

Franklin Township Residents

When I ran for office in November of 2005, I promised to do my best to keep the residents of Franklin Township informed.

If people read the February 23, 2006 edition of the Dillsburg Banner they probably noticed the bold print headline "Supervisors reject regional recreation plan". They may have also assumed that with that rejection the regional recreation plan topic was closed. I hope for the majority of the board and for the citizens of Franklin Township that this particular topic is closed. Supervisor Shambaugh said it best, when the vote was taken, "This is not our plan".

There are those, however, who plan to continue to push for the passage of this plan.

Carroll Township has a \$32,000 investment in this plan on which they hope to see a phenomenal return. The only way they can experience such a return is if all of the municipalities in the region opt into the Northern York Region Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan.

Franklin Township was contacted by correspondence dated September 19, 2002 from Carroll Township's manager, Dianne Price, requesting Franklin Township's participation in a grant application to develop the plan. The minutes of the Franklin Township Board of Supervisor's meeting for September 24, 2002 reflect the decision of the majority of the board not to participate in the grant application. Correspondence from Franklin Township was sent September 26, 2002 informing Carroll Township of the board's decision not to participate. Consequently no one was authorized by Franklin Township to participate on the project study committee to develop the Northern York Region Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan.

At the Franklin Township Board of Supervisors January 2006 meeting, Mr. Wayne Kober delivered a disc of the regional plan dated November 2005 and asked to have the plan placed on the February 2006 meeting agenda. The plan was placed on the agenda and at the February meeting Supervisor Brown explained the plan, since he was the chief official in Carroll Township when the application for the grant was written. He also served on the study committee to formulate the plan.

In spite of the board opting out of the plan, it was decided Sally Holbart of Land Logics Group, the planner for the project would attend a future meeting of Franklin Township's Board of Supervisors meeting, possibly in March. Perhaps her attendance is to influence a reversal of the board's decision to opt out.

Some of the many things that I find greatly disturbing about this plan are the many levels of bureaucracy including a Regional Recreation Commission, a Regional Recreation Authority, a study committee made up of the current members of the Northern York Community Services Foundation, of which Supervisor Brown is a member, a Safe Route Team, an Environmental Advisory Council (EAC), an Interim Recreation Study Committee to kick off key implementation issues such as intergovernmental agreements to lock municipalities into the plan. All of these committees are appointed positions denying the citizens their choice of representatives.

The plan serves as a window of opportunity for excessive taxation, and intrusive bureaucracies that control its residents as units of revenue and not co-equal citizens.

Provisions for bike and pedestrian trails, both on and off road, are listed in the plan. Three to five miles of trails will be designated or developed each year. Many of these miles of trails will traverse private property. Trails that can not be purchased or set aside by developers may be taken by eminent domain.

This plan requires riparian buffers along streams on private and public property. The maintenance of these riparian buffers, whether private or public, will be maintained by bureaucracy enforcement funded by the public.

Park land will be purchased as a region instead of by each municipality. Even though Franklin Township has adequate parkland through the year 2010, we would be involved in purchasing land in other municipalities, perhaps like the mistaken parcel of land that was wrongfully confiscated in Carroll Township.

Joint use and purchase of equipment would be the norm for a regional park maintenance team, paid for by joint funds from all municipalities. Franklin Township has good equipment which would end up depreciated in other municipalities only to have to be replaced by Franklin Township tax dollars.

A multimillion dollar community center being promoted by Supervisor Brown and the Northern York Community Services Foundation is of great concern. The plan says funding may come from grants, floating of a bond or by long term financing. Then there is the paid administrative and maintenance staff to support this massive undertaking.

These things are just the tip of the iceberg. The taking of private property for public pedestrian and bike trails, the liabilities and great maintenance costs, unelected bureaucracies ruling many facets of our lives, and higher taxes to meet the demands of this plan are only a few of the offensive results of implementing such a plan. Each year the supervisors have budget workshops which would then include the monies these unelected commissions would dictate for the projects they need to complete their pseudo-utopia. It used to be that people united to defend freedom and liberty, not to take it away.

Please attend the supervisor's meeting to let your thoughts and concerns be known. The meeting is the third Thursday of each month. March 16 is our next meeting.

Unfortunately some of the same people responsible for this plan are also working on Franklin Township's zoning, resulting in a far from simple zoning ordinance, which was the original goal.

Sincerely,
Naomi Decker