

Zoning

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change it after that."

"That's an insult," said council president Don Cooper of the suggestion that council is aware of a plan to build a large development in a conservation district. "There's no design on anybody's part when we do this."

"First of all the majority of it, we were mandated to do by law," said Cooper of the new ordinances. "We had to bring it all into compliance with existing laws."

Cooper said that the borough could lose a \$14,000 state grant used to pay for developing the new codes if they aren't completed by June.

Cooper was also upset that King did not ask council or the planning commission about the new ordinances.

"If he raises a question I'll see that he gets an answer in writing," said Cooper.

The proposed zoning ordinance is an attempt to correct and standardize the widespread spot zoning allowed in previous codes with varying and sometimes confusing lot sizes and setbacks, depending on the lots' uses and locations, according to Pat Peiffer.

"The old zoning designations and lot sizes depended mainly on the availability of water and sewers. Lots were larger in places where wells and septic tanks were required and smaller where public utilities were available," said Marlene Pawlowski, the planning consultant who helped the borough write the new ordinances.

Depending on the lot size, one- or two-family homes will be designated R-1, R-2 or R-2A, while multi-family units will be rezoned R-3.

Including many recommendations from the 1980 proposed comprehensive plan, the new zoning map includes more residential districts, possibly through the conditional residential use of land zoned for conservation.

"The borough's most recent zoning ordinance dates from 1973," said Pawlowski. "Chester Engineering had drafted a new comprehensive plan and an improved zoning map in 1980, but that is basically all that we had to work with."

Pawlowski said that the present ordinance allows only one home for every two-acre lot in a conservation district. The proposed ordinance would allow planned residential development like that at Newberry Estate in conservation districts.

"Planned residential communities are designed to minimize digging and to prevent urban sprawl,"

Pawlowski added. "You're still putting only 25 homes on a 50-acre tract - you're just bringing them closer together and leaving more open space."

Pawlowski said that cluster or planned residential communities require a minimum of 50 acres and are covered by state regulations.

Section 704 of the proposed ordinance specifically defines what is allowed in these developments, regulating layout, density, erosion control, tree conservation, utilities and other design features. The land would have at least 20% (or 10 out of every 50 acres) devoted to common open space, the ordinance says.

Although the proposed ordinance is available for public inspection at the Dallas Borough Manager's office and at The Dallas Post, it does not contain the new zoning map.

"The map isn't finalized yet," said Borough Manager Milt Lutsey.

"Normally we review the zoning map at the same time that we review the proposed zoning ordinance," said Adrian Merolli, director of the Luzerne County Planning Commission. "The text doesn't mean much unless people can actually see on a map how their neighborhoods will be rezoned."

Merolli said that the county regularly reviews municipal zoning changes to make sure that they follow county and state law.

Normally the proposed ordinance and map go through a first reading, a public hearing before the municipal planning and zoning board, a second public hearing before the borough council and a second reading before they are adopted, Merolli said. The second public hearing and second reading can be done the same night that the council approves the ordinance.

Lutsey said that a public hearing on the proposed ordinance is planned, but no date has been set yet. He said that the Planning Commission will meet Thursday, April 30, at 7 p.m. to discuss it.

Under state law, no formal public hearings are required before ordinances are approved, as long as the council advertises in the newspapers that the ordinance is being considered, according to Dallas Borough Solicitor Ted Krohn. The public may comment on the ordinance at borough council meetings.

"We're trying to be very careful in writing this ordinance," said Pat Peiffer. "We want people's input."



PEER HELPERS - Shown from left are Dallas Peer Helpers Rich Sylvia, Joe Hudak, Keith McDonald and Becky Yurko. (Post Photo/Eric Foster)

911

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from Harveys Lake dialed on 911 will be relayed to the county communications center by the Back Mountain dispatcher.

The Luzerne County Communications Center is providing service to Harveys Lake for free.

Ironically, municipalities signing onto the county center in 1992 have had to pay for the service.

"Toward the end of 1991 we were running kind of at capacity," said David Macekura, director of the county communications center. "We had to add a dispatcher and add some equipment. It's at a staggering cost. The other towns before 1992 were configured into the system."

The two towns which have joined the county center in 1992, Plymouth Borough and Fairmount

Township, are paying \$48,000 and about \$2,000 a year for service respectively. The difference in cost is because Plymouth Borough has far more calls than Fairmount Township.

