

LOWER PAXTON TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
WORKSHOP MEETING

September 28, 2009

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Fredrick Lighty
Roy Newsome
Ernest Gingrich
Dennis Guise
Douglas Grove
Robin Lindsey

ALSO PRESENT

Dianne Moran, Planning & Zoning Officer
Watson Fisher, SWAN Representative

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Lighty called the workshop meeting of the Lower Paxton Township Planning Commission to order at 5:32 pm, on September 28, 2009 in Room 174 of the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, 425 Prince Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Mr. Grove led the recitation of the Pledge.

ROUTE 22 BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Stakeholders' Meetings

Mr. Lighty stated that the feedback from the first meeting was mostly positive. The attendees at that meeting suggested to the Commission that they hold a second meeting with a new group of guests. That meeting is tentatively scheduled for the end of October. The following is a list of the attendees from the first meeting:

Hoffman Ford-Earl Jr. & Ryan
Essis & Sons-Muss Essis
Aston's TV/Gem Jewelry-Regis & Laurie Doyle
Case-O-Bear-Rory Rineer
Paxton Towne Centre- Donald Smith
PA Central FCU-Hal March
Swartz Supply-Bob Swartz
Members 1st FCU-Frank Fischer
Applebee's-John P. Booth

Next Meeting Guest List

The Commissioners and staff discussed additional owners and businesses, and came up with the following list of key stakeholders to invite to the second meeting:

Tire Mart-Jack Dietel
Freedom Toyota-Cal Hartman
Paxton Square-Vivian Biscoe
Colonial Commons
Colonial Park Mall
Rite Aid (Corner of Dev. Rd & Rte 22)
CAT Bus or HATS Representative
El Rodeo
Fulton Bank (5049 Jonestown Rd)
Goodall Pools
Harley Davidson
Hess
Holiday Inn Express
Mellon Certified Restoration (Former Sir Speedy Bldg)
Mountz Jewelers
NB Liebman/Commerce Bank (Same Owners)
Quality Inn (200 N. Mtn Road)
Royer's Flowers/Stephenson's Flowers
Sandwich Man
Integrity Bank
Ted's Bar & Grill/Cachet Furniture
USA Gas
(22 guests)

Mr. Newsome noted that the Sandwich Man has a restaurant in the Harrisburg Downtown Improvement District, so the owner should be able to tell about their experience in an improvement district.

Mr. Newsome stated that Cal Hartman was very helpful during the development process of the sign ordinance, so even if he cannot come, a representative from his management team would be welcome and appreciated.

Mr. Lighty stated the meeting is targeted towards business owners that own the land because they get to vote and pay the assessment, but the lessees will ultimately pay the assessment and their opinions can be incorporated into these meetings.

Second Stakeholders' Meeting Agenda

Ms. Lindsey suggested deemphasizing traffic, so the guests do not misinterpret it to mean construction or redesign, it could be discussed as traffic management, such as timing or coordination of the lights. Traffic should not be listed as the primary goal.

The letter of invitation did give the definition of a BID from the statute, but Mr. Newsome suggested a good short definition.

Mr. Guise suggested asking the guests if they have businesses that participate in a BID elsewhere, and what their experience has been. During introductions, they could give their name, business name and if they have had experience with a BID (yes/no).

Ms. Lindsey asked about the Lancaster area BID that the Applebee's representative talked about.

Mr. Lighty stated he will point out BIDs that are in suburban areas.

Mr. Lighty stated that Susquehanna Township has installed a welcome sign at Route 22 and 39th Street. Mr. Grove stated there are three of them. Mr. Newsome suggested the island at the Diner would be a good location for a sign announcing the district. Traffic backs up there, so it will be seen. Mr. Lighty suggested brick with 12" pin letters to represent the colonial look.

Branding, a name and a slogan need to be thought about, and could incorporate ideas about these aspects of the area: great shopping, great services, big box & small shops, variety/mix of shopping, a lot to offer in a short strip, a unique feature of the strip, different than the Carlisle Pike which is so wide and fast moving or the Route 30 corridor which is so long and runs from Dutch Wonderland down to Park City Mall.

