

ATTENDANCE

Planning Commission

Kate Domico, Chairman
Bill Steudler, Vice-Chairman
Brian Rater, Secretary
Robert Prosek
Harry McAllister
Paul Silvis
Richard Schmidt

Township Staff

Doug Erickson, Township Manager
Stephen Casson, Township Engineer/Dir. Public Works
Ken Soder, Zoning Officer
Paul Christner, Asst. Twp. Eng./Asst. Dir. Public Works
Greg Garthe, CRPA

Audience

Tim Harlow, Hawbaker Engineering
Tony Stopper, State College Borough

The May 7, 2018 work session was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair, Kate Domico.

1. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

2. **REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND RECYCLING (NR2) ZONING DISTRICT**

Township Planner Greg Garthe noted that The Borough of State College (Borough) operates a leaf/grass/organics composting operation on a site formerly referred to as the “the old Borough dump.” This is the site of a closed, former landfill utilized by the Borough of State College more than 30 years ago. The Glenn O. Hawbaker Recycle Center also operates on the site, and accepts and recycles clean fill construction materials, leaves, brush, and organics collected in Centre Region municipalities. The site is bounded by I-99, the Colonnade, the Otto’s property along N. Atherton Street and the businesses on the east side of Hawbaker Industrial Drive.

The property was originally zoned NR-1 (Natural Resource) which permitted very little development of the property. The Borough’s leaf composting operation, which pre-dated zoning, was then a legal, non-conforming use on the parcel.

The NR-2 Zone was created in 2006 specifically for this property to permit the planned recycling center and make the leaf composting a conforming use. Under Pennsylvania law, municipalities have a greater ability to manage “conforming uses” as opposed to “legal, non-conforming uses.”

A request has been submitted to the Township stating that the Borough “is proposing to expand the composting capacity ...” at this site and they ask the Board of Supervisors to consider a reduction in the required open space component of the site from sixty percent (60%) to forty percent (40%). The request further states “This would increase the availability of land for the continued recycling and composting of yard waste.”

Mr. Garthe indicated that the Board of Supervisors referred the matter to the Planning Commission for study and a recommendation. The request letter, a location map and the NR-2 regulations were included with the agenda materials.

Ms. Domico asked why the Borough has their composting site in Patton Township. Township Manager Doug Erickson stated that the Borough owns the property, which was the site of the Borough dump many years ago until becoming the composting site more recently.

Brian Rater asked if the site was to be used for recycling organics from all the Centre Region municipalities when that service is available with a future waste/recycling contract. Mr. Erickson said that it would be available to those who wanted that service in the future.

Mr. Rater noted that his understanding was that the Borough's composting program had a 90% participation rate.

Ms. Domico mentioned that she and Mr. Garthe had visited the Centre County Solid Waste Authority the previous week as part of the Leadership Centre County program, and that Authority staff had indicated that organics composting has been a successful part of their regional waste management strategy.

Mr. Rater asked if more compost at the Borough's site would lead to odor issues at the surrounding businesses. It was mentioned that the Borough turns the piles frequently, there should be no increase in odors. It was also noted that the expansion of the compost facility would be generally to the northwest of the existing facility, hence further away from the businesses on Colonnade Boulevard.

Township Zoning Officer Ken Soder mentioned that the Borough sells the compost that they produce to anyone in the region, and gives it away for free to Borough residents.

Ms. Domico asked whether the required open space on the site would be available for public use. Mr. Erickson indicated that it was private property.

Bob Prosek noted that there was a fire at the site at one time. Mr. Erickson commented that the fire was a result of a large pile of woodchips spontaneously combusting. Mr. Soder added that the large piles of woodchips created a lot of heat due to the compaction and that the piles were no longer that high.

Mr. Soder noted that the land development plan submitted by the Borough proposed expansion of the composting operation by creating another composting pad to the northwest of the existing pad.

Ms. Domico asked whether the requested reduction in the NR-2 open space requirements was necessary in order for the Borough to expand their operation. Tim Harlow, Hawbaker Engineering, said that the Borough needed the additional space for their composting operation in order to process additional organics that are expected when service is offered region-wide. Tony Stopper, State College Borough, added that Mr. Rater was correct about the 90% success rate of the Borough's composting program. In response to Mr. Rater's concern about odor, Mr. Harlow stated that he has never noticed an odor in the area and that the composting piles are turned frequently.

Mr. Rater asked who would be responsible for collecting organics throughout the region. Mr. Erickson indicated that it would be the contractor(s) who hauls waste in each municipality.

Ms. Domico commented that organics composting is beneficial. Paul Silvis added that having the Borough's site located near Interstate 99 and far from area businesses is beneficial as well.

The Planning Commission members unanimously directed staff to draft an ordinance to revise the NR-2 district open space requirements and bring it back for action at the next meeting.

3. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS

Mr. Garthe noted that during the discussion of the Patton Towne Center Phase 3 Land Development Plan at the April 12, 2018 meeting, Planning Commission member Brian Rater suggested that the Township may want to consider requiring electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in new commercial developments. Mr. Rater noted that several businesses in the State College area offer charging stations. The Planning Commission members asked staff to research regulations from other communities that relate to EV charging stations.

