

**SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP**  
**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE**

**April 24, 2017**

**APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

The April 24, 2017 Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (Committee) of South Strabane Township came to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Mae C. Reynolds Meeting Room of the Municipal Building (550 Washington Road).

The following were present:

Steering Committee: David Fisher (Resident)  
Jack Keisling (Supervisor)  
Joseph Kopko, (Planning Commission)  
Dan Reitz (Resident)  
Cynthia Rossi (Resident)  
Michael Sherrieb (Township Engineer with KLH)  
James Stewart (Zoning Hearing Board)  
William Ursic (Resident)

Absent: Thomas Steele (Planning Commission)  
Brandon Stanick (Township Manager)  
Robert Weber (Supervisor)

Also Present: Carolyn Yagle (Planning Consultant with EPD)

There were three residents in attendance.

The April 10, 2017 Steering Committee Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved with corrections.

Ms. Yagle distributed a Regional Parks Map and a Township Parks Map to the group and briefly described the content of the maps. She stated the GIS data was provided by the Washington County Planning Commission (WCPC) and the updated information generated by the Committee would be given to the WCPC. Ms. Rossi suggested adding the following parks/facilities in adjoining communities: North Franklin Township, Amwell Township and the ballfield behind the Faith Christian School in East Washington Borough.

Mr. Kopko noted that a portion of Washington Park is in the Township. Mr. Keisling added there has been discussion in the past regarding an additional exit from Washington Park onto Clare Dr., but there has only been support for an emergency access and not a full road.

Ms. Yagle stated we will want to understand what the Township wants for its park and recreation facilities based on accessibility (ways to get to the parks) and population demands with focus on public spaces and partnerships where the Township would not own land and/or facilities.

The Steering Committee identified the following park and recreation facilities: Rue Tom soccer field; walking trail behind the Cameron Wellness Center; Community Park, Streator Park, Driscoll Park and Billy Bell Park; land and shelter behind the Laboratory Fire Station; playground at Trinity East Elementary School; and the gymnasium at Trinity East, which can be rented. Ms. Yagle stated the land and facilities that the Township owns will be the focus of the Plan; although others are available, but under different management.

Ms. Yagle noted the Plan will provide updates for design, financial and administrative costs, programming and maintenance of facilities. The approach to programming shapes the approach to maintenance. She stated the Quality of Life in a community is often personified by open space, parks and the Main Street streetscape. A discussion followed regarding rating current park facilities. Mr. Keisling noted it may be helpful to look at the 2015 survey data as a guide.

A discussion followed regarding summer youth activities in schools. Mr. Fisher noted parks and recreation is an area of opportunity and a positive social factor leading to healthy activities and overall wellness.

Ms. Yagle stated the Township will need to have an understanding of an inventory of its facilities and recreational choices; the total options available to residents. Providing information to residents would be a manageable way to communicate the Quality of Life in the Township.

Mr. Kopko stated parks and recreation means "community" and mentioned simple outdoor activities from years past.

Mr. Sherrieb noted our parks are primarily used for picnics and graduation parties. Most fields are occupied by organized sports and the parks are too sterile with open mowed grass and no shaded areas.

Mr. Keisling suggested a professional park and recreation director. Ms. Yagle noted that recreation is a business and a service. The Township will need to understand the customer demand for services and related to our potential and what will be needed for the future. Mr. Kopko expressed his agreement and added the Township needs a professional park and recreation director with a degree in the field. Mr. Keisling stated the Township has a good start with its volunteers though the majority of programming is for senior and youth activities.

In response to a comment from Mr. Fisher regarding maintenance, Mr. Sherrieb said landscapes in parks can be designed to minimize costs associated with labor and time.

Ms. Yagle stated a solution for recreation in the Plan will not be specific. The Township of Upper St. Clair's facility has a large number of non-residents who pay a higher fee, which was factored in from the beginning. The Township could use this and similar pricing structures to understand how rates could be structured in South Strabane.

