



THOMAS COMMITTA ASSOCIATES, INC.  
*Town Planners & Landscape Architects*

MEMORANDUM

TO: East Goshen Township Officials & Staff

FROM: Thomas J. Comitta, AICP, CNU-A, RLA  
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DATE: September 25, 2018

SUBJECT: **RESIDENTIAL OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A PATH FORWARD**

Enclosed are our Recommendations for Open Space Development in East Goshen Township. These Recommendations are based on a review and analysis of:

1. The provisions of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code;
2. The provisions in the existing East Goshen Township Zoning Ordinance;
3. The tract sizes in the R-2 District;
4. The arrangement, form, and composition of additional dwelling unit types;
5. The existing land uses in the R-2 District;
6. The existing natural features (floodplains, slopes, woodlands) in the R-2 District; and
7. The above considerations, with a view toward a modest expansion of dwelling unit opportunities within the R-2 District.

We will present the enclosed Recommendations at the EGT Planning Commission Workshop Meeting on September 26, 2018, and can answer various questions at that time.



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### **1. Overview on Zoning Ordinance Provisions, per the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code**

- 1.1. According to Section 603.(c)(5) of the PA MPC, Zoning Ordinances may contain: “provisions to encourage innovation and to promote flexibility, economy and ingenuity in development, including subdivisions and land developments as defined in this act”.
- 1.2. According to Section 604.(4) of the PA MPC, the provisions of Zoning Ordinances shall be designed: “To provide for the use of land within the municipality for residential housing of various dwelling types encompassing all basic forms of housing, including single-family and two-family dwellings, and a reasonable range of multifamily dwellings in various arrangements...”.
- 1.3. According to Section 604.(5) of the PA MPC, the provisions of Zoning Ordinances shall be designed: “To accommodate reasonable overall community growth, including population and employment growth, and opportunities for development of a variety of residential dwelling types and nonresidential uses.”.

### **2. Overview on Existing EGT Zoning Ordinance Provisions**

- 2.1. The R-1 District in EGT is the Hershey’s Mill community. It has been developed under the PRD – Planned Residential Development provisions of the EGT Zoning Ordinance, and Article VII of the PA MPC. The R-1 District allows in Section 240-8.D.(1)(a)[1]: “Single-family detached dwellings, semidetached dwellings, townhouses or apartment dwellings with a maximum of six total dwelling units attached to each other”.
- 2.2. The R-2 District in EGT currently allows in Section 240-9.C.(1): “Single-family cluster development as a Conditional Use in accordance with §240-28”. This opportunity pertains only to Single-family detached dwellings.

In Section 240-28. Single-family cluster development, the following is required: a minimum tract area of 20 contiguous acres per §240-28.C.(1); one (1) dwelling per acre per §240-28.C.(4), since the base R-2 District requires a minimum lot area of 1 acre; and 40% to 50% minimum Common Open Space depending on lot sizes of 25,000 square feet and 20,000 square feet respectively.

- 2.3. The R-2 District in EGT also currently allows in Section 240-9.C.(11): “Single-family open space development as a Conditional Use in accordance with §240-36”. This opportunity pertains only to Single-family detached dwellings.



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In Section 240-36. Single-family open space development, the following is required: a minimum tract area of 8 contiguous acres per §240-36.B.(1); one (1) dwelling per acre per §240-36.B.(4), since the base R-2 District requires a minimum lot area of 1 acre; and 55% minimum Common Open Space.

- 2.4. Currently, there are no opportunities in the R-2 District for attached dwellings, such as a twin or triplex dwelling unit.

### **3. The Tract Sizes in the R-2 District**

- 3.1. Given the current level of development in EGT, and based on existing property boundaries, there are four (4) tracts that total 20 acres and greater. The 20 acre minimum tract size is being considered as a possibility for new residential opportunities in the R-2 District, since that acreage threshold is already recited in the Single-family cluster development provisions.
- 3.2. Other tracts from 8 to 20 acres were also evaluated. However, in order to create a sufficient space within which a small neighborhood would gracefully fit, and in order to have substantial open space, 20 acres is much more plausible.

### **4. The Arrangement, Form, and Composition of Additional Dwelling Unit Types**

- 4.1. The new residential opportunities that could be considered for properties 20 acres and greater, would be for some forms of attached dwellings such as twin dwellings (where 2 homes would share a party wall). Another form of an attached dwelling could be a triplex dwelling (where 3 homes could be attached and could be referential to the look of a typical Chester County/EGT expanded farmhouse, and could have a building frontage width in the range of approximately 60 to 80 feet).

By having increased opportunities with twin dwellings and triplex dwellings, the EGT Zoning Ordinance could be more responsive to items 1.1., 1.2., and 1.3. above, pertaining to the PA MPC.

### **5. The Existing Land Uses in the R-2 District**

- 5.1. The properties that are 20 acres or greater in the R-2 District are developable, in that they do not have an existing land use that already consumes the property such as a school or other institution, and do not have Conservation Easements that would preclude development.



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Existing land uses of the properties 20 acres or greater are either large lot residential properties, meadows, farm fields, woodlands, or lawn areas.

### **6. The Existing Natural Features (floodplains, slopes, woodlands) in the R-2 District**

- 6.1. The existing natural features of the properties 20 acres or greater do not include severe constraints that consume the entire properties. There appears to be sufficient land that is not encumbered by steep slopes, and wetlands. Therefore, it appears that there are sufficient upland areas that are developable (above the lowland areas that have streams and floodplains).

### **7. The Above Considerations, with a View Toward a Modest Expansion of Dwelling Unit Opportunities within the R-2 District**

- 7.1. A new set of provisions could be written to complement §240-28. Single-family cluster development, and §240-36. Single-family open space development. New provisions could be titled: "Single-family attached dwelling unit development".

However, because §240-36. has the main ingredients for successful dwelling unit arrangement in the subsections pertaining to Area and bulk regulations, Open space regulations, and Open space plan development, §240-36. could be modified and renamed: "Residential Open Space Development".

- 7.2. Amendments to Section 240-36. could be created whereby existing provisions could pertain to single-family detached dwelling units as a main Subsection "A", and new provisions could be written for single-family attached dwelling units as new main Subsection "B".
- 7.3. A minimum tract size of 20 acres could pertain to single-family attached dwelling units.
- 7.4. An opportunity to have twin dwelling units, and triplex dwelling units could pertain to the 20+ acre tracts.
- 7.5. The minimum open space of 55% could pertain to the single-family attached dwelling unit developments (and remain as 55% for single-family detached developments).
- 7.6. Refined open space design standards could pertain to the single-family attached dwelling unit developments (as well as for the single-family detached dwelling unit developments) to specify minimum parcel widths for open space types. Further, the refined open space design standards could address "more usable" open space for



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- Trails, Walkways, Pedestrian Gathering Areas, Greens, etc. on land with certain slope thresholds.
- 7.7. The requirement for a centralized water supply system and centralized sewage disposal system could pertain to the single-family attached dwelling unit developments.
  - 7.8. The maximum density of 1 dwelling unit per acre could pertain to the single-family attached dwelling unit developments.
  - 7.9. New design standards could pertain to: the arrangement of dwelling unit types; the types of vehicular thoroughfares and streetscapes; the arrangement of usable open space in proximity to dwelling units; building types (including unit widths, heights, roof pitches, fenestration, materials, colors, etc.); and setback and buffer standards.

Based on the above analysis and evaluation, we suggest that the EGT Planning Commission consider making a positive recommendation to the EGT Board of Supervisors to have a draft set of Amendments prepared to enable Single-family attached dwellings (twins and triplex homes) in the R-2 District.