
APPENDIX B

MEETING SUMMARIES

FOR THE

WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP,

PERRY COUNTY, PA

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- B1 2011 Citizen Survey
- B2 Public Meeting #1 – November 15, 2011
- B3 Planning Commission Public Meeting – October 11, 2012
- B4 Board of Supervisors Public Hearing – *TBD at time of printing*

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Appendix B1: 2011 Citizen Survey Report

December 12, 2011

The 2011 Wheatfield Township Citizen Survey was conducted to provide citizens with an opportunity to express views and concerns on Township conditions and future directions during the preparation of the Township's updated comprehensive plan.

The four-page survey included:

1. An introductory letter from the Wheatfield Township Planning Commission
2. 30 multiple-choice and open-ended questions regarding
 - Resident Satisfaction
 - Resident-reported Problems
 - Future Development and Conservation
 - 10-Year Priorities
 - Willingness to Service as a Township or Community Service Volunteer
 - Respondent Characteristics
 - Open Comments
3. A closing "thank you" and public meeting reminder
4. Optional name and contact information.

A hyperlink to the online survey was provided on the township website from mid September to November 23, 2011. 1250 surveys were sent to Wheatfield Township households in the Township's Fall 2011 Newsletter, distributed the week of October 3, 2011. Paper copies were also available at the Township office. Thirty-five newsletters were returned to the Township as undeliverable. Several residents who reported that they did not receive the Fall 2011 Newsletter were directed to the Township office for a paper survey or to the township website. The total number of undelivered newsletters is unknown.

As of November 23, 2011, 83 surveys were submitted, a 6.6 percent response rate. This opinion survey was intended for general input to the planning process. It was not designed to yield statically valid and reliable results. The results of the survey are assumed to reflect the opinions of the residents that participated, but may not reflect the full range or average of resident opinions.

Summary Results

Residents are generally satisfied with the quality of life, township-provided services and other available services found in or near Wheatfield Township.

- Over 92% agree that the quality of life is very good.
- At least 63% agree that they are satisfied with township services.
- At least 65% agree that 8 of the 11 community services available within or near Wheatfield Township are adequate: state police, fire and ambulance, road maintenance, trash collection, recycling, public parks and recreation, and public walking, biking, riding trails. A slight majority agree that on-demand transportation service from the Perry County Transportation Authority is adequate but nearly 35 % were not sure. Only 40% agree that public library services and services for seniors are adequate accompanied by significant response rates for "not sure."
- Nearly 40% agree, and 45% disagree, that adequate employment opportunities are available within or near Wheatfield Township. Another 15.9%, some but not all of whom are retired, are not sure of the availability of local jobs.

Appendix B1: 2011 Citizen Survey Report

December 12, 2011

- Residents are divided over whether or not adequate commercial services, such as shopping and restaurants, are available within or near Wheatfield Township; 45% agree, 54% disagree.
- Property maintenance is a major issue for 48% of respondents, however 49% disagreed. Junk cars, equipment, trash, depositing leaves, grass clippings and snow onto the roadside, and lack of enforcement were reported as sources of the property maintenance issue. Of the remaining seven issues, only three were considered major problems by more than 30% of respondents: stormwater runoff, unemployment, and loss of rural character. Poor drainage was cited for causing road hazards and pavement degradation. And “too much development” was cited as the source of loss of rural character.
- Other problems or issues noted by respondents include: fair enforcement of township ordinances, lot sizes (too large for seniors to maintain), increasing school taxes (without commercial development to balance the tax burden), trash burning (and its effect on air quality), speeding, and roadside litter.
- A majority of respondents supported farms, single family homes, home-based businesses, secondary businesses on the farm, senior housing, service shops/garages, and large lot estates – uses fairly typical of rural communities. A majority also supported offices and retail stores/restaurants, which are not as common in rural communities, but could provide additional local employment.
- A majority of respondents agreed that the Route 274 corridor and Mecks Corner/Carroll Township border are appropriate locations for future commercial development.
- A majority of respondents agreed that all listed locations except Mecks Corner/Carroll Township border were appropriate for future 2-acre lot residential development. On average, 25% also supported these locations for 1-acre residential lots.
- Respondent concerns about development included over-development and loss of character, impact of certain development types on property values and tax base, and suitable locations for each development type.
- A majority of respondents agreed that Wheatfield Township should act:
 - to concentrate development in limited areas (78%)
 - to require land conservation by subdivisions of 10 lots or more (68%)
 - to require public parkland provision by subdivisions of 10 lots or more (70%), and
 - to purchase of historic sites and landmarks as public parks (79%).
- Most respondents (58%) use Wagner Park at least once a year; the largest group uses the park monthly (20%). They enjoy both active (athletic) and passive (non-athletic, often nature-based) recreation activities at the park. Two out of three could not walk to the park today, citing it is too dangerous to walk or bike on the road. Thirteen respondents suggested park improvements; the only commonalities among the suggestions were to work toward making the park financially self-sustaining and to increase security.

