

SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

August 1, 2019

**APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

The Planning Commission of South Strabane Township held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, August 1, 2019 at 7:00 P.M. in the Mae C. Reynolds Meeting Room of the Municipal Building, 550 Washington Road, Washington, PA 15301.

Present: Vice-Chairperson Fred Pozzuto, Ms. Susan Bayard, Mr. Jay Gordon, and Mr. William Ursic

Not Present: Chairperson Joe Kopko, Ms. Paula Phillis, Mr. Thomas Steele

Also present: Assistant to the Township Manager Patrick Connors, Solicitor Meghan Patrick, and Township Engineer Michael Sherrieb

Vice-Chair Pozzuto led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

A list of 2 visitors is on file at the Municipal Building.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No public comments were received.

**APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES – July 11, 2019**

Vice-Chair Pozzuto moved to approve the July 11, 2019 Regular Meeting minutes with a correction recognizing that Mr. Ursic, Ms. Bayard, and Mr. Gordon were not present for the July 11, 2019 Regular Meeting. Ms. Bayard seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

**CONSIDERATION OF A REQUEST FOR PRELIMINARY AND FINAL MINOR SUBDIVISION FOR THE INSANA-KING SUBDIVISION AND CONSOLIDATION PLAN ALONG VERMONT STREET**

Mr. & Mrs. Insana came before the Planning Commission seeking a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors approving Preliminary and Final Minor Subdivision and Lot Consolidation for their property located at 969 Vermont Street. Mr. Insana stated that he and his neighbor located at 894 Glenn Street (King Residence) are seeking an equal exchange of property between their lots in the amount of 1,300 square feet. Mr. Insana highlighted that such an exchange of property would create more sensible property boundaries and also would provide the necessary setbacks to construct a private pool. Township Engineer Sherrieb stated that the application for Preliminary and Final Minor Subdivision and Land Consolidation met all Township requirements.

The following comments from the Township Engineer (KLH Engineers) were received:

**Township of South Strabane  
Application for Subdivision Approval  
Preliminary and Final Approval Review  
Insana-King Subdivision & Consolidation Plan**

An application for Subdivision Approval has been received from Mr. Richard Insana for the Insana-King Subdivision & Consolidation Plan, a minor subdivision.

KLH Engineers, Inc has completed a review of the following drawings and documents received by this office for compliance with Township Ordinances:

- Township of South Strabane Application for Subdivision Approval dated June 13, 2019.
- Subdivision and Consolidation Plan prepared by Wind Ridge Engineering Co. dated June 2019.

## **CHAPTER 206 SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT**

### **ARTICLE IV – MINOR SUBDIVISIONS**

#### **206-13 APPLICATION PROCEDURE-Completeness Review**

The applicant has provided all of the required information in §206-13 for the minor subdivision application. The application was determined complete as filed on July 24, 2019.

#### **CHAPTER 245 – ZONING-Compliance Review R-4 Zoning District**

This property is zoned R-4, Medium Density Residential District.

The Subdivision Plat contains the required Table of Zoning Requirements.

The application is in compliance with the requirements of Chapter 245, Article VIII for R-4 Medium Density Residential District.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

1. The Township may have additional comments.

The application submitted for subdivision of the Insana-King Subdivision & Consolidation Plan is complete and in compliance with the Township zoning and land development requirements. The application was reviewed solely for conformance to Township Ordinance standards.

I am recommending both preliminary and final approval of the application for subdivision for the Insana-King Subdivision & Consolidation Plan for the August 1, 2019 Planning Commission meeting, with a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors that they waive the plan monumentation requirements of §206.53.

Mr. Gordon moved to recommend approval for Preliminary and Final Minor Subdivision and lot consolidation for the Insana-King subdivision and consolidation plan along Vermont Street. Mr. Ursic seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

### **REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE TOWNSHIP'S LAND DEVELOPMENT AND ZONING REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING GREEN SPACE, LANDSCAPING, AND STEEP SLOPES**

Assistant to the Township Manager Connors outlined that on March 26, 2019 the Board of Supervisors authorized the Planning Commission to review subdivision and land development regulations relating to steep slope, landscape, and open space requirements. He stated that in effort to more easily manage a topic so wide ranging it would be easier to break the subject matter into three distinct categories; tree management/preservation, open space and lot size requirements, and steep slope regulations.