The US Department of Energy notes that there are three tools that state and local governments commonly use to regulate EV infrastructure. These include zoning codes, building codes, and parking regulations. Such tools can be used to allow, incentivize, or require EV infrastructure. In addition to promoting alternative energy and environmental sustainability, EV requirements or incentives are commonly used to help address "range anxiety" by providing a network of charging stations for EV owners to ensure an adequate ability to charge their vehicles. The State College area has approximately ten EV charging station locations. They are sited at several area hotels, car dealerships, and a gas station. A map of these locations is included as an attachment. Patton Township has two EV charging locations, including one at the Sheetz convenience store at the intersection of North Atherton Street and Woodycrest Avenue, and a standalone ChargePoint Charging Station near the Olive Garden Restaurant in Williamsburg Square.

In late 2017, the Atlanta City Council passed an ordinance that added provisions to the city's land development code to require developers to install the necessary infrastructure for EV charging facilities in all new commercial buildings and several types of residential dwellings in the city to facilitate future installations of EV supply equipment. The ordinance also requires 20% of the spaces in new commercial parking decks to provide EV infrastructure, and provides provisions for the enforcement of EV-only parking requirements. The proceeds from fines are to be "used solely for the maintenance, purchase, and expansion of infrastructure for electric vehicles within the City of Atlanta."

The Washington State EV infrastructure guidance for local governments recommends allowing EV charging stations as a permitted use in a number of zoning districts, including commercial and industrial. In residential districts, EV stations for individual homeowners are recommended as an accessory use. The guidance does not provide a minimum recommended number of EV charging spaces in public parking lots or garages, but does suggest location and design criteria, including signage, maintenance, accessibility, and

lighting. There are also recommended ADA accessibility guidelines for the placement of EV stations.

The PA Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) grants municipal planning commissions the authority to prepare and amend zoning and subdivision and land development (SALDO) ordinances, but matters related to the building code for new construction are under the purview of the State, and on-street parking regulations are a matter that could be undertaken by the Board of Supervisors at any time. If the Planning Commission members wish to pursue a zoning or SALDO approach to allowing, requiring, or incentivizing EV charging stations or related support infrastructure, they should provide general guidance to staff on what may be appropriate standards.

Several attachments related to EV regulations, and a map of EV stations in the Centre Region were included with the agenda.

Ms. Domico asked whether it was a good idea to write regulations to promote EV use.

Mr. Silvis noted that he owns an electric vehicle, and gets between 90 and 120 miles on a charge, so “range anxiety” is a concern. He added that expanding the EV infrastructure network would be expensive.

Ms. Domico indicated that it would be more cost effective to install EV infrastructure in new buildings, rather than retrofitting existing ones. Bill Steudler agreed.

Mr. Silvis indicated that the Level 1 charging stations are very slow, and a full charge usually takes overnight. Mr. Prosek and Harry McAllister agreed.

Mr. Steudler explained that Level 3 stations convert alternating current (AC) to direct current (DC), so they provide a charge much faster than Level 1 and 2 stations.

Mr. Rater commented that he would like to incentivize EV, and Mr. Silvis agreed.

Mr. Silvis stated that he would like to hear from Sheetz in order to understand why they are installing EV stations in some of their stores, and how much use the stations are getting. Ms. Domico agreed and asked staff to contact Sheetz representatives about it.

Mr. Rater suggested that community support and a strong network of EV infrastructure might attract companies to the area.

Mr. Prosek questioned whether electric vehicles were a fad, and commented that it would be helpful to see related sales data. Ms. Domico noted that General Motors has been recently promoting electric vehicles (again), and suggested that it would make sense to require EV readiness for new commercial buildings to prepare.

Mr. Rater suggested also contacting Weis Markets because the Bellefonte store has EV charging.

Mr. Silvis asked the other members whether they had a plan for regulating EV, which might include incentivizing it. He noted that more research was needed, and the discussion should continue.

Richard Schmidt asked staff to look into whether any other municipalities in PA were currently considering an EV ordinance. Mr. Steudler added that Cornell University did a study on EV.

The Planning Commission members agreed that Sheetz and Weis Markets should be contacted, and information on any PA ordinances should be provided at a future work session.

4. STATUS ON PENDING ITEMS

There were no comments on pending items.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Domico asked Mr. Erickson if he had a proposed format for the May 9th Public Hearings for the Mixed-Use Overlay District 2 Ordinance and Rezoning of Tax Parcels 18-012-020 and 18-012-021. Mr. Erickson noted that he was planning to have Mr. Garthe and members of the Planning Commission review the request and give a brief overview of the process the Planning Commission had taken to date, then receive a presentation from the Patton Crossing developers on their concept plan, and then the Board would hold the Public Hearings. Ms. Domico, Mr. Steudler, and Mr. Rater indicated that they planned to attend the meeting.

Mr. Steudler indicated that he would be able to provide the Planning Commission report to the Board at the May 23rd meeting. *The report was removed from the May 9th agenda due to the Public Hearings.*

The Planning Commission welcomed the new Assistant Township Engineer/Assistant Public Works Director, Paul Christner.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The work session was adjourned at 7:52 PM.