

**HILLTOWN TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING
WITH THE PLANNING COMMISSION
May 1, 2006
7:30 p.m.**

Call to Order: The regularly scheduled Hilltown Township Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson Brooke Rush at 7:30 p.m. At 8 p.m. Mr. Rush invited the Open Space Committee to join the meeting. Open Space Committee members in attendance were Jeff Lapp, Donna DiMella, Sandy Williamson and Jeanne Scanlon.

Following is the final draft of minutes (approved version not yet available) pertinent to the non-contiguous open space text change, as taken by Denise Hermany:

Proposed Zoning Ordinance – Non-contiguous open space text change

Brooke informed the Open Space Committee that the Planning Commission made a motion at their previous worksession to attempt a draft text change to the zoning to allow for non-contiguous open space.

Mike Beatrice asked Lynn Bush her opinion of the open space proposal. Lynn commented that the county is always in favor of saving open space and cited an example in Doylestown Township where non-contiguous open space land was preserved along the Neshaminy Creek. She also mentioned that 50% of a 200 acre site in Buckingham was preserved by doubling the density on a parcel. Rather than 1 house/2 acres, the township agreed to 1 house/1 acre.

Joe Marino commented that he has no problem drafting a zoning text change, but it shouldn't be designed solely for the Cinnabar/White Chimney property. Brooke commented that the applicant is moving forward, at this time, with their original plans.

The members of the Open Space Committee believe that this is an opportunity to preserve open space and Jeanne Scanlon made a motion, Donna DiMella seconded, to draft a text change to the zoning to allow for noncontiguous open space. The Open Space Committee motion passed 4-0.

Chuck Kulesza mentioned that criteria need to be established for this type of zoning, i.e. parcel size, % open space, distance between primary site and open space parcel, Township Boards' involvement, and appropriateness to Township Open Space Plan. Chuck questioned whether the ranking system in the Open Space Plan could be used.

Mike Beatrice suggested a minimum of 20-40 acres. Open space could be preserved using deed restrictions, development rights and easements.

Brooke Rush completed a version of a possible text change amendment for review with the boards and provided copies for the committees. After a lengthy discussion, several recommended changes were incorporated into the draft. Everyone agreed that the Open Space Committee and Park and Rec Board should be part of the review process. It was recommended that existing open space plans should be incorporated along with the current open space criteria. Some people didn't want distance limited to ½ mile between parcels, but in the end it was agreed to leave it in. It was discussed that a non-contiguous open space parcel not be limited to 200 ft. of road frontage, but rather have road frontage and be accessible. Since we are trying to preserve appropriate open space, Section 8C was eliminated, therefore open space parcels need not be adjacent to other open space parcels. It was also discussed that if a builder has the opportunity to cluster homes on one site, then the land on the other site should be deeded to the Township for them to do with as they deem appropriate, i.e., sell development rights or keep for active or passive recreation. Brooke was to incorporate all of the changes into the draft and forward copies to the committees. The final draft text change will be forwarded to the Supervisors on Monday night at the reporting meeting.

Following the above discussion, at approximately 9:45 p.m., the joint session ended, and the Planning Commission continued with its regularly scheduled meeting.