

Amity Township land zoned for industrial park

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By Denise Larive, News Writer

The Amity Township Board of Supervisors unanimously approved on Dec. 15 the rezoning of 400 acres of land on north Limekiln Road for an industrial park.

Board of Supervisors Chairman Robert R. Yanos said the rezoning concluded two years of work and consulting discussions by the township to create the area now known as the Amity Western Industrial Park, with the intent of attracting commercial businesses to move to the area.

The land was rezoned from low density residential to a planned business office and industrial district that would permit land development plans for a minimum of 40 acres.

Supervisor Kimberly J. McGrath was absent from the meeting.

Township Solicitor Brian F. Boland said the ordinance provides definitions for the PBOI district as well as "light manufacturing" and "compounding" uses that will be permitted by-right in the district.

By-right uses include business, professional, or government offices, light manufacturing processes and compounding and assembly, printing, binding, and publishing facilities, laboratories for research and development, hotel and/or conference centers, health clubs, adult and child day cares, fire and emergency service facilities, township-owned public uses, restaurants, personal and household service establishments, business services, warehouse and distribution facilities, as well as dry cleaning, laundry, and clothes pressing plants.

Heliports would be permitted only as a conditional use when approved by the board of supervisors and when operated in conjunction with another by right use.

Sanitary landfills, recycling facilities, and trash transfer stations would not be a by-right or conditional use.

Twenty five property owners located near the AWIP area were notified of the Dec. 15 public hearing to rezone the acreage.

Phyllis Rinehart, Monocacy Hill Road, Douglassville, asked how the zoning ordinance could affect their property taxes.

Boland said property taxes wouldn't change until the use of the land actually changes and the property becomes more valuable.

He said homeowners can still make improvements to their properties without the improvements increasing their assessments.

“There are no specific uses moving in there yet,” said Boland.

Yanos said the township has received inquiries into AWIP “but nothing serious yet.”

“It could take 20 to 30 years, but it would be a huge financial impact to the Daniel Boone School District,” said Yanos. “We’re not getting any kids out of it and the school district would make out tremendously.”

“The reason is to create long term stability,” said Supervisor Scott Stepp. “We see an opportunity here while the economy is slow to make these changes.”

Greg Herbst, Amity Park Road, Birdsboro, asked why this area was chosen and these properties and if there were other industrial-zoned areas in the township.

“They are not the same as LI,” said Yanos. “Riga Lane and Route 662 behind Kiwi are kind of land-locked. This was looked at as more conducive with the light at Route 422, that intersection can be improved further and Limekiln Road is basically a straight road until the parcel in question, and developers could improve that.”

“The township has had nothing but single family detached housing and a lot of complaining about that,” said Yanos. “We took a proactive approach here. It may not be successful, maybe someone will build and maybe they won’t but there would have been houses there someday, and the school district needs relief. That is why we are doing this.”

Supervisor Paul R. Weller said 800 to 1,000 homes could have been built on the 400 acres.

“It was a good move and I’m glad to see you did it finally or otherwise all it would be in there was homes with no benefit to anyone in this township to have another 1,000 homes in there,” said Reginald N. Scheifley, Browns Mill Road, Douglassville.

In other business:

- The board also approved the preliminary/final land development plan for an Italian Restaurant at Old Airport and Old Swede roads by Paulo Brutto, Reading.

Brutto wants to open Vincenzo’s this spring and said he will begin land development and construction as soon as the township receives his letter of credit and the municipal and financial agreements are finalized.

- The board unanimously approved the township’s 2011 general fund budget of \$4,012,337.64 with no tax increase to residents.

- Township Manager Charles E. Lyon said the Geiger Road Bridge is now open to vehicular traffic after being closed since 2005.

He said the final construction cost was \$109,000 with the installation of a box culvert.

- Michael Zomolsky was elected as the new chief of the Amity Township Fire Department.