While the Back Mountain Communications Center has had 911 service for several years, Macekura said that the county communications center in a year and half to two years.

"Things are moving ahead faster than expected," said Macekura.

Macekura said that once the county has a 911 system of its own, the towns will no longer be charged because an assessment of up to \$1.25 per month can be put on every phone in the county to pay for the system.

Concert

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borough a 2% amusement tax to help cover the costs the borough might incur, both in liability and increased police needed for the traffic and crowds.

Councilman Thomas Kehler said at the borough's council meeting April 21 that a meeting will be scheduled with Greco to discuss the proposal.

Based on selling 4,000 tickets at \$20 each, the borough could stand to make \$1,600 per concert with a 2% amusement tax.

The total cost of the amphitheater and other renovations will be over \$100,000, according to Greco,

who has a ten-year lease agreement with Shirley Hanson. Other improvements will be an outdoor patio bar which will overlook sand volleyball courts.

The amphitheater stage has been designed so that the sound will shoot towards the woods where some of it will be absorbed, rather than having the sound reflect off of the lake, according to Greco, with shows ending at about 10 p.m.

Along with concerts, Greco plans on having several ethnic festivals, and has offered the use of the amphitheater to the Northeast Pennsylvania Philharmonic.

Peers

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ent crisis situations, suicide, child abuse, alcoholism.

"It's become our responsibility to take time out of our schedule to talk," said senior Keith McDonald. "One week you won't get anything. The next week you'll be on the phone every night."

"It's not always drugs or alcohol. A lot of times it's relationships," said McDonald. "Sometimes they come to you, not even for advice, sometimes just to bounce ideas off of you. A lot of kids feel more comfortable talking

with someone their own age. Oftentimes you don't have to have had the same exact experience. They're just looking for someone to talk with or someone I can refer them to."

"Basically, you listen as well as you can," said junior Becky Yurko. "You don't pass judgement. The important thing is that it's in total confidence. If you break this pact of confidentiality, you're out."

Makowski said that in the five years Dallas has had Peer Helpers, there has never been a breach of confidentiality.

The Peer Helpers also work on preventing problems by making new students feel more at ease. Each of the 35 to 40 students transferring into the district are each assigned a Peer Helper to show them around until they're familiar with the school.

While Peer Helpers are there to lend an ear, they're not expected to go it alone when safety is involved.

"If anybody is talking about being hurt, or hurting themselves, they don't spend any time on that," said Makowski. "They go to an advisor. They're a support group for the person after."

One of the things that the Peer Helper may do in serious cases, is refer the student to a STAR advisor.

Dallas's STAR program (Support for Teens at Risk) consists of 14 teachers and counselors at the High School and Middle School who are ready to help students who may be undergoing substance abuse problems, physical or sexual abuse, depression, eating disorders, school phobia, truancy, or are contemplating suicide.

"We don't want to put these people in a situation where they're going to be carrying baggage around with them," said high school principal Frank Galicki. "We're one of the few school districts that incorporates the Peer Helper Program as the spokesmen for the STAR program. We found the Peer Helpers are our link to the students and that helps us tremendously."

"The STAR team has given seminars to the Peer Helpers," said Makowski. "They know what we do on that team and they're not afraid to refer someone to us."

Yurko and freshman Rich Sylvia said they haven't had any tough problems yet.

"I've had it easy, I haven't had anything difficult so far," said Sylvia.

"It really gives you a sense of accomplishment," said senior Joe Hudak. "It really makes you feel like you helped someone with their problem. It picks up around the holidays," said Hudak. "It gets weird. I guess people get depressed."

When things get busy, the Peer Helpers are there for each other, in what McDonald calls a "support system within a support system."

The experience has made Hudak consider a career in counseling such as social work.

The Peer Helpers also have to do a service project each year.

"The big thing is teaching the students about community service," said Galicki.

Their latest venture is participating in the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's Adopt-A-Highway Program. The group has signed an agreement with PennDOT pledging to keep a two-mile stretch of Hilderbrandt Road near the high school free of litter.

Though the Peer Helpers are visible through community projects and the t-shirts they designed to wear to training programs and school functions, McDonald says the real results of their work is invisible.

"I don't think the triumphs are outward, it's the lack of problems," said McDonald.

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