Appendix B1: 2011 Citizen Survey Report

December 12, 2011

- Respondents largely supported listed public service improvements as 10-year priorities: roadway improvements, especially to address drainage problems; higher development standards; additional development of Wagner Park; development of other public trails (a walking/biking trail from Duncannon to New Bloomfield suggested), enforcement of township regulations (property maintenance, trash burning, and noise ordinances suggested), and maintenance (not replacement) of township buildings, vehicles, and equipment. Less than half of respondents agree that developing a new park or revising township regulations is a 10-year priority.
- When asked specifically about the future study and evaluation of regional public services, e.g. a regional police force, as Wheatfield Township's population grows, a majority of respondents agreed, and one in five reported "not sure."
- Significant losses among the farming community, woodlands and open space were cited by a majority of respondents as reasons they would consider leaving the Township. Increasing taxes was noted among "other" reasons. If the township becomes strictly a bedroom community and or small business development occurs, about one in three respondents would consider relocating.
- When asked what one thing was most important for the comprehensive plan to accomplish or advance, respondents listed the conservation of rural character and a limited amount of development to balance tax base and meet job and service needs locally most frequently.

Survey Findings

1. Respondents are very satisfied with the quality of life and services in the Wheatfield Township area.
2. Respondents are more familiar with the township newsletter than its website. If public information is recommended by the plan, the newsletter is the better vehicle for distributing such information.
3. Some respondents are uncertain of the availability of area library, senior and on-demand transportation services. Information about these area services printed in the township newsletter could improve residents' awareness and increase use of these services.
4. A slightly larger percentage of respondents would like more commercial services to locate in or near the township for variety of reasons: to increase local employment opportunities, to balance the municipal and school district tax base, and to increase convenience. The planning process should evaluate the permitted business uses and locations provided by the zoning ordinance.
5. Major problems, as reported by township residents, are few. Property maintenance is the item of greatest concern and notably not a concern for some. Loss of rural character was not listed as a major issue but was mentioned in comments throughout the survey. The planning process should review the current property maintenance standards and enforcement procedures and recommend improvement, if appropriate. It should also characterize the loss of character expressed by respondents.

Appendix B1: 2011 Citizen Survey Report

December 12, 2011

6. Respondents support the continued presence and expansion of a variety of uses typical of rural communities. A majority do not support any type of multi-family housing with the exception of housing for seniors. While the zoning ordinance cannot exclude uses, it can manage the amount of land designated for uses, so long as it does not result in exclusion.
7. Most respondents support regulations that limit further development to defined areas and that require land dedication for public use from larger subdivisions. A majority also support acquisitions of historic sites and landmarks. Respondents' support for the purchase of development rights from farm and non-farm owners is divided with more than 10% not sure of their support for such action. If the plan recommends types of properties for acquisition, it should focus only on historic sites and landmarks that could be preserved as parks as part of the township's heritage.
8. The maintenance and improvement of infrastructure and regulatory enforcement should be the Township's first priorities per respondents. Expansion of recreational activities ranks third. The planning process should consider these priorities in its recommendations.
9. Most respondents support the exploration of regional public services as the need for expanded services arises. Any action regarding regional efforts should be accompanied by public information on the costs, benefits and outcomes of such efforts to help the one in five who are not sure to determine their support.
10. Respondents desire to keep the Township's rural character – its agricultural uses, its woodlands, and its dispersed development pattern – as much as possible. Many also consider an expansion of lands designated for business or an expansion of permitted home- and farm-based businesses to be worthwhile consideration. The planning process should determine if further management of the amount, timing, location and intensity of future development is appropriate.

