

Preface

What do I think makes where I live so great?

- Open fields quilted just for me by the farmers
- Lots of woods -- flowers -- animals
- even turkey buzzards by the flock
- Fairly good road system
- Reasonably Low taxes
- Good school
- Decent jobs nearby
- Nice people (But not too many people)

This sounds like an idyllic rural picture, but how long do I think Clinton Township will remain perfect? Change will come. When change comes, what can be done to preserve the picture? The future will come. What is the vision for the future?

The basis for answering these questions is the comprehensive planning process. Questions are asked and scenarios are designed that are, in fact, the abstract concept of the future of the area. Questions are asked about land use, transportation, housing, economic development, recreation and agriculture.

I believe the key to answering all of these questions is land use planning -The other themes relate back to land use. We like the farmers' fields, the woods, the parks. What we are talking about has an official term: "open space". Although there is open space some places in a city - open space is most commonly considered "the country" - rural - and endless. However, open space is not endless. If we don't take care - it will be gone.

The economic values of land conservation are many: Parks and open space often increase the value of nearby properties - - an important goal - preserve property values, create a higher quality of life. Working lands, such as farms and forests, usually contribute more money to a community than the cost of the services they require. Tim Kelsey, Professor of Agriculture at Penn State did a study that shows that for every tax dollar a municipality collects it spends 13 cents to provide municipal services to agricultural land as opposed to \$1.19 on residential developments. Conserving open space helps safeguard drinking water, clean the air, and prevent flooding - services that can be very expensive.

On the other side, how do you say "No" to development? How do you tell a property owner he can't develop his property? How do you limit the equity of a country landowner; as the land is his retirement plan and savings account? A community cannot and should not do this. Property rights are revered in the

Commonwealth of PA. An official Commonwealth publication states, "Land is one of our most valuable natural resources and the way it is used or developed creates a significant part of our physical surroundings. An important power of local government is to plan for and guide the way land resources are used."

Development can be guided, and the State has empowered municipalities to do this in many ways, some more innovative than others, through the use of The Municipal Planning Code, the MPC.

There are a variety of techniques available to use to encourage innovation AND ingenuity in development. In the process of using some of the techniques a community can effect open space planning.

How can we keep this vision? Perhaps we give the owner the opportunity to transfer the development rights of some of this property to another portion of the property that might suit development as well, if not better, than the prime viewing area....the part you see as you drive Through Clinton Township, Buffalo Township.

The perfect place to live is right here. We don't want to be caught short five years from now; when it's too late to implement any of these planning concepts, or when it's too late to prepare for growth and change. We have prepared this plan for now, to implement the vision.

Mary Zacherl
Secretary-Treasurer, Zoning and Permit Officer
Clinton Township

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