

Bethel Township
Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission
Joint Zoning Ordinance and Map Amendment Meeting
November 10, 2020

The Bethel Township Joint meeting was called to order by Chairman Jacob Meyer at 7:05 p.m. in the Bethel Township Meeting Room, Bethel PA.

Attending the meeting were Robbi Lane, Michael Graby, Jacob Meyer, Bill Straw, Michael Orendo, Corey Houser, Betsy Bowman, Lisa Hassler, Sheldon Martin and George Shollenberger. Also, in attendance were Solicitor Stephen Price, Engineer Jeffrey Steckbeck, Robin Royer (via Zoom) and Township Sec. Treas. Jayne Seifrit.

Bill Straw stated he has had time to go over the numbers for Plan A and for Plan B, under roof, Bill Straw shared his numbers and clarification was asked for and where the numbers came from. Bill Straw stated the numbers came from a sheet that was provided by McNeas Wallace and Nurick LLC a law firm, and by Mr. Bowman. It boils down to the following: Plan A could have 200,000 – 275,000 more sqf warehouse/flex space than Plan B. Plan B would be 400,000 sqf of warehouse and 286,800 sqf of agricultural housing. If rezoned Plan A could go to 675,000 sqf and would also have the mixed-use buildings right off of Route 645, which are not calculated in the previous number. Corey Houser was saying the truck traffic on the local roads will increase with Plan B. He stated some of the potential delivery trucks (ie, feed, manure, hauling) and the weight of each and the frequency. Corey Houser also stated he spoke to three appraisers, he was told one or two husbandry houses don't usually affect the values, but six will reduce by about 15%. Jake Meyer calculated the tonnage traveling on local roads to be about 12,400 per year. Corey Houser stated it will affect entire Township, not just that community, funds for roads come from the property owners in the entire township. Question raised as to how often do roads need to be redone. Jeffrey Steckbeck stated about 20 years if the right material was used for the use of the road, cost about \$475,000.00. Fred Bowman stated Paul can address some issues that were raised. Paul, Liberty Engineers, stated a turn around has been provided to keep trucks from going on local roads. Dennis Seiverling stated the Myer Dr and Daub would need to be widened and paved. Mike Graby stated they need to get them in the Traffic Impact. It was stated agricultural projects don't have to do TIF. Mike Graby stated a warehouse is showing coming out onto Meyer Dr. Jeffrey Steckbeck stated if they did a full depth reclamation like is going to be done on Brown Rd it would cost about \$650,000.00. Discussion on fees, taxes etc. ensued. It was stated Plan B would be far less funds received then Plan A. George Shollenberger stated trucks are still going to miss entrances. Jake Meyer stated there is another turn around on Plan A. Discussion on bridge on the Bowman property. Funds would not be available to replace bridge with Plan B. Paul stated traveling is safer with Plan A as it is all internal, not using local roads. Bill Straw asked Stephen Price where are we, next steps. Stephen Price stated the MPC needs to be followed. PC makes a recommendation, the BOS determines what form it takes, the BOS authorize the Engineer, Solicitor and Secretary to send out to other entities including the Berks County Planning Commission, properties posted, and notices to property owners affected about hearing. Stephen Price stated this has been since November 2019, and before. It was asked why the Township is doing this. Bill Straw explained the Comprehensive Plan was updated; next logical step is to work toward updating the zoning.

Jeff Bukowski, Attorney, stated this is like a hearing with planning members getting information to present to the Board of Supervisors. He stated there have been buffer/transition areas in other areas of the Township, but not here. There needs to be serious consideration to protect land rights. It was stated the Boltz property would not be bound by deed restrictions.

Steve Burkhart stated truck traffic has increase already. He questions if there is a conflict of interest among members. Steve Burkhart stated he is against more warehouses and so are many other people, go with Plan B. He stated consistency is needed, not pick and choose.

Betty Martin stated she wants the BOS not to lose sight of prior comments throughout the past months. Buffer needs to be in her area also as in other areas of the Township. This is not about Plan A vs Plan B. People enjoy farmland. Betty Martin spoke about the hearing from October 19th and the BOS meeting of the

same date. She compared transcript and minutes; questioning why this is back to the joint committee. She filed a Right to Know and received the information she requested. The information received posed question as to why some people received an email. Betty Martin outlined other areas of concern. Betty Martin is asking the committee to think about them as a community.

Dean Klopp was here on election day and asked people 6 questions, not all questions asked to each person. One question was do you believe Bethel needs more warehouses, 634 of 710 people said no. Another question was do you believe farm land needs to be protected, 678 of 709 people said yes. Dean Klopp also asked if supervisors of Bethel Township should keep their promises 702 out of 703 said yes. Dean Klopp stated property rights are very important and it is not about the money.

Tony Fitzgibbons stated they are fundamentally doing planning. They have addressed comments from the beginning, there is a 30 feet screening, traffic only on 645 and there is a second turn for wayward trucks. He stated there are hundreds of people in favor of Plan A.

Corey Houser asked if there were any other properties that needed to be discussed. Stephen Price stated he believes they have been discussed over a year plus or so ago. Lisa Hassler stated she still has concerns with properties being devalued. Lucky Khinda started to speak and was told his issue is for the next meeting.

Planning makes a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. Fred Bowman stated it should be an open meeting because a lot of people want to speak. George Shollenberger made a motion recommending to the Supervisors the proposed map and zoning ordinance as it is today (not including Bowman parcels to IC), seconded by Sheldon Martin. Those in favor Betsy Bowman, George Shollenberger and Sheldon Martin. Opposed Bill Straw, Mike Orendo, Lisa Hassler and Corey Houser. Bill Straw asked about discussion of deed restrictions. If needed they can be discussed by the Supervisors at a later date.

Corey Houser made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 pm., seconded by Bill Straw. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jayne K Seifrit
Township Secretary