

# County of Centre



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### - MEMO -

**To:** Registered Professional Land Surveyors and Engineers submitting Subdivision and Land Development Plans under the jurisdiction of the Centre County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

**From:** Anson C. Burwell, Subdivision and Land Development Planner  
Centre County Planning and Community Development Office 

**Subject:** Policy updates for administration of the Centre County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance: Amended Receipt and Review Policy; Definitions of 'Public Water Supply' and 'Areas Where Public Water Is Available'; and, 'Submission Checklist' to effect a complete submission package.

**Date:** February 28, 2006

Please be advised, due to an increased volume of Major Subdivision and Land Development Plans submitted under the jurisdiction of the Centre County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (both in number and scope) coupled with an ongoing concern regarding the need to reduce incomplete plan submission packages, the Centre County Planning Commission has instructed the Planning Office staff to inform you of the following:

- 1) At their regularly scheduled public meeting of February 21, 2006, the Centre County Planning Commission adopted a policy change whereby the staff will continue to accept formal major plan submissions up to the allotted twelve (12) day time limit, as defined in Section 307. of the County's Ordinance; however, when in receipt of a complete submission package the staff will provide standard notice to all applicable parties indicating that the staff will bring the plan before the Planning Commission not at the next scheduled meeting, but at the following monthly meeting.

For example: Plans submitted within March's deadline will be brought before the Centre County Planning Commission for review and action at their regularly scheduled meeting in April.

This policy change is consistent with both the criteria for review and action as defined in Section 508. of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) and in Section 307. of the County's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and will provide a minimum time frame sufficient for the staff to properly prepare action recommendation and to allow for a pre-review of the various plan submissions by the Planning Commission's recently established '*Major Subdivision and Land Development Plan Review Sub-Committee*'.

Note: For further information, please reference the attachment entitled: **Policy Revision**.

- 2) At their regularly scheduled public meeting of February 21, 2006, the Centre County Planning Commission adopted a policy change regarding the terms 'Public Water Service' and 'Areas Where Public Water Is Available', as noted in Section 416. of the County's Ordinance.

Provided are definitions found acceptable by the Centre County Planning Commission and the Planning Office staff is instructed to employ same in the administration of the County's Ordinance.

Note: Please reference the attachment entitled: **Public Water Service**.

- 3) As noted in the opening statement of this memorandum, the Planning Commission has voiced its serious concern in regard to plan submissions that are incomplete, due to any number of factors, including but not limited to numerous graphic deficiencies, lack of supporting required documentation and a general trend of trying to 'get something submitted' by the submission deadline.

Note: In order to help plan preparers, please refer to the attached **Submission Checklist**.

In closing, the Planning Office staff encourages the scheduling of 'pre-submission conferences', this in an effort to eliminate or at least markedly reduce the number and type of plan deficiencies that would lead to an incomplete submission package.

As always, if you have any questions regarding these issues please don't hesitate to call. And thank you for your continued cooperation, it's appreciated.

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**Policy Revision - - Adopted by the Centre County Planning Commission at its regularly scheduled public meeting of February 21, 2006.**

**Major Subdivision and Land Development Plan Submission, Staff Review and Commission Action Policy**

Background:

The *Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC)*, specifically Section 508. Approval of Plats, reads in part: All applications for approval of a plat, whether preliminary or final, shall be acted upon by the governing body within such time limits as may be fixed in the subdivision and land development ordinance but the governing body shall render its decision and communicate it to the applicant not later than 90 days following the date of the regular meeting of the governing body next following the date the application is filed, provided that should the said next regular meeting occur more than 30 days following the filing of the application, the said 90-day period shall be measured from the 30<sup>th</sup> day following the day the application has been filed.

Section 307. of the *Centre County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance*, entitled: Date of Submission and Review, reads: "The date of submission shall be the date upon which the Application Form, the fees, if any, and the requisite number of Plans and other documentation is submitted. Staff review shall take place as soon as practicable. Commission review and action shall not be less than twelve (12) calendar days nor more than ninety (90) calendar days after the submission date. Plans submitted less than twelve (12) calendar days prior to a Commission meeting shall not be reviewed at that meeting, but will be reviewed at the succeeding meeting. Extensions of the ninety (90) day review period may be granted if agreed upon in writing by the Applicant and the Commission."

