided they would have to look at this regarding parking after the storm water is taken care of. They did a rough design showing how the water could be captured and pond behind the houses and then there would be a pipe from the pond through the houses to connect to the pipe in the street. Their preliminary analysis showed that it can work. There is a solution. They have not done the final designs for it. That would be the step after the zoning happens. If the zoning doesn't happen there's no sense in doing a complete engineering design of the project. If the project gets rezoned they will have to do a full survey of all the properties and then do a complete design showing how the storm water will be captured and then conveyed past the houses. That would have to be reviewed and approved by Don Franson, the Borough Engineer. They would work with Don on that. It would have to go through DEP also. From the sketch plan it is more basin than it is parking on the lot. Typically on a lot that size you would get more than 60 parking stalls. Because of the storm water issues it's going to be a lot more storm water retention. As far as the pipe that goes down through the property, you would have to grant an easement to the owner of the property and if you write it in the easement it would be their responsibility to maintain. They will design it so the pond can be mowed. It won't be a cliff that will require a fence. It won't be an eyesore. There is a long way to go once the first step is taken care of and they work closely with the Borough staff like they always do to come up with the best plan.

Ms. Tosti-Vasey asked about the culver issue. They would have to work with Don on that to see that the water can get into that pipe and go on past it. Don is very attentive to things like that. Mr. Gallo can verify that statement about Don.

There is a strip of Borough property that goes out to Monroe Street that has a lot going on.

The proposed parking lot has only one way in and out. The only pavement would be the parking stalls.

Ms. Tosti-Vasey had a question about the storm water. There is water coming off of Centre Crest on to Wilson Street. Way down hill is Spring Creek. She wanted to know where all this water goes. If rezoning was done to allow all of this she asked how it would affect High Street, Howard Street and going down. Mr. Gallo said currently all the storm water drains down Howard Street. There were issues approximately ten years ago where the state came in and did a lot of work for the property by a little alley. It works its way down toward the stream. The first issue to tackle is the rate of water that is being sent down. The Borough has a regulation on the time frame ponds have to drain, which is typically 72 hours.

There are children that live in those houses and if the pond has a deep body of water how do you keep the children away from the water if there isn't a fence. Dallas said they are getting into issues that belong to the storm water engineer. Ms. Dainty stated, that if the zoning changed, it would affect the people on Wilson Street, High Street and Monroe Street. If the Borough and council go forward with the change there would be a public hearing and all those people would be invited to attend and give their opinion of what is planned. That information would be taken into consideration when deciding whether to change the zoning.

Mr. Brachbill appreciated the invitation to this meeting. He is here more as a resident than a council person.

Ms. Dickman feels her previous motion to change the lot to R4 is in the best interest of the area.

Mr. Clark made a motion like to rescind the recommendation to Council for approval for the R2 Zone Change. Mr. Gallo seconded the motion. Ms. Dickman feels it should be three separate issues looked at separately. Mr. Clark feels parts of the letter need to be clarified. Mr. Gallo asked if they would have the possibility to apply before the Zoning Hearing Board for any type of variance. Ms. Dainty said they can always go to the Zoning Hearing Board to ask for a variance. A voice vote was taken. The motion passed with three (3) yes votes and one (1) no vote.

This is a joint request. Centre Care, Inc. is the lessee of the entire facility. Centre Care is interested in adding parking for the operation. The County owns the building and the tract of land. It is the County's concern that it is inappropriately zoned. The very first meeting of the Planning Commission he didn't know about and wasn't here, but he was told that the issue of adding nursing homes as a permitted use was dead on arrival. When he got here for the second meeting what they spent 99% of their time talking about was the rezoning to facilitate the parking.

Mr. Dannaker thanked those that attended the meeting.

### **New Business**

- None.  
(tape ended)

### **Information Items**

- None.

### **Adjournment**

- Having no further business (?) made a motion to adjourn the April 25, 2016 meeting of the Bellefonte Borough Planning Commission at (?) PM. (?) seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous.