

SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

June 12, 2017

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

The June 12, 2017 Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (Committee) of South Strabane Township came to order at 6:03 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) (at 6:06 p.m.)
Don Lambert (Committee Alternate/Zoning Hearing Board)
Dan Reitz (Resident)
Cynthia Rossi (Resident)
Michael Sherrieb (Township Engineer with KLH)
William Ursic (Resident)
Robert Weber (Supervisor)

Absent: Thomas Steele (Planning Commission)
James Stewart (Zoning Hearing Board)

Also Present: Brandon Stanick (Township Manager)
Carolyn Yagle (Planning Consultant with EPD)

There were four residents in attendance.

Mr. Weber provided a brief update on the two open houses noting they were not well attended.

Mr. Reitz moved to approve the May 22, 2017 meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Ursic seconded the motion. The minutes were passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Kopko entered at 6:06 p.m.

Mr. Weber suggested the Members break into sub-committees to gather additional information concerning: a mission statement; goals and objectives; outreach efforts to realtors, businesses and the school district; Agricultural Security Areas; park and recreation; housing; transportation; land development; and an official map. In addition, he suggested that the draft plan be submitted to the Washington County Planning Commission and the Township Planning Commission in September to meet the requirements of the Municipal Planning Code.

Prior the meeting, Ms. Yagle had distributed an executive summary about an official map.

Ms. Yagle reviewed several highlights from the open house. She noted the predominant topics were transportation safety concerns (intersections and roadways) and recreation in relation to physical places and the approach to providing park and recreation programs and services. Other topics were related to ordinance and policy documents, Township strategies, as well as taking advantage of opportunities for collaboration with other communities.

Ms. Yagle noted Berry Rd. and Manifold Rd. intersection, Cameron Rd. and Old Mill to Manifold Rd. were items identified as safety concerns. She noted the public safety elements involved in transportation emphasizes quality of life issues.

Mr. Keisling suggested the Planning Commission be aware of the truck routes for various projects in the Township.

Mr. Kopko noted that the road bond requirements are no longer sufficient to cover damages.

Mr. Lambert suggested the Township understand PennDOT's plans for state roadways. A discussion followed regarding the various groups involved and that the Township should take advantage of possible funding opportunities identified by regional planning agencies.

Mr. Kopko suggested the Comprehensive Plan also address communications with governmental and non-governmental entities. The Township's Plan should coordinate with other agency plans that are being developed.

Ms. Rossi suggested the fourth topic reviewed earlier by Ms. Yagle include communication in addition to collaboration.

A discussion ensued regarding the impact of driverless vehicles and how it relates to the Township's parking requirements and economic development, e.g. ride sharing programs or senior transportation options.

Ms. Yagle led a discussion regarding economic development. She noted entertainment in the future looks as though it will shift to more interactive and recreational experiences. The Township will want to understand the future shifts in the retail environment. Additionally, changes to home care facilities and senior housing in relation to proximity to commercial development and opportunities for mixed-use developments. The Township should also seek to understand what becomes of big box stores and repurposing these facilities for future uses.

Mr. Lambert noted it is difficult to discuss these issues without understanding future population growth and the changing demographics.

Ms. Yagle noted as the Township looks to appeal to a younger generation it will be important to ensure that housing stock is adequate and attractions are available. She stated a younger demographic is most attracted to quality of schools, jobs and recreation and other amenities.

A discussion concerning enhancing the attractiveness of the Township followed.

Mr. Sherrieb stated that in past meetings the Committee learned that the costs to the Township are much higher for residential development.

Mr. Weber suggested reaching out to businesses as they know what is needed to prosper and do well.

Ms. Rossi suggested the Township seek to balance regional demand with the local demand.

A discussion followed regarding the local and regional market and the Township's role in each. Ms. Yagle summarized the discussion noting there is interest in the Township understanding the present demographic and understanding what types of businesses the Township can attract and would like to attract.

A discussion regarding hotel occupancy ensued. Ms. Yagle suggested asking the Chamber of Commerce or the County for information on hotel occupancy rates. She noted the Township should seek to understand the impacts of hotels and the impacts on the business environment.

Mr. Lambert suggested not factoring in the occupancies related to the oil and gas industry as they would be cyclical in nature. He noted understanding the number of senior homes would be insightful because those visiting older parents and grandparents are more likely to stay at a hotel than a home downsized for senior living.

Ms. Yagle reviewed park and recreation and noted the feedback was primarily comprised of comments related to policy and facilities. She stated using comments about park and recreation services/programs will be valuable from the perspective of identifying amenities that can be used to attract a specific demographic.

Mr. Keisling suggested any information relating to park and recreation factor in those services/programs provided by the schools and understand how the Township can be a part of those facilities.

A discussion of recreation trails followed.

Interest was expressed in understanding how residents and visitors currently use park and recreation amenities offered by the Township, as well as the reasons they may not be used. Interest was also expressed having a park and recreation professional on staff.

Mr. Keisling expressed interest in having the structure of the Plan identified.

Mr. Fisher expressed interest in the Township and the school district collaborating on community issues.

Mr. Weber opened the floor for public comment.

Mr. Luketich (resident on Booth Rd.) suggested the Township consider working with neighboring municipalities to understand what others are planning. He referenced a recent Observer-Reporter article describing the process used in a multi-jurisdictional comprehensive planning initiative.

Ms. Panasik (resident on Green Crescent Dr.) suggested the Township consider what it wants to be closest to such as schools and not industrial areas. She expressed concern that high-end housing does not come to South Strabane and for the oversaturation of business. People tend to be most concerned about increasing taxes. She also expressed concern for knowing if residents or non-residents use Township parks. Ms. Panasik suggested the Township pursue a comprehensive community survey.

As no further business came before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brandon J. Stanick
Township Manager