

SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 5, 2023

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

The Planning Commission of South Strabane Township held its Regular Meeting on Thursday, January 5, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Building, 550 Washington Road, Washington, PA 15301.

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

Not Present: Thomas Steele, Chair

Also Present: Brandon Stanick, Township Manager; Scott Groom, Township Engineer; and Gabrielle Conti, Solicitor

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chair Gordon led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. REORGANIZATION FOR 2023

Mr. Pozzuto moved to re-elect Thomas Steele (Chair), Jay Gordon (Vice Chair) and Paula Phillis (Secretary) as Planning Commission officers for 2023 and to set meeting dates for the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Reitz seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

3. 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.

Judy Panasik, resident on Green Crescent Drive, stated she has been attending Township meetings for 17 years and pays attention to what is occurring in the Township. She expressed her hope the Planning Commission sees how many individuals are in attendance and considers that as part of their review of the Snuffy Planned Residential Development. She expressed her concerns regarding lighting at the proposed Menard's home improvement store, noting she is aware these concerns are shared by residents on Pine Valley Road and Berry Road. Ms. Panasik expressed her concerns with the Washington County Transit Authority purchasing the property for their proposed Transit Facility and making it tax exempt. She expressed her concerns with the traffic on Berry Road in that vicinity. She suggested the Township discuss these issues with the County and noted there could be Local Share Account funds available to make improvements. Ms. Panasik expressed her displeasure with the recent Fire Tax and financial issues with the Township.

Taylor Deep, resident on Lakeview Drive, expressed his opinion everyone in the area should have been notified of the Public Hearing to consider the Snuffy Planned Residential Development, not just those within 300 feet.

Jeff Bull, property owner on South Main Street, stated the parcels that comprise the properties of the proposed Snuffy Planned Residential Development are currently in the I-1 Light Industrial Zoning District for a reason. He stated common sense should be used and noted the poor quality of the roads in the vicinity.

Gaylord Plants, resident on Vance Station Road, stated the infrastructure in the area of the proposed Snuffy Planned Residential Development is unable to accommodate the anticipated impact. He stated schools will be impacted, taxes will go up and crime will increase. Mr. Plants suggested the property be subdivided into 10-acre lots to match the character of the properties on adjacent Floral Hill Drive.

Lori Preston, resident on Hilltop Acres Road, stated Lakeview Drive is windy with no sidewalks. She described personal experiences of large vehicles running her off the road. Ms. Preston stated the Snuffy Planned Residential Development will add over 400 families to the area with two cars each. She stated delivery trucks will travel Lakeview Drive more frequently. She expressed concern regarding the dangerous curve under the train trestle. Ms. Preston stated South Strabane Township is unique due to its green space and rural character.

4. CONSIDERATION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 1, 2022

Mr. Gordon noted he had requested a traffic safety study be completed by Menard's and this was not reflected in the draft minutes.

Mr. Pozzuto moved to approve the December 1, 2022 meeting minutes subject to Mr. Gordon's comments being included. Mr. Reitz seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

5. CONSIDERATION OF AN APPLICATION FROM SNUFFY INVESTMENTS, LP TO REZONE TWO PARCELS COMPRISING 134 ACRES EAST OF QUARRY ROAD, MORE SPECIFICALLY KNOWN AS PARCEL NOS. 600-007-00-00-0036-00 AND 600-007-00-00-0039-00, FROM THE I-2 GENERAL INDUSTRIAL TO THE R-2 SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICT AND CONSIDERATION OF A MASTER PLAN FOR THE SNUFFY PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT CONSISTING OF 294 SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED HOMES AND DUPLEXES AT THE SAME LOCATION

Mike Wetzel, Landscape Architect for Snuffy Investments, LP ("Applicant") from Victor Wetzel Associates gave a presentation on their request to rezone two parcels comprising 134 acres east of Quarry Road, more specifically known as Parcel Nos. 600-007-00-00-0036-00 and 600-007-00-00-0039-00 ("Property"), from the I-2 General Industrial to the R-2 Suburban Residential Zoning District and their Master Plan for the proposed Snuffy Planned Residential Development ("PRD").

The Applicant demonstrated how the proposal is consistent with the Township's Comprehensive Plan through the future land use map, the provision of a full range of housing types and connections with the Township parks. He went on to provide an overview of the Master Plan. The proposal consists of 54 duplex units on 27 lots, 89 age-targeted single-family detached homes and 151 traditional single-family detached homes for a total of 294 units. Common open space will include 4 parklets one-half to one acre in size and one neighborhood park. The PRD will be accessed from

Quarry Road through a boulevard-style entrance. Pedestrian and emergency vehicle access connections with Community Park are also proposed. Stormwater facilities are proposed to comprise three stormwater management ponds along the southern boundary of the site. Mr. Wetzel gave special attention to the boulevard-style entrance with two lanes as a strategy to alleviate concerns regarding there only being one entrance/exit to the PRD proposed.

Mr. Pozzuto requested clarification on who is the driving force behind the Applicant. Scott Turer, owner of the Property, introduced himself and stated he has owned the Property for approximately 60 years. Mr. Pozzuto asked if any variances will be necessary to meet the requirements of the R-2 Zoning District. Mr. Wetzel stated they are not anticipating needing any at this time as they are following all setback and open space requirements.

