

HANOVER TOWNSHIP, LEHIGH COUNTY
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING -- WORKSHOP

February 15, 2023
6:00 P.M.

Present: Councilmen Heimbecker, Lawlor, Paulus, Rossi, Woolley; J. Jackson Eaton, III, Esquire; Al Kortze, P.E.; Melissa A. Wehr; Vicky Roth; Audrey Anderson

New Business:

1. Review of River Central Comprehensive Plan (Review and Discussion)

The Township Attorney stated there are five municipalities consisting of Catasauqua Borough, East Allen Township, Hanover Township, Lehigh County, and Northampton Borough who joined together to put together a new Comprehensive Plan.

This is different than other Comprehensive Plans from the past. The Comprehensive Plan has always been about how the Township will grow in the future. What you should be looking for as far as placement of things and such and usually sets out suggested locations for various zones and things to be in the ordinances and has always been thought of and still is a recommendation. When you have disputed zoning hearings and disputed land development hearings very frequently, the objectors or developers will bring out the land development plan and say, although your zoning ordinance and/or land development ordinance controls, the Comprehensive Plan says, you should be doing this or doing that.

This is important also because it does involve five municipalities. Things that are important in East Allen Township, which shows a lot of farmland, and the Comprehensive Plan has this as one of the highest priorities, preservation of farmland. Hanover Township, Lehigh County, has none other than the part that is in the airport. Things that are stated in the Comprehensive Plan, in general terms, as far as priorities for example may not be a priority for Hanover Township. There are different things like that to be considered. At the end of this there is a discussion on how this will all be implemented. There are discussions on what appears to be an Intermunicipal Agreement on how the ordinances and so forth will be coordinated. It is not clear, but this could be implying that you are giving away some of your authority over control of what you now control in the Hanover Township. Keep those things in mind as far as how you feel you want to respond. Right now the Township Manager and the Township Clerk have been involved very much and the Township Engineer has had input into it. I've gotten involved now as the Attorney because we are going to pass an ordinance and I want to make certain you have an overview in case this comes back in the future when you go to adopt a zoning ordinance or land development ordinance.

A Council member asked the Attorney to give an example of how Hanover Township might be different ordinance-wise from the other participating municipalities. The

Attorney replied that they did not compare ordinances. Sometimes comprehensive plans have an existing conditions section and if they had that this would have shown all five existing ordinances. The problem there is as far as what the zones are, each one may define their zones differently so that might be hard to do. If you look on the first plan on page 35, 36, you can get a sense of how they see things as different going forward. A discussion ensued.

The Township Manager stated that the Comprehensive Plan is your road map to how you are looking to have your municipality developed in the future. They are looking for a comprehensive agreement moving forward and you can choose to or not to be part of an intermunicipal zoning ordinance as well.

The Township Attorney stated if you look at page 35, 36 of the plan and the colors involved Hanover is almost entirely a development area and at the bottom of the first column on the text on page 35 it says, centers and corridors located within development areas are recommended for denser mixed use mixed transportation development. It is accurate to what we have now. The Attorney agrees with the concerns of the airport with how it is portrayed on the plan. At the northend of the Township there is a hatched area which is a preservation buffer and they recommend retaining farmland in those areas. It has to be changed to show Lots 5A since part of it is already approved for development and the warehouse is up already. Somewhere in the text it has to be stated that it is farmland preservation until the development by the airport. It's recognized in the Plan that it is airport land and will be developed by the airport. The Attorney is looking at other items which need to be corrected. He will send the concerns to the Township Manager.

Discussions ensued.

A Council member asked to go on the record regarding 6.5 on page 121. He does not agree with it.

The Attorney said he feels it is very significant and you have four other municipalities who are agreeing on this and will follow through with what all five municipalities ultimately agree as River Central participants.

Adjournment

The workshop adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa A. Wehr
Township Manager