



## The Express-Times

### 800-home plan can't pass muster

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By **SARAH MAUSOLF**  
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FORKS TWP. -- Despite an attorney's efforts to peddle a proposal for 837 homes, the township's planning commission recommended nixing the plan.

About 300 people packed the Forks Community Center on Thursday night for a meeting to review dueling proposals for a new housing development.

Residents who spoke during the meeting aired concerns about the impact of 837 homes on roads, schools and the community at large.

Drawings of the proposal featured 460 age-restricted houses and 377 single-family homes on two parcels zoned farmland protection.

The planning commission also viewed an alternate sketch plan for 162 homes on the same swath.

Dennis Benner, an attorney for Kings Mill Development Co. LLC, said the larger development would bring far fewer children to the Easton Area School District than some school officials fear.

He unveiled figures suggesting the development would bring 282 children and generate a net benefit of \$1.9 million in school taxes.

"The horrendous, catastrophic events that seem to be suggested by others just don't exist," he said.

Benner also touted the perks of the 837-home proposal, saying the developer would pay \$10 million in fees to the township.

Perks also include a library, municipal maintenance facility and about 50 acres of open space, he said. Drawings of the age-restricted community called "The Cottages at Kings Mill" feature a walking trail, clubhouse, tennis courts, bocce, shuffleboard, a putting green and ponds.

The plan would require a zoning overlay because it features more dense homes than a farmland protection zone allows.

The less dense plan, with 162 homes, conforms with zoning laws.

The land in question is 380 acres presently home to soybean and corn crops. One swath is 163 acres bordering Richmond Road, Newlins Road East and Glover Road. The other is 219 acres along Uhler, Richmond, Padula and Glover roads.

Although Benner argued the more dense proposal would benefit the township, most planning commission members advised ditching it.

Chairman Vito Tamborrino Jr. cast the lone opposition vote, saying he wanted to see a compromise between the plans. He preferred a plan less dense than 837 homes, but with open space and a mix with

age-restricted homes.

Planner Erik Chuss said the density is a concern, saying the development would place a strain on roads, services and taxes.

"The kettle is boiling over already," he said.

Several planners also questioned the accuracy of figures Benner presented on the number of schoolchildren the proposals would bring and the financial impact.

Planner John Castrovinci, who is principal of Forks Township Elementary School, expressed concerns about the impact on the schools, saying the elementary school is seeing an increase in enrollment.

Residents who spoke overwhelmingly opposed the 837-home proposal. Their gripes focused on increased traffic the development could bring, the impact on roads in surrounding municipalities, the strain on water and sewer systems, the potential for a tax hike and the students the project could bring.

Zoning hearing board member Lou Moyer said extending public sewer into the farmland protection zone would cause developers to swarm like a plague of locusts.

Other residents said granting a zoning overlay would have a similar effect.

C. David Howell, a candidate for supervisor in the November election, said he was glad to see so many residents turn out at the meeting and echoed concerns about density.

"The devil is in the density," he said.

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