Mr. Fisher stated the Township should be aware of what it can do and what could be borrowed from others. He discussed partnering with Washington & Jefferson College to offer things without increased costs. Mr. Keisling suggested working with Trinity School District to share facilities.

Ms. Yagle stated a sample parks vision statement might be: *South Strabane Parks and Recreation is full of potential and the future is centered on the community.*

A discussion regarding costs ensued. Ms. Yagle added that low cost is not the same as cheap and that low cost can be quality.

Mr. Ursic asked how our 80 acres of parks compare to other townships and Ms. Yagle said she would investigate this. She noted the ways parks are used is more important than acreage. The discussion of whether more land is desirable is for a future meeting. Mr. Reitz asked if there is a requirement for setting aside a certain amount of acreage for parks.

Mr. Keisling remarked a walking trail is still needed in Strabane Manor. Ms. Yagle stated that the type of land is important when considering connectivity or the potential for connectivity.

Mr. Fischer recommended requiring open space in all subdivisions. Mr. Reitz agreed that accessibility to the open/green/recreation spaces is critical. Mr. Kopko added that transportation to the parks is important as well.

Mr. Stewart commented on the lack of sidewalks as a hindrance in developments. Ms. Yagle said rights-of-way and size are important considerations from a perspective of connectivity. Mr. Reitz suggested having sidewalks on one side of a street and a bike lane on the opposite side.

Ms. Yagle asked Committee members of the desired message about safety and health. Mr. Fischer said it would be important to see considerations for sidewalks, etc. in all future development plans. Mr. Sherrieb added the Code requires 20% open space of which up to 50% can be water and at least 40% of common open space must be solid spaces. A discussion followed regarding sidewalks and open space/recreation in future developments.

Ms. Yagle said the Committee will work on a vicinity piece to relate this information.

Mr. Keisling stated streams were cut-off when I-70 was constructed and American Rivers was enlisted to make a compensatory area in Charleroi. He would like to see an area for fishing in the Township.

Ms. Yagle announced dates for two Community Open Houses at the Municipal Building: Thursday, May 25<sup>th</sup> (from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.); and Tuesday, May 30<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

The floor was opened for public comments.

Mr. Richard Luketich (resident on Booth Road) commented Community Park is located in an area not accessible by some residents. Because family dynamics are changing, families do not necessarily going to the park together and children have a difficult time getting there on their own.

Mr. Kopko stated it behooves the Township to make Community Park more accessible, fun and filled with no cost activities.

A discussion of using the website to advertise the Township more ensued.

Ms. Judi Panasik (resident on Green Crescent Dr.) remarked about the Easter Egg Hunt event and that non-residents participate for free. She added we have more non-residents than residents attending functions.

Ms. Panasik stated that non-resident ball teams designed Community Park. She expressed her concern the park survey from several years ago did not limit the responses to only residents. A survey should ask how long the respondent lived in the Township and how long does the respondent plan to live here. She added the tennis courts at Washington & Jefferson College can be used if the school is not using them. South Strabane residents have always said they want tennis courts.

Ms. Panasik suggested the Township install security cameras at all park facilities.

Mr. Ursic suggested developing adult leagues like those in other areas.

Mr. Sherrieb suggested considering different facilities, such as a dog park or BMX track.

Ms. Laynee Zipko (resident on Berry Rd.) suggested that open space and green space in all developments should be open to everyone in the Township. She noted we are not attracting children to the parks because of they are already over-scheduled with activities/academics.

A discussion of open space ensued. Mr. Luketich suggested the Township require a minimum of one acre for all yard space.

Ms. Yagle announced the next meeting will be held Monday, May 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. The presenters will be local youth expert Michael Foreman discussing the costs of services and Rolo Brady who will discuss fire protection service needs.

As no further business came before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brandon J. Stanick  
Township Manager