Assistant to the Township Manager Conners outlined the current tree requirements in the Township's Code. First, he discussed buffer yard requirements pertaining to trees, citing that existing healthy trees within buffer areas shall remain undisturbed. He also discussed planting requirements in newly developed buffer areas. Mr. Pozzuto highlighted that many developers are hamstrung regarding tree preservation when constructing various stormwater facilities that are mandated by the Township's code and MS4 obligations. Mr. Gordon stated that developers should be given the opportunity to re-plant trees that were damaged or removed during development. Assistant to the Township Manager Conners continued by outlining tree planting requirements in new developments, both residential and non-residential. Mr. Pozzuto highlighted that blanket requirements may not be effective in the long run, citing that planting 150 mature trees may be more successful in a commercial development than planting 400 saplings. Mr. Pozzuto inquired regarding landscaping review conducted by the Township. Township Engineer Sherrieb stated that landscape requirements are outlined in the Township Zoning Code. Assistant to the Township Manager Conners concluded by discussing suggested trees set forth in the Township's zoning code and highlighted various tree species native to Pennsylvania.

Assistant to the Township Manager Conner then outlined the zoning regulations for the R-1, R-2, R-3, & R-4 Residential Zoning Districts. He highlighted the minimum lot area, minimum lot widths, and maximum lot coverage for each residential district. He illustrated the zoning districts with the assistance of the Township's Beta GIS zoning map. Assistant to the Township Manager Conners highlighted that regulations in the R-1 & R-2 Zoning Districts are identical. He also highlighted that the Township does not outline a maximum impervious surface limit in residential zoning districts. Township Engineer Sherrieb highlighted that a large portion of the Township does not have access to the Public Storm Sewer System. A brief discussion outlining the difference between impervious surface and lot coverage ensued. Assistant to the Township Manager Conners concluded by discussing building regulations in the Agricultural Zoning District, highlighting that area of the Township as the likeliest to experience urban development in the coming decades. Mr. Gordon highlighted the recently developed comprehensive plan intends for the Agricultural District to remain rural. Mr. Pozzuto discussed the urbanization of Peters Township's agricultural districts, citing an increasing scarcity of open space within its boundaries.

Township Engineer Sherrieb outlined the Township's rules and regulations concerning development on and around steep slopes. He briefly discussed a land slide incident that occurred in North Strabane Township, highlighting the soil conditions in Western Pennsylvania and recent rainy spring seasons combined to make such an event more likely. He continued by highlighting that poor construction practices increase the likelihood of such an event occurring. Township Engineer Sherrieb reported that South Strabane Township's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) is mute regarding steep slope regulation, highlighting that it only discusses grading improvements. He stated that working with and monitoring the review process of a project's engineer is essential to any development involved on or near steep slopes. Mr. Pozzuto discussed the background of the North Strabane landslide event, citing various geotechnical deficiencies that should have been identified during the review process. Mr. Gordon inquired regarding Washington County's role in the review process. Township Engineer Sherrieb stated the Washington County Planning Commission provides hazard reviews for SALDO projects, issuing a letter to the Township highlighting their findings. He reported that municipalities are made aware of historical hazards on a given property such as a history of deep mining, flooding, and landslides. He also noted that natural heritage sites are identified. He continued by reporting that if a County Planning Commission review letter identifies a hazard, the Township's Code requires the applicant address the cited concern(s). Township Engineer Sherrieb concluded by highlighting that agricultural activities are exempt from the Township's grading requirements. Mr. Pozzuto stated that more detail is needed for our grading requirements. Assistant to the Township Manager Conners stated that for the next meeting he would provide benchmarking metrics for residential zoning requirements, tree regulations, and steep slopes for the Planning Commission to review.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Ursic moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. Ms. Bayard seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully,

Patrick M. Conners  
Assistant to the Township Manager