About the Respondents

Most of the 83 respondents to the survey:

- Have lived in Wheatfield Township more than 24 years (49%)
- Choose to live in Wheatfield Township for its rural community (69%) and because it's a good place to raise a family (54%)
- Have no children (under 18 years) living at home (65%)
- Own their home (95%)
- Are employed full-time (52%)

Working respondents are employed mostly in south central Pennsylvania but also statewide. The West Shore region of Cumberland County (24%) and Dauphin County (other than Harrisburg, 22%) were the two most common responses.

Forty-five respondents would consider serving Wheatfield Township as a township or community service volunteer; sixteen provided contact information, which was forwarded to the Township office.

Appendix B2: November 2011 Public Meeting

In preparation of the Wheatfield Township Comprehensive Plan

Summary

Twenty-six people attended the November 15, 2011 Public Meeting hosted by the Wheatfield Township Planning Commission at the Duncannon EMS Building. The meeting was scheduled following the Planning Commission's citizen survey and community and resource profiles, both in preparation of a new township comprehensive plan. Meeting attendees included the Planning Commission members, the Board of Supervisors, and residents and business owners in the Township. A factsheet on the planning effort and handouts related to the evening's presentation were available.

Paul Finkenbinder, Chairman of the Wheatfield Township Planning Commission, welcomed participants to the meeting. He noted that the Planning Commission has been working since May 2011 to document current conditions and trends, including the recent survey of citizens. He introduced Michelle Brummer of Gannett Fleming, Inc., the planning consultant, who facilitated the remainder of the meeting.

Ms. Brummer shared a presentation with attendees, covering the following topics and periodically asking for feedback from the attendees. She asked attendees to offer candid feedback verbally or to not them on their comment sheets to be turned in at the end of the meeting. About a dozen comment sheets were submitted.

- **What is a Comprehensive Plan?**, explaining its purpose and major components, the history of planning in the township, and the planning process.
- **Wheatfield Township Today**, illustrating current conditions and concerns through facts, data and trend statistics, and photographs of the township and surrounding area; topics included the resident population, natural resources, cultural resources, housing stock, land use, transportation facilities and services, utilities, and township facilities and services, and their relationship to concerns for future development. There were several questions about the source(s) of data about population and housing, which were primarily the US Census Bureau's 2010 Census and its 2005-2009 American Community Survey.
- **The 2011 Citizen Survey**, which had a response of 81 surveys (a 6.5% return) at the time of the meeting and was intended to be an informal survey, reflected high satisfaction with the quality of life and available services in the township. Survey results indicated low availability of commercial services, employment, library services, services for seniors; and concerns or stormwater run-off, loss of rural character and (poor) property maintenance. Though the survey phrased several of these items as "major problems," only property maintenance received more than 40 percent agreement with a nearly equal percentage of disagreement. The survey results indicated that the majority of respondents support land conservation (68.0%) and public parkland (69.9%) associated with larger developments (10 lots or more) as well as for the purchase of historic sites and landmarks as public parks (79.0%), and land preservation from willing farmers and non-farm owners. When asked "If the plan advances just one thing, what would have that be?," two themes

Appendix B2: November 2011 Public Meeting

In preparation of the Wheatfield Township Comprehensive Plan

emerged: conserve rural character and encourage a limited amount of development for employment, service and tax base benefits.

- **Trends and Issues as Direction for the Plan** resulting from the technical research and citizen survey show that the township should review its policies and regulations to conserve (maintain presence and minimal change) of its rural character, family farms, nature-based recreation opportunities, historic landmarks, multi-generation families, and sense of community. It should also look for ways to refine and improve:
 - Locations for business and industry
 - View on agriculture
 - Character/open space protection tools
 - Housing options
 - Development standards
 - Long-range view on shale gas extraction
 - Maintenance/Improvement of roads
 - Leverage of Norfolk Southern rail line and open space for business development
 - Manage service costs through prudent expansion
 - Manage service costs through shared services
- **Next Steps, Next Public Meeting**, noting that the Planning Commission would next prepare the plan policies and recommendations and present a draft to the public in the Spring of 2012.

