

Aston Township Comprehensive Plan

Steering Committee --Kickoff Meeting Meeting Minutes April 27, 2015

Location: Township Building, Pennell Road

Attendees: see attached sign-in sheet

Items Discussed:

- John Granger, Township Manager, introduced the project, which is funded by a grant from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC).
- Marc Morfei, landscape architect for Pennoni Associates (appointed Township Engineer), described the goals for the Comprehensive Plan, which is to establish goals and objectives for the Township, which will guide municipal priorities and policy.
- Joseph Luste, planner for Pennoni Associates, explained that the Municipal Planning Code set requirements for Comprehensive Plans, which must address certain specific topics covering a wide range of community issues, including Land Use, Housing, Parks and Recreation, Community Facilities, Natural Resources, and other issues. He also explained that economic development will be an important element of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Mr. Morfei described the process for developing the Plan. There are approximately 6 working meetings of the committee anticipated. At these meetings, several different Plan topics will be reviewed and discussed. Towards the end of the process, a public meeting will be held to review the draft recommendations and solicit input from the community. The Plan is expected to be finalized and adopted in early 2016.
- Mr. Morfei and Mr. Luste reviewed the previous Comprehensive Plan from 2005, which was a multi-municipal plan for Aston, Lower Chichester, and Upper Chichester. Mr. Luste explained that Comp plans should be updated every 10 years, so now is the proper time for an update.
- The Action Plan from the 2005 was reviewed. Overall discussion of these 2005 recommendations focused on the following:
 - Boards and Commissions: The establishment of new boards and commissions to take the lead on certain issues has mostly not taken place. Of particular interest was the idea of a quasi-public Community Development Corporation that can act in a development role to acquire and redevelop blighted property. This should be investigated more fully.
 - Ordinances: The discussion was that existing codes and ordinances should be more strenuously enforced. Existing codes and ordinances should be reviewed and modernized where appropriate, and strongly enforced.
 - Residential Neighborhoods: The Committee views low-income housing as a critical issue impacting the quality of life in Aston. The view is that Section 8 housing contributes to run-down neighborhoods, property deterioration, and crime.
 - Community Facilities: Mr. Granger explained that an architect has been retained to prepare a plan for new and improved Township facilities, including the fire station(s), public works,

police, community center, and library. The recommendations from this study are expected to be done before the end of 2015.

- Transportation: There is great interest in understanding the scope and possible impact on Aston of the planned PennDOT project to widen Route 322. Current planned improvements to Route 452 are expected to alleviate congestion and create a more attractive commercial corridor.
- Mr. Morfei and Mr. Luste reviewed the Aston Township Vision Plan prepared in 2014. The main recommendation of the Vision Plan is to promote economic growth by allowing high-density development along the main commercial corridors as an incentive to redevelopment.
 - Mr. Granger described the goal as specifically allowing more density along Route 452, to encourage development closer to the street. This would be allowed by enacting a new zoning overlay.
 - Mr. Morfei noted that a draft zoning overlay ordinance will be developed concurrently with the Comprehensive Planning process.
 - Some committee members expressed concern regarding the fate of existing retail shopping centers if new development occurred along the street, specifically the issue of blocked visibility.
- Mr. Morfei and Mr. Luste described the goals for the next meeting. At this meeting, discussion will focus on two specific Plan elements – Parks/Recreation, and Livability – along with continued discussion of the economic development incentives recommended by the Vision Plan.
- The next Steering Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 10, 7:00pm at the Township Building.

If you have any questions or comments, or would like to correct or add to these minutes, please contact Marc Morfei, Pennoni Associates, at 215-254-7790 or mmorfei@pennoni.com.

Aston Township
Comprehensive Plan
Meeting April 17, 2015

SIGN-IN SHEET

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PENNONI ASSOCIATES INC.
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Aston Township

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Meeting Agenda, 4/27/2015

1. Project Introduction

- a. ***Why?***
 - Intent and Purpose of Comprehensive Plan
- b. ***What?***
 - Municipal Planning Code: Required elements
- c. ***How?***
 - Plan Preparation Process
 - Goals and Objectives
 - Expected Outcome
 - Role of Steering Committee

2. 2005 Comprehensive Plan

- a. 2005 Action Plan – review status and outcome

3. 2015 Vision Plan

- a. Key Issues and Goals

4. Project Schedule and Next Steps

- a. Kickoff Meeting – late April 2015
- b. Working Meeting #1 – early June
- c. Working Meeting #2 – late July
- d. Working Meeting #3 – mid-September
- e. Working Meeting #4 – early November
- f. Public Meeting – early December
- g. Working Meeting #5 – early January 2016
- h. Plan Completion and Adoption – January/February 2016

5. Agenda and Goals for Next Meeting

Aston Township Comprehensive Plan Update

Introduction

A *comprehensive plan* is a long-range planning tool used to guide future growth and development. It expresses a community's vision and goals for the future and recommends policies and strategies to achieve them. Comprehensive Plans are officially adopted by the municipality, and are implemented to a large extent by zoning, subdivision, and land development ordinances.

MPC Plan Requirements (PA Municipalities Planning Code)

MPC Section 301 (a) requires each municipal comprehensive plan to include specific elements. Collectively these *basic elements* should present a composite vision of private and public development for the future based on a statement of community development goals and objectives.

1. *Statement of community development objectives* that chart the location, character and timing of future development.
2. *Land Use Plan* identifying the amount, intensity, character and timing of land use.
3. *Housing Plan* to meet the needs of present and future residents, as well as accommodating new housing in different dwelling types and at appropriate densities for households of all income levels.
4. *Transportation plan.*
5. *Community facilities plan.*
6. *A Plan for the Protection of Natural and Historic Resources*, including: wetlands, aquifer recharge zones, woodlands, steep slopes, prime agricultural land, flood plain, unique natural areas and historic sites.
7. *A Statement of the Interrelationships* among the various plan components which estimates the environmental, energy conservation, fiscal, economic development and social consequences on the municipality.
8. *A discussion of short- and long-range* implementation strategies.
9. A statement indicating that existing and proposed *development is compatible with plans and development in contiguous municipalities*, and is consistent with County Comprehensive Plan.

2015 Comprehensive Plan Update Goals and Objectives

1. Determine **what has changed** in the 10+ years since the current plan was developed and adopted.
2. Incorporate the **2014 Township Vision Plan**.
3. Incorporate and integrate the current planning and/or design of **traffic improvements**.
4. Incorporate and integrate the revitalization and economic development **overlay zoning** and SALDO design provisions, where applicable and appropriate.
5. Incorporate and integrate the current **parks and recreation** planning activities.
6. Incorporate and integrate the current **streetscape planning** and design, where appropriate.
7. Develop a new element/chapter devoted to **revitalization and economic development**, incorporating the goals and recommendations of the Adopted Aston Township Vision Plan.
8. Update a variety of **newer statistics on population** and other related data.
9. Include and integrate Smart Growth and Sustainability principles that have evolved since preparation of the previous comprehensive plan.
10. Maintain and build upon the goals, objectives, policies, and established implementation steps as befitting the future.
11. Work with the **Delaware County Planning Commission** in preparing this comprehensive plan update.
12. Guide plan preparation and adoption to be consistent with the PA Municipalities Planning Code as amended and supplemented.
13. Ensure that the plan update reflects the wants and needs of the Township, and its residents, businesses and institutions for at least the next 10 years and beyond.