

SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

March 3, 2022

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

The Planning Commission of South Strabane Township held its Regular Meeting on Thursday, March 3, 2022 at 7:01 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Building, 550 Washington Road, Washington, PA 15301.

Present: Thomas Steele, Chair; Jay Gordon, Vice Chair; Joe Kopko (via Zoom); Paula Phillis; and Fred Pozzuto

Not Present: None

Also Present: Jim Sutter, Assistant to the Township Manager; Scott Groom, Engineer; and Dennis Makel, Solicitor

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Steele led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

The Planning Commission allocates a period of time during this item for those individuals who would like the opportunity to address the Planning Commission on any matter. Each person addressing the Planning Commission is asked to limit their comments to a maximum of three (3) minutes.

There were no comments from the Public.

3. APPROVAL OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – FEBRUARY 10, 2022

Mr. Pozzuto moved to approve the February 10, 2022 meeting minutes. Mr. Gordon seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

4. CONTINUATION OF A PUBLIC HEARING FOR A CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATION FROM PANKRATOS, INC. TO OPERATE A JUVENILE PERSONAL CARE HOME LOCATED AT 1961 N. MAIN STREET IN THE I-1 INDUSTRIAL ZONING DISTRICT

Chair Steele introduced the item. On May 14, 2021 the Township received an application for Conditional Use approval from Pankratos, Inc. (“Applicant”) to operate a Juvenile Personal Care Home at 1961 N. Main Street (“Property”) owned by KMG Properties, Inc. (“Property Owner”) in the I-1 Industrial Zoning District.

Prior to this, on April 19, 2021, the Applicant had received a variance from Section 245-80 and 245-133 of the Zoning Code. The variance from Section 245-80 allows them to use the Property despite it being 0.717 acres in size, smaller than the 1 acre minimum for properties in the I-1

Zoning District. The variance from Section 245-133 allows the Applicant to operate a juvenile personal care home on a property smaller than 1 acre subject to several conditions.

At its July 1, 2021 meeting, the Planning Commission commenced with the Public Hearing, and following a presentation from the Applicant, as well as public comments, the Planning Commission continued the hearing to their subsequent meeting. This continuance was agreed to by the Applicant and granted by the Planning Commission to allow time for Fire Chief Scott Reese to tour the Property and facility to ensure any accessibility issues are identified and able to be addressed. Chief Reese conducted his inspection on July 8, 2021 and in a memo dated July 9, 2021 noted significant life safety issues and structural degradation.

At its August 5, 2021 meeting, the Planning Commission continued the Public Hearing. Chief Reese reported on his visit to the Property and subsequent memo and was on hand to answer questions from the Planning Commission. Following testimony from the Applicant the Planning Commission continued the Public Hearing to a subsequent meeting. The continuance was agreed to by the Applicant to allow for structural and electrical engineers to evaluate the Property on the ability to renovate it to bring it in compliance with all Building and Township Codes.

At its December 2, 2021 meeting, the Planning Commission continued the Public Hearing. The Applicant provided an update on their progress in obtaining the requested structural and electrical engineering reports. Following testimony from the Applicant the Planning Commission continued the Public Hearing for a length not to exceed three months. The continuance was agreed to by the Applicant.

Mr. Ryan Lemke, legal counsel for the Applicant, appearing over Zoom, stated he had forwarded an evaluation of the Property from Philip Hayden or Hayden's General Contracting, Contractor for the Applicant, to Assistant to the Township Manager Jim Sutter. Mr. Lemke stated, the investigation has made it clear the work required is not a simple rehabilitation. While the structure of the original house is sound, the subsequent additions bore the brunt of the damage from a previous fire. It is the opinion of the experts these portions of the structure will require demolishing. Mr. Lemke stated this is not something able to be accomplished in the next few months, though the Applicant intends to perform the work required. He requested the application not be denied and instead be extended to allow time for necessary demolitions to occur.

Ms. Tianna Headen, representing the Applicant, reiterated Mr. Lemke's statement that the best course of action is a demolition of the damaged portions of the structure. She stated they have a contractor ready to perform the work. Ms. Headen added they are in talks with the owner of the Property on how to finance this work. Mr. Marcus Harvey, representing the Applicant, added they are also in negotiations to own the Property. A discussion ensued on the Applicant's proposed operations at the Property.

Mr. Gordon suggested the Applicant submit the final design of the rebuilt structure to the Planning Commission for review prior to them being finalized. Mr. Pozzuto asked for clarification only the additions to the structure will require demolition. The Applicant confirmed on the additions require demolition and not the original structure.

Solicitor Dennis Makel read the following Exhibits into the record:

Exhibit A – Conditional Use Application;

Exhibit B – Legal Notice Published in Observer-Reporter; and

Exhibit C – Report from Hayden’s General Contracting.

Mr. Lemke noted the work to be done by the Applicant is costly. He requested if the reconstruction occurs and complies with the standards of the Township Code, the Planning Commission would consider approving the application. Chair Steele suggested the Applicant agree to waive all time requirements for 6 months and continue the Public Hearing to that date or a time sooner.