Participation in the survey and the public meeting were both very low. This may be a reflection of residents' satisfaction with the quality of life in Wheatfield Township and a lack of threats to that quality of life. Those who did participate offered their time and thoughts on the current and future direction of the Township. Their input will be considered as the Planning Commission determines what, if any, action or change to recommend. Any recommendations that the comprehensive plan makes to change zoning, subdivision and land development, or other ordinances would require public notice and public meetings prior to adoption.

Discussion and Comments

Average resident: 39.6 years old with a high school diploma, working in a management, professional, or sales position likely in public service or logistics

Average household: 2-3 person household, earning \$62,333

- *Does this describe your household? If no, please explain.*
 - Yes (2); About
 - No – retired
 - No – we have 11 people at our house

Appendix B2: November 2011 Public Meeting

In preparation of the Wheatfield Township Comprehensive Plan

- No, income not this high
- (Age) 55 household with \$150,000 income
- Where did resident statistics come from? The US Census Bureau 2010 census (100% count) and 2005-2009 American Community Survey (sample)
- Was each lot in the trailer park counted as a household? We assume so, as completed by the residents.
- Concern for accuracy of unemployment data

- *What would you add to the characterization of housing and conditions?*
 - It is private – leave it that way
 - It would be helpful to know the trend in school-age children population
 - Gas

- *What would you add to the characterization of the transportation system?*
 - Good enough
 - It's a rural area; lack of transportation should be expected
 - The Norfolk Southern rail line presents a long range opportunity for passenger rail. Think about where to place a station in our area and other alternatives to reduce gas use and cost.
 - Fix some of the 2' ditches along the road
 - (The plan) needs to recognize the potential impact of global oil shortages on local transportation

- *What would you say about utilities and services?*
 - Good enough, adequate
 - All new subdivisions should have underground utilities
 - A service station/mini mart at Meck's Corner
 - Do we want street lights and signage
 - Change the overhead line ordinance
 - Wagner Park should not be further developed in terms of clearing more land except for trails

- *Other comments*
 - Cultural resources include Wagner Park and the covered bridge
 - Air quality is good except for trash burning (especially plastics)
 - (Retail) Businesses are hanging by a thread, i.e. farmer's market
 - Noaker's (auto body service) is doing well
 - May need to commercialize farms to grow and prosper
 - There is a distinction between factory farms and small, family farms
 - Stormwater concerns may have been influenced by this year's high rainfall and severe events

Appendix B2: November 2011 Public Meeting

In preparation of the Wheatfield Township Comprehensive Plan

Some Things Should Stay The Same In Wheatfield Township

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. Our rural character | Other items |
| 2. Presence of family farms | - All of them (2) |
| 3. Nature-based recreation opportunities | - Marked items 1,2,4,5,6 (not 3) |
| 4. Protection of our historic landmarks | - Marked items 1,2,3,4 |
| 5. Multiple-generations families | - Marked items 1,2 (2) |
| 6. Sense of community | - Marked item 2 |
| | - (I) Don't disagree |

Some Things Should Change In Wheatfield Township

- 1. Location of lands designated for business and industry development.**
 - Only home-based
 - Plenty of services available
 - In home businesses should be allowed if neighbors agree or if no neighbors are around. Noise and odor pollution should be considered, also hours of operation and light pollution.
 - We should take a regional approach by encouraging the location of most services in Duncannon and New Bloomfield
 - o **What kinds of services?**
 - Butcher shop, farm stands, small equipment shop
 - o **Are these services appropriate as home-based or farm-based businesses?**
 - Yes (3)
 - Some maybe, but this is a slippery slope. (I) don't want to see roadside sprawl such as Route 11/15 in Penn Township
- 2. Consider agriculture**
 - o **What flexibility do farmers need or anticipate?**
 - To subdivide – lower taxes or tax concept
 - Farms need to have property taxes frozen so they are not forced to sell to pay school/property taxes
 - We only have one farmer – ask him
 - Work with residents
 - Factory farms are not residential friendly
- 3. Appropriate tools for open space protection (to protect rural character)**
 - o **How should protection be achieved? Protection of a few large areas? Protection of many smaller areas? Protection of connected areas (think hubs and spokes)?**
 - Any size development should have open areas