Policy:

Staff acknowledges receipt of the proposal (once the applicant or agent submits a complete submission package within the prescribed criteria, as described in Section 307. of the County's Ordinance) and corresponds to all applicable parties indicating that the plan will be brought before the Centre County Planning Commission at their next scheduled meeting for review and action.

Note: Practically speaking, most plan submissions occur at the 'last hour' and it effectively leaves the staff with as little as eight (8) working days to prepare our review and action recommendation for presentation at the Commission's public meeting.

Amended Policy Changes:

As observed and discussed by the Planning Commission, the continued high volume of plans (both in number and scope of detail), coupled with limited staff time for adequate review preparation as well as the disproportionate amount of time devoted to the Commission's review and action at their public meetings, suggests the need for an alternate approach, as offered below:

1. Both the MPC and the County's Ordinance indicate that action shall occur within the ninety (90) day time limit allotted. Therefore, staff will acknowledge plan receipt similar in previous fashion (when a complete submission package is received); however, when received staff will indicate that the plan is to be brought to the Commission for review and action not at the next regularly scheduled meeting but to the Commission at the following monthly meeting. This will allow staff approximately a five (5) week time period to prepare the review and recommendation for presentation to the Commission.
2. Per the above, the Centre County Planning Commission has created a Major Subdivision and Land Development Plan Review Sub-Committee, comprising three (3) appointed Planning Commission members. This sub-committee will schedule to meet with the planning staff at a designated time prior to each upcoming public meeting. The goal being to address much of the routine items that now occur at the public forum such that a 'fast-tracking' of plan reviews and action can take place subject to a report of the sub-committee at the public meeting.
3. At the specific request of the Planning Commission, the staff will schedule sufficient time for preparation of meeting handouts such that they can be included in the Minutes and Agenda package as is mailed to each member prior to the next scheduled Planning Commission meeting.

## **Public Water Service Policy and Definitions - - Adopted by the Centre County Planning Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting of February 21, 2006.**

The Centre County Planning Commission requested that the Planning Staff review the internal policy relative to the term 'Public Water Service', since a definition for the term is not outlined in the Centre County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

Section 416. of the Centre County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, entitled: Water Supply indicates that "The Applicant shall provide public water service to all lots in all areas where public water is available and where the responsible water agency determines it can serve the proposed lots."

In order to provide guidance to the Applicant, the Centre County Planning Commission approved the following as a standard and accepted definition for the following terms:

**Public Water Service (System):** As stated in Chapter 109.1 of the Pennsylvania Code, a public water system is "... one which provides water to the public for human consumption which has at least 15 service connections or regularly services an average of at least 25 individuals daily at least 60 days out of the year." Further, ownership type of the system; i.e., municipal, authority, association or private community, are all defined as a public water service system.

Note: Under Section 109.1 of the Regulations, "system" is defined in relevant part as follows:

- (i) A group of facilities used to provide water for human consumption including facilities used for collection, treatment, storage and distribution. The facilities shall constitute a system if they are adjacent or geographically proximate to each other and meet as least one of the following criteria:
  - (A) The facilities provide water to the same establishment which is a business or commercial enterprise or an arrangement of residential or nonresidential structures having a common purpose and includes mobile home parks, multi-unit housing complexes, phased subdivisions, campground and motels.
  - (B) The facilities are developed, owned, managed and/or operated by the same person or legal entity.

**Areas Where Public Water Is Available:** Where the Applicant's property intended for development is either traversed by a public water system service main, adjacent to a public water system service main and/or within 150 feet of the existing water system service main or is within a distance of 50 foot increments for every Equivalent Dwelling Unit (EDU) created by the subdivision, and where the existing water system service main(s) can provide at least 25 psi of potable public water service (per Chapter 109.607) to all existing and proposed customers. Further, should alteration or upgrade be needed in order to avoid degradation of existing public water service, the parties will be encouraged to discuss various options to address availability.

Note: Per the above, the Applicant shall produce written confirmation from the public water service system provider indicating that service can be provided per the above-referenced minimum standards.