

## Open House Public Meeting Summary

Tuesday, April 30, 2024

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Pleasant Hills Middle School

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this public meeting was to update the Pleasant Hills community on the progress of the Implementable Comprehensive Plan and engage everyone in helping to affirm and refine preliminary key issues. The meeting recapped the progress made during the first half of the planning process to ensure that the project team and committee are on the right track as they begin to develop recommendations.

Jenni Easton, project manager, presented a brief overview of the implementable comprehensive planning process and project milestones reached so far. This included highlights from public events, committee discussions, stakeholder interviews and the community questionnaire. Based on all input to date, the plan's four key issues at this time are: Communications, Community Facilities, Safety and Property Maintenance, and Old Clairton Road. In addition to group discussion, stations around the room laid out these issues and their components, inviting written feedback.

Discussion included the following points.

### *Communications*

- It is important to find effective ways to connect with seniors in Pleasant Hills, as they comprise a significant portion of the population. Because not all seniors access information online, communications must happen across different platforms.
- Some suggested that the Borough had not communicated proactively with residents regarding the Borough building demolition and new construction, which they cited as an example of the need for better outreach on important future local matters.
- Reaching more people might look like publishing more information in the South Hills Messenger, televising or live-casting meetings, posting on the library bulletin board, broadening use of a text alert system similar to the school district's, opt-in mailings and/or further promoting the email list.

- The Borough website should be updated to more clearly and effectively update residents on agenda items and decisions made.
- A sense of branding and identity could benefit Pleasant Hills. Gateway signage could reinforce branding and placemaking, as well as a sense of local pride and values. For instance, this could set expectations for commuters speeding into the community along Old Clairton Road from new developments being built across borders.
  - The Borough's tree canopy and arboretum represent an obvious jumping-off point.
  - Gateways include the Route 51 cloverleaf, Gill Hall Road, Old Clairton Road, Bruceton Road, Green Drive and Arbor Lane.

### *Community Facilities*

- Pleasant Kingdom is a “wonderful” asset but can be challenging to access on foot.
- There's nowhere to push a kid in a stroller or teach a kid to ride a bike, other than in a parking lot – lack of flat, comfortable paths forces people to drive elsewhere (Peters Creek, etc.).
- A spray park could be a nice and relatively inexpensive enhancement.
- Mowry Park could use a playground area, something for smaller children.
- The baseball field layout and concession stand are not conducive to having multiple games or a tournament happening at one time, which could bring in revenue for the community. Upgrading the snack shack could improve the experience.
- No flush toilets or shelters at Mowry Park are available to the public.
- There's space for expansion at Mowry Park.
- Signage and wayfinding for some of the parks is lacking (Maize Field in particular).

### *Old Clairton Road*

- Traffic and pedestrian safety along Old Clairton Road deserve attention, including intersection upgrades at locations including (but not limited to) Coleen Drive and Broadway.
- Old Clairton Road should be walkable and well lit, with a cohesive sense of place.
- Make this a walkable community. This is about design and equipment (flashing beacons, crosswalks, etc.), about enforcement and about culture – “If you're in a crosswalk in Mt. Lebanon, they stop. Not here.”

- The cloverleaf is a gateway – important access, though kind of a mess. The Borough’s ability to address this is limited because Route 51 is owned, designed and maintained by PennDOT.

## *Safety and Property Maintenance*

- Traffic safety and police enforcement remain important.
- Sidewalk upgrades are needed in places such as along Old Clairton Road and Gill Hall, but the Borough will need to find creative solutions that don’t unduly burden homeowners.
- Keeping vacancy and blight under control is important. This can help encourage or discourage future development and redevelopment.
- Maintain strong code enforcement.
- Bill Green’s Shopping Center has cohesive signage because there is unified control. Perhaps the Borough could more broadly incentivize signage that conforms to a standard.

## *General Comments*

- This plan should look into TreeVitalize or a similar model to enhance the tree canopy and overall tree health.
- One of the things that attracts residents is how well the roads are maintained – it shows!
- Although the Borough has 470 businesses – and five applicants last month – residents continue to desire more local businesses. The Borough cannot fully control which businesses choose to locate here, though it can hold them to its standards. The former Foodland is an important vacancy to fill. The former Texaco will become a gas/convenience station.
- Rapid housing development in neighboring communities has an impact in Pleasant Hills, which is mostly built out. Much of the impact is through traffic. There are only three access points to Route 51.