Appendix B2: November 2011 Public Meeting

In preparation of the Wheatfield Township Comprehensive Plan

- Purchased by township – why penalize owners
- A private people do it. Not with tax dollars
- Strong enforcement of existing zoning and land use ordinances

4. Development options for smaller lots and homes

- o **Where are appropriate locations for smaller lots and housing units?**
 - Near major roads
 - Delville Road, Roseglen, many areas
 - By creeks and streams for discharge of sewer plants
 - There aren't any. Keep the 2-acre lot requirement, which has probably done more to protect Wheatfield's rural character than anything else

5. Cost-Benefit of development standards/regulations

- o **Would you support mandatory trash collection? a burning ban to protect clean air?**
 - No (8)
 - We recycle but also burn un-recyclables. So do our neighbors.
 - Yes, and yes
- o **Would you support property maintenance? What aspects are most important to address?**
 - Have in effect, not enforced
 - No (3)
 - For cluster development
 - Yes, to the current zoning regulations (junk autos, garbage, junk metal)
 - Yes. All citizens have the right to maintain their property
 - Limit unlicensed non-farm vehicles to five or less per household

6. Long term shale gas extraction

- o **Your comments**
 - Need some protection
 - Adopt a model ordinance, including an extraction tax or drilling fee
 - If available, go for it!
 - If it is private property, it is not government business. It's private - leave it that way
 - No

7. Maintenance and improvement of Township roads.

- o **Are there other roads or bridges that need to be maintained differently or improved?**
 - (unreadable) At Montebello Rd and Sulfur Springs Rd
 - All new subdivisions should have drainage and paved roads

Appendix B2: November 2011 Public Meeting

In preparation of the Wheatfield Township Comprehensive Plan

- More paving, less tar and chip
- Yes
- No
- We need to address roadside litter. Ideally everyone looks after their own strip of roadside property, but many don't. Township-wide litter pick-up day with volunteers?

8. Leverage land uses of regional impact.

- o **What township, county, or state investments could incentivize business development or indirect economic benefit to Wheatfield Township?**
 - Would support business
 - No big business wanted
 - Again, we need to take a regional approach. Encouraging business development in existing developed areas.

9. Manage cost of township services through prudent expansion of services

- o **Should the township support the water trail and rail-trail concepts? Are there other trail corridor suggestions?**
 - Yes (5)
 - No
 - We should support and work with other communities. Boat landing to Juniata River similar to the Amity Hall side
 - The township does not own enough of the old railbed to make it worthwhile
 - No and no; economy is terrible. (We) do not need to spend money. (It's) not important. Wheatfield has plenty of park area and many parks available in Perry County
- o **What historic landmarks should be incorporated?**
 - Mill over bridge, Delville Church, Covered bridge, railroad bed, other mills and covered bridges (if any), old narrow gauge railroad right-of-way and still-to-be identified sites and buildings
 - Any private business would like to
- o **Are there services that Wheatfield Township doesn't provide that you think it should?**
 - Recycling
 - Unobtrusive home-based business between hours of 8am and 8pm
 - Road maintenance
 - Ordinance enforcement. This is the township's biggest failure

Appendix B2: November 2011 Public Meeting

In preparation of the Wheatfield Township Comprehensive Plan

10. Manage cost of township services through shared services

- **Are there services that Wheatfield Township doesn't provide but should provide through shared arrangements?**
 - Shared equipment
 - Possible (unreadable) recycling times if shared with other communities as such as Duncannon/Penn Twp
 - Possibly police in the future, recycling
 - None
 - I can see the value of a county police force. I don't know to what degree the township cooperates in joint purchases of equipment, road salt, etc. but it should be explored if it isn't already (done).