Mr. Lighty asked the Commission to think of someone that could donate some time to help with marketing. Mr. Guise stated that the businesses already have a handle on marketing and advertising for their particular store, so they may have good ideas for a name or slogan for the strip. Mr. Guise suggested the BID could hold a contest shortly after it is formed to name the district, and win something like a free first year of assessment. "Colonial Corridor" was suggested, but it was noted that "colonial" might draw attention to the mall and not the rest of the corridor. It was also noted that those that do not live in the immediate area do refer to the entire strip, including the Paxtonia area, as Colonial Park, but it may offend the businesses that are not really in Colonial Park. Mr. Newsome stated the variety is fantastic and should be emphasized somehow. He suggested that the square footage of retail space might be bigger than the others in the region. Mr. Guise suggested "from Aamco to Zeplin, Colonial Park has got it all". Ms. Lindsey suggested "from cars to carpet". Watson Fisher, SWAN, suggested also emphasizing the quality. Mr. Guise agreed and noted it is not outlet or low-end shopping, and it has the only Costco in the area. It has the largest liquor store in the area, and the restaurants vary from national chains to local, one-of-a-kind restaurants.

Preliminary Plan

Mr. Lighty stated the Commission has not talked much about the preliminary plan. He stated that the list of requirements may not be something the Township has to pay a firm to do. The Commission may be able to pool its talents and varied backgrounds to complete the 18 items. Some items are already done or are under way. The Commissioners could each volunteer to do a couple items. The Board of Supervisors can review it at that point, and if they do not like it, they could opt to hire outside help. Mr. Guise asked for some samples from other BIDs and agreed that the Commission was up to the task.

1. map-done, and only needs cleaned up
2. name the district
3. description of service area
4. list of properties to be assessed-done
5. list of proposed improvements and estimated costs
6. revenue sources-done: assessment and donations
7. estimated time frame for implementation
8. identify the administrative body-done: not-for-profit corporation is better than an authority
9. bylaws
10. method of determining the assessment-use the maximum, recommendation from the PC, selection by the BOS
11. identify the duties of the BID and the Township
12. written agreement between the corporation and the Township
13. non-profits make donations-done: there aren't any non-profits in the district
14. agreement that the Township will maintain the same level of services and programs as prior
15. provision that the district sunsets in five years

Mr. Guise asked what kind of services can be provided for \$370,000. Mr. Grove noted that the salaries for the executive director and staff would come out of that money.

Ms. Lindsey asked what happens if a property owner is assessed and does not pay the assessment. Mr. Lighty stated it is the same as not paying taxes and a lien can be placed against the property.

The first group of business owners were at least interested even if not fully supportive yet. Several of them commented that the assessment is smaller in terms of dollars than they anticipated. They were especially interested in what they can get out of it. Mr. Lighty stated that the proposed budget is \$370,000, and the 240 hanging baskets in Harrisburg cost \$25,000. Mr. Newsome stated that every time he travels Route 22, he imagines flowers or flags, or some other decorative item that could be defining the corridor. He also wants to get input from the bus service.

Mr. Lighty asked staff to get a copy of the preliminary plan from Harrisburg, East Lampeter and East Liberty. After reviewing the samples, the Commissioners can volunteer for items required in the preliminary plan. Some items will require group discussion, but most can be completed at home. Mr.

Newsome offered to write an introduction for a map. These items can be discussed/assigned after the stakeholders meeting (same night), assuming that meeting is not overwhelmingly negative.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no additional public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The next Planning Commission workshop session regarding the Route 22 Improvement District is scheduled for Monday, October 26, 2009, at 6:45 pm, in Room 174 of the Municipal Center. There will be refreshments available starting at 6:30 pm.

The next regular Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 14, 2009, at 7:00 pm at the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, Room 171.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:47 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Hiner
Recording Secretary