Mr. Pozzuto requested the Applicant provide an overview of the proposed operations. Ms. Headen stated they will operate a foster care agency certified and licensed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to place children into foster homes. Children are only permitted to stay for 3-7 days before being placed in a longer-term care home. Additionally, the facility is to provide a hub for reprieve and family visits. Mr. Lemke noted the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law from last May’s Zoning Hearing Board Public Hearing state these clearly and volunteered to provide them to the Commissioners upon request.

Ms. Phillis moved to enter Exhibits A-C into the Public Record and continue the Public Hearing for six months until September 2022 subject to the Applicant waiving all time requirements in writing. Mr. Pozzuto seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

A discussion ensued on the meaning of the name Pankratos.

5. PUBLIC HEARING FOR A CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATION FROM WASHINGTON INVESTMENTS, LLC TO OPERATE A MEDICAL CLINIC LOCATED AT 2 PARK PLACE IN THE C-2 ZONING DISTRICT

Chair Steele introduced the item. On February 11, 2022 the Township received an application for Conditional Use Approval from Washington Investments LLC (“Applicant”), on behalf of DeNovo Clinic, Inc., to operate a Medical Clinic (“Development”) located at 2 Park Place (“Property”) in the C-2 Commercial Zoning District.

Mr. Mark Kepple, legal counsel for the Applicant, provided an overview of the request. The Property is located on a corner lot at the intersection of Burkett Lane and Park Place. The Property is 2.32 acres in size with a single-story mixed use commercial building, 21,150 square feet in size. The Applicant is in the process of completing an interior build-out of the space to accommodate a Medical Clinic to treat individuals with depression, anxiety and provide other mental health services not requiring overnight treatment.

At its September 28, 2021 meeting, the Board of Supervisors (“Board”) approved an at-risk agreement with the Applicant to hold the Township harmless should necessary zoning relief and conditional use approval not be granted as DeNovo wanted to start interior build-out of the space prior to obtaining land use approvals. Following this, on December 13, 2021 the Zoning Hearing Board (“ZHB”) conducted a Public Hearing and unanimously granted a variance from Section 245-130B of the Zoning Code to allow a Medical Clinic to operate in a building that does not

have frontage on a public street. Mr. Kepple added this is an expansion on their existing operations in Bethel Park.

Mr. Pozzuto asked for clarification on if the structure has been built. Mr. Kepple stated the outside shell has been completed. He added the Covid-19 Pandemic delayed their search for tenants, but they are very excited about DeNovo occupying a portion of the building. Mr. Pozzuto asked if there are currently plans for any other tenants, noting compatibility concerns. Mr. Kepple stated they are very attentive to the themes of their spaces. He stated they would love to find another tenant that is medical or quasi-medical in character, such as a physical therapist. He stated another possibility is a tenant that would draw customers in the evening, such as a restaurant, in an attempt to spread out traffic flow into and out of the Property.

Mr. Makel read the following items into the record:

- Exhibit A – Conditional Use Application;
- Exhibit B – Legal Notice published in Observer-Reporter;
- Exhibit C – Site Plans and Interior Plans submitted; and
- Exhibit D – December 16, 2021 ZHB Minutes.

Mr. Pozzuto asked if this facility will operate in the same way as the current location in Bethel Park. Dr. Alan Axelson, representing the Applicant, stated himself and Dr. Rachel Nash, will be the leadership at this location. He added it will be continuing and expanding upon their current services at the Bethel Park location. Mr. Pozzuto asked when the structure was completed. Mr. Dean Childers, Senior Project Manager with Accelerated Construction Services, stated the building was completed in 2019.

Mr. Gordon moved to enter Exhibits A-D into the Public Record. Mr. Pozzuto seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Pozzuto moved to recommend the Board approve the Conditional Use Application from Washington Investments, LLC to operate a Medical Clinic located at 2 Park Place in the C-2 Zoning District. Mr. Gordon seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

6. PREAPPLICATION MEETING WITH SNUFFY INVESTMENTS, LP. REGARDING A PROPOSED PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ALONG QUARRY ROAD, FURTHER IDENTIFIED AS PARCEL NO. 600-007-00-00-0035-00

Over the past 18 months, the Planning Commission has conducted a pre-application review with Sandy Hill Development regarding a Planned Residential Development (“PRD”) on the property located at the intersection of Lakeview Drive and Quarry Road, known as the Snuffy Parcel (“Property”). On December 21, 2021 the Township received an updated concept plan for a proposed PRD of the Property.

There was no representative from Snuffy Investments, LP. in attendance. Two residents who live near the Property were in attendance to receive the presentation and express their concerns with the proposed PRD. With no Applicant in attendance to present, the Commissioners allowed the residents to express their concerns. They noted concern over a previous proposal to install a traffic circle. They also noted overall concerns regarding increased traffic and stormwater runoff should

the Property be developed. They stated there is already too much stormwater runoff in the area and stated Lakeview Drive is already hazardous. They noted they are not against development, but do not feel this Property is an appropriate location. A discussion ensued.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Mr. Gordon moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m. Ms. Phillis seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully,

Jim Sutter
Assistant to the Township Manager