11. Other suggested changes:

- I think we should be thankful for what we have in Wheatfield Township. Nothing is perfect and no community is perfect but the numbers say very much about how satisfied our people are. Minor tweaking to our development is OK but keeping much the same is good for the majority.
- Need to allow older citizens a way to stay in the community as they get older. Senior center needed!
- Re-do ordinance book to the use of this township

Appendix B2: November 2011 Public Meeting

In preparation of the Wheatfield Township Comprehensive Plan

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Appendix B3: October 2012 Public Meeting

In preparation of the Wheatfield Township Comprehensive Plan

Summary

Thursday, October 11, 2012

7:30pm at the Wheatfield Township Building

1. Call to Order

Paul Finkenbinder, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. Attendance by the Planning Commission and other attendees is noted below. He then turned the meeting over to Michelle Brummer of Gannett Fleming, Project Manager for the Comprehensive Plan.

Wheatfield Township Planning Commission	✓ Paul Finkenbinder ✓ Dave Mills ✓ Robert (Bob) Rhoades ✓ Dave Jenkins Jen Wilson	Other Attendees	✓ Jim Fuller, Twp Supervisor ✓ Dexter Potter ✓ Tom and Val Nchilla ✓ Michelle Brummer, Project Manager, Gannett Fleming
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2. Overview of the Draft Comprehensive Plan

Michelle overviewed the plan's preparation, trends and issues, the direction outlined by the plan for the township, and the procedures for the review and adoption process, using a handout (attached).

3. Planning Commission Discussion

The planning commission members noted how much they learned about the township during the plan's preparation. They also acknowledged that while the resident population has grown, the rural character of the township remains even today. Continued growth is expected all be it at a slower pace during the economic recovery, and similarly will not change the rural character greatly. Therefore, the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan are only slight modifications to those adopted in 1974 and the recommendations are few.

If more significant growth or faster growth begins to occur, the township should update the trends and conditions of resources to determine if the goals need to be revised and additional recommendations for regulatory changes or other actions are needed to manage that growth.

The planning commission indicated that they overlooked the need for a recommendation to address steep slopes in the township regulations. Protection of sensitive natural resources was included but there was no recommendation to review and revise the definition and standards for steep slope protection. This is particularly important, since the sloping hillsides offer scenic views

Appendix B3: October 2012 Public Meeting

In preparation of the Wheatfield Township Comprehensive Plan

of the rolling topography and may be targeted for residential development. Michelle said she would insert a recommendation into the final draft.

Michelle also raised the point that the planning commission had not prioritized the recommendations. This can be as simple as a table that identifies which recommendations the township wants to pursue in the first two to three years and which in later years. It provides a schedule to follow and review. The planning commission agreed that a simple table should be included. Michelle said she would insert a table and provide it to the planning commission for review. The planning commission can review and approve and forward to the Board of Supervisors prior to plan adoption.

4. Final Steps in Review and Adoption

Michelle outlined the remaining steps in the review and adoption process. With the planning commission's approval, Michelle will

- 1) revise the draft plan as directed by the planning commission,
- 2) provide one copy to the township office elected officials and citizens to view,
- 3) provide an electronic copy to the township secretary for posting on the township website and confirm the posting, and
- 4) send letters to the county, adjacent municipalities, and school district, notifying them that the plan is available on the website for their review; print copies can be requested.

This opens the 45 day public review window. After 45 days, the Board of Supervisors must conduct a public hearing to receive final comments and may then adopt the plan. This meeting will likely take place in January or February 2013. Jim Fuller confirmed that there is not a pressing reason to rush the adoption in 2012.

5. Motion to approve the draft Regional Comprehensive Plan

Bob Rhoades made the motion to approve the draft Comprehensive Plan, with the steep slope and implementation table revisions, for public review and for consideration by the Board of Supervisors. The vote was unanimous in approving the draft plan.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Appendix B4: 2013 Public Hearing

In preparation of the Wheatfield Township Comprehensive Plan

Pending at time of printing

Appendix B4: 2013 Public Hearing

In preparation of the Wheatfield Township Comprehensive Plan

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APPENDIX C

MAPS

FOR THE

WHEATFIELD TOWNSHIP,

PERRY COUNTY, PA

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- 1 Population Density
- 2 Land Use
- 3 Community Facilities
- 4 Future Land Use

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