



TCA Newsletter

Thomas Comitta Associates, Inc.

Summer 2010

Town Planners & Landscape Architects

In This Issue

Lititz Borough FBC

Expert Witness Testimony

Welcome Penn Township

Marcellus Shale

Binns Park Cleanup

CNU 18

6th Ward Park

TCA wishes you all a healthy and enjoyable Summer of 2010!

TCA is staying at the forefront of local and regional planning issues. Example: Our work pertaining to impacts from the Marcellus Shale natural gas activity. Clearly, the unfolding disaster in the Gulf of Mexico due to the Deepwater Horizon spill (may it end soon!) puts drilling in our own backyards into perspective. The results of the April workshop, co-hosted by TCA, re-emphasized the critical role that high-level planning has to play in creating and maintaining healthy communities. Please see the article below for more information.

Quick Links

[Home](#)

[Projects](#)

[Services](#)

[Staff](#)

[Blog](#)

Community health was also the theme last month at CNU 18 (the Congress for New Urbanism's 18th Annual Conference), held this year in Atlanta. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) partnered with CNU to highlight the relationship between well-designed, walkable communities and a healthy population. A growing body of research supports this relationship, and provides one more good reason for TCA to provide innovative planning and design services that facilitate walkable communities.

Join Our Mailing List!

TCA specializes in state-of-the art planning tools, and has done so for over 37 years. We are becoming the premier firm in Pennsylvania for Form-Based Codes and Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND). This newsletter provides just a brief overview of some of the contributions TCA has made to bring better planning- and better health- to our own communities and yours.

**Visit TCA at the
PA Downtown
Center Conference**
in Lancaster,
June 13-16th

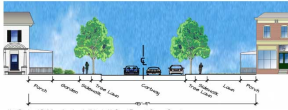
Regards,

Tom

Thomas J. Comitta, AICP, RLA, ASLA
President, Thomas Comitta Associates, Inc.

Lititz Borough adopts Form-based Code

TCA is excited to have assisted Lititz Borough to develop and adopt the first Form-Based Code in Lancaster County. The year long process focused on maintaining the traditional character of this charming borough.



Expert Witness Testimony

Did you know that TCA has served as an expert witness at more than 1,200 hearings? We have recently been retained on cases pertaining to:

- billboards;
- conditional uses for urban infill;
- housing in compliance with ADA and the Fair Housing Act; and
- Parking standards for TNDs.

Welcome Penn Township!

TCA has begun to work with **Penn Township, Lancaster County**, to transform their existing Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision/Land Development Ordinance. These efforts are intended to support a new Comprehensive Plan (currently in draft), promote sustainable design, and incorporate needed Form-Based Code elements.

Balancing Marcellus Shale Interests



TCA partnered with Advanced GeoServices Corporation (AGC) and the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS) to facilitate a participatory Workshop on issues surrounding the development of Marcellus Shale (MS) in Pennsylvania. The Workshop, held on April 7, 2010 in Williamsport, PA, was well attended by over 80 participants, including municipal officials, residents, concerned citizens, representatives of environmental groups, and oil and gas industry representatives.

Faculty from Penn State, legal professionals, government officials, and environmental leaders were invited to share their knowledge and experience with MS on topics ranging from land use planning, roads, environmental impacts, and economic factors. Participants shared their own stories, asked questions, and made valuable connections.

When speaking at the PSATS Annual Conference on April 22, 2010, Tom summarized some of the key comments in the following way:

- An exaction tax or severance tax is needed to support infrastructure and accommodate the surge in Marcellus Shale activity;
- The State needs to assume a leadership role in Regional Planning, and understand the needs of small towns like Towanda;
- The cumulative impact on the natural environment and critical habitats need to be evaluated;
- Comprehensive Planning needs to take MS into account;
- Municipal Zoning Ordinances need to be amended to balance the development and growth of MS as an industrial land use; and
- "Growth Opportunity Corridors" should to be identified to focus the MS activity, and accommodate growth needs.

Binns Park Cleanup

Five years after Lancaster's Binns Park construction, TCA's John Hershey noticed that some plantings within this popular downtown destination required substantial maintenance in order to sustain his original vision for this open space designed while he was employed by Derck & Edson Associates. After soliciting financial support from a local philanthropist and maintenance equipment from the City's Public Works Department, John organized a fun group of 30 experienced gardeners and downtown enthusiasts for pruning, weeding, planting, and mulching on April 11th. Thanks to this generous community support, Lancaster's "outdoor living room" is once again ready for a busy season of summer events. A second park clean-up and bulb planting effort will likely occur in early-November.



CNU 18: A Prescription for Healthy Places

TCA participated as a "New Urbanist Partner" at CNU's 18th Congress, held May 19 to 22, 2010, in Atlanta, GA. Tom also represented ANUPA, the Association of New Urbanism in Pennsylvania, at the Chapter Meet-up. The event was organized with assistance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and focused on the growing database of metrics that indicate how effective urbanism promotes healthy lifestyles and communities.



Personal highlights from CNU-18 for Tom included guided tours of the 28 acre Glenwood Park TND (2003) by Charles Brewer, the master developer, and of the Olmstead-designed 1400 acre Druid Hill neighborhood (1908) by Bruce Rado (resident and fellow Harvard Graduate School of Design graduate).

6th Ward Park Reconstruction



As the first of 30 publicly-owned open spaces to be improved in accordance with TCA's Urban Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan for the City of Lancaster, the 6th Ward Memorial Park is presently being reconstructed. This park's centerpiece will be a fully accessible wading pool with a water 'sprayground' designed with critical input received from neighborhood children last summer. To ensure future success, TCA solicited such input to promote park "ownership" by its youngest users. Other park enhancements include accessible play structures, basketball courts with porous paving (to decrease storm water run-off and reduce noise), a new pavilion, outdoor seating areas, and walkways. Completion of Phase 1 construction is anticipated in September, 2010.



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