

**PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MAY 9, 2005**

The special meeting regarding the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, Public Listening Session #2, of the Planning Commission of the Township of Upper St. Clair, duly advertised and posted in accordance with law, was called to order by the Chairman at 7:00 PM, Monday, May 9, 2005, in the Board of Commissioners Meeting Room, 1820 McLaughlin Run Road.

PRESENT: Joel M. Helmrich, Chairman
Scott R. Slagle, Secretary
James Sekela
Douglas L. Shuck
Shannon Miller Planning and Zoning Administrator
Kathleen R. Oberle Recording Secretary

ABSENT: Robert J. Ridge, Vice Chairman
Marvin Haddox
David Wade

PUBLIC: Six (6) persons: Matthew R. Serakowski, Assistant Township Manager, Paul Besterman, Director of Recreation & Leisure Services, Mark Magalotti, Township Traffic Engineer, T. A. Ward, Trudy Rose and Jerry Kinder

A. J. Schwartz of Environmental Planning and Design (EPD) explained that in this second public listening session, he would be reviewing the demographic analyses as well as the preliminary findings of the benchmarking analyses. He utilized a Power Point presentation, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

An open discussion followed. In answer to a question by Trudy Rose as to why Township residents have the highest mortgage payments, Mr. Schwartz replied that it is due to the quality of the housing stock along with the increased land values. He was uncertain whether this included both first and second mortgages.

In terms of public school spending per student, Mr. Helmrich asked if the cost per student included a breakdown by teacher's salaries, fringe benefits, computers, supplies, programs, et cetera. Mr. Schwartz replied that it was not broken down in that fashion; however they could try to obtain those figures

In terms of the significance of priority of services, Mr. Schwartz explained that the table is broken into two categories: retaining residents and attracting residents. Mr. Slagle stated that he saw very little difference between the two categories. He moved to Upper St. Clair because of the school system, public safety, fiscal responsibility, public works and parks facilities and recreational programs, which he saw as being the same.

Mr. Shuck felt that there is a subtle difference between the two categories and that cultural resources, schools and parks and recreation (both active and passive) are important. The young families are looking for good schools and parks while the "empty nesters" are looking for cultural resources along with educational opportunities, which he defined as having a college in

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or near the community or having continuing education programs available through the school system. The regional environmental education center will be a big plus along the educational line. He also felt that Park Facilities and Recreational Programming were in the same category.

Mr. Sekela agreed that it is tough to differentiate between retaining and attracting because people tend to move due to a life-changing event.

While people wouldn't shop for a home in Upper St. Clair because they'd heard we had a great public works program, Mr. Shuck felt that public works could be an attraction when driving into the community and viewing the condition of the roads, landscaped traffic islands and general cleanliness.

Resident relations are a category that seemed to come up while talking to the planning staff as a way of retaining residents. Mr. Schwartz explained that long-term residents have an expectation that their elected and appointed officials along with the staff are going to be responsive to their needs.

Jerry Kinder felt that code enforcement as it relates to maintenance of properties is important.

Mr. Helmrich felt there is somewhat of a dilemma for the Township to determine whether it wants to either retain or attract residents. Mr. Schwartz felt that both need to be done.

Mr. Shuck felt that Upper St. Clair currently offers a variety of opportunities and with the new environmental education center and future expansion at Boyce Mayview Park, the Township should be ahead of the curve in attracting and retaining residents.

In answer to some questions and comments raised by T. A. Ward, the first draft of the Plan should be available in the Fall with adoption proposed in the Spring of 2006. The Township is using the 1995 Plan to build upon as well as changing and updating the data. Mr. Ward questioned where the Township is on constructing sidewalks and adjusting problem intersections. Matt Serakowski explained that both of these were part of the 1995 Comprehensive Plan and what hasn't been accomplished yet will be carried forward in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. Carolyn Yagle of EPD cited several plans developed by the Township such as the Sidewalks and Bikeways Plan and the Commercial Properties Plan.

Mr. Ward was concerned that Upper St. Clair doesn't have a town center and would favor the creation of a central business or focal point through a community corridor. At a minimum, he favored linking Kings Restaurant to the High School with sidewalks. Mr. Shuck agreed that having a town center is important, and he would like to see sidewalks linking Kings Restaurant down to beyond Pinebridge Mall, so that people can either walk or bike that route with perhaps some ice cream or coffee shops to draw pedestrians to the corridor. He added that the High School with its theater provides a tremendous opportunity for cultural events and this is already a great start. Mr. Shuck commented that he would like to see the stretch of Route 19 from Boyce Road to South Hills Village Mall linked with sidewalks.

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Matt Serakowski explained that the 2005 Comprehensive Plan will provide dates and deadlines of goals to be achieved. Then funding sources will need to be identified. Budgeting for capital projects for plan implementation should be done for the immediate short term.

Mr. Schwartz summed up the following short-term steps:

1. Summer, 2005 Define key community issues and opportunities
2. Summer, 2005 Develop planning concepts to address issues and opportunities
3. Fall, 2005 Prepare first draft of the Comprehensive Plan

There will be a second joint meeting of the Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners in July.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, it was moved, seconded and carried unanimously that the meeting be adjourned at approximately 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen R. Oberle, Recording Secretary

Attachments

1. Print of Power Point Presentation