Mr. Gordon noted the proposal to utilize Lakeview Drive as access to the PRD. Mr. Wetzel stated they are aware improvements are necessary to Lakeview Drive. Mr. Gordon stated the Township attempted to have upgrades included on the recent Pennsylvania Department of Transportation ("PennDOT") Transportation Improvement Plan ("TIP"), but it could be years before improvements are made. Mr. Gordon noted his personal difficulties driving on Lakeview Drive and asked the Applicant how they are proposing to address these concerns. Mr. Wetzel stated they are aware a traffic study is needed and would like to review options with PennDOT and the Township. Mr. Pozzuto stated a full design deficiency report is needed for Lakeview Drive and stated they need to see a commitment from PennDOT and the Applicant. Mr. Wetzel stated this is a Master Plan concept and they are fully aware of what they need to address.

Mr. Pozzuto stated he has no real problem rezoning the Property from the I-2 to the R-2 Zoning District, but the issues with Quarry Road and Lakeview Drive are significant. He stated the sewage concern also needs to be addressed before this plan can move forward. Ms. Phillis stated she is reluctant to rezone the Property without having the concerns related to Quarry Road and Lakeview Drive addressed. A discussion on the zoning of the Property ensued.

Mr. Gordon opened the floor for public comment.

Mr. Plants stated he is not satisfied with the Applicant's presentation. He stated the proposal is premature and does not fit at the Property. He stated the stormwater control plans are inadequate. Mr. Plants stated commercial businesses in the Township will be too busy and the Planning Commission should reconsider the plan.

Greg Gorrington, resident on Quarry Road, stated the entrance to the proposed PRD is across from his property. As a result, he is concerned with the increase in traffic associated with the plan. He stated the watercourses in the area cannot handle existing stormwater runoff. Mr. Gorrington expressed his opposition to the proposal stating it will affect quality of life.

Mr. Bull stated the proposal will change the fabric of the neighborhood. He stated Community Park should not be used as egress and questioned winter maintenance. He expressed his displeasure with conduct by Township officials and stated there has been a lengthy amount of time for the issues with Lakeview Drive to be addressed.

Donald Booher, resident on Lakeview Drive, stated the Applicant will need to use explosives to clear the rock and noted there are bridges in the vicinity in need of replacement.

Mr. Pozzuto noted a second entrance was previously proposed, but the presence of a gas line prevented it from being utilized.

Jamie Falvo, resident on Quarry Road, provided details on an accident on Quarry Road involving a tow truck and police car that could not pass each other. She noted her family likes to walk on the road.

Pam Wolosky, resident on Lakeview Drive, provided details involving an accident on Lakeview Drive involving a pet dog. She noted existing stormwater runoff is bad in the area and has caused significant damage to her property. Dr. Wolosky noted it is a country road with a 35 mile per hour speed limit. She detailed her experience with PennDOT constructing a sound barrier and not reimbursing them for cutting down trees. She stated a lot of money will be needed for the schools to support the potential influx of students. Dr. Wolosky stated leaving the property zoned industrial will not impact the schools and questioned where an existing R-2 property would be rezoned to I-2 in the interest of balance.

Zach Morgan, resident on Vance Station Road, stated potential new residents will take Vance Station Road to access Interstate 79. He described the inadequacy of the road networks in the vicinity of the Property. He stated the proposal includes too many homes and will cause an adverse impact on the school district. Mr. Morgan expressed concern for the number of new residents and stated he did not want the Township to become similar in character to Cranberry Township, Butler County.

Kim Habe, resident on Quarry Road, expressed skepticism buses would drive through the development to pick up students. She noted how busy the road is during rush hour currently. Ms. Habe expressed concerns with children walking down from the PRD and stated she would not be living in her current location if she knew of this proposal. She complimented the Public Works Department for their efforts on plowing snow.

An unnamed resident stated extra money is paid toward the pump station presently and questioned how traffic will be managed on the surrounding roads.

Francis Blank, resident on Zediker Station Road, stated the PRD needs greater site distance, more ponds and a road into Community Park.

Ms. Panasik stated the Board meeting to consider the proposal should be held at the Oak Spring Fire Station. She stated the Township is pursuing grant funding for the Applicant. She stated a rezoning of the Property would be spot zoning. Ms. Panasik cited a 2002 article promising to give the land to the Township. She stated the existing R-2 Zoning District has not been developed in a character consistent with that district. Ms. Panasik expressed concern for senior citizens being at heightened risk for heart attacks given the proximity of the proposed PRD to railroad tracks. She claimed the entire development could consist of duplexes and stated the Applicant is not being forthright regarding this.

Lauren Parker, resident on Lakeview Drive, stated she has difficulties pulling her vehicle into the roadway from her driveway and has been run off of the road.

Mr. Plants expressed displeasure with PennDOT constructing stormwater controls on his property.

Stephanie Faust, resident on Quarry Road, expressed her concerns regarding traffic in the vicinity of the railroad trestle. She expressed a desire not to see the Township become similar in character to Peters Township. She stated Peters Township is having issues with PRD's with single entrances. Ms. Faust stated having more children does not necessarily result in better schools. Ms. Faust encouraged the Planning Commission to not recommend approval of the proposal.

Cindy O'Brien, resident on Quarry Road, expressed her concern regarding heavy equipment on the roads in the vicinity of the Property.

George Rowan, resident on Flint Drive, stated he has been fighting with the Township for six years as President of the Strabane Manor Homeowners' Association. He expressed disappointment with the difficulty in having the stormwater controls maintained and stated new residents will learn about this challenge.

Frank Zappala, Developer for the Applicant from The First City Company, stated NVR, Inc. is a top builder of homes in the country. He stated there has never been an issue with bonding or finances. He stated Township staff has expressed the same concerns being heard at this meeting. He discussed the need to upgrade the Quarry Road Pump Station. He stated if the Property is rezoned to the R-2 Zoning District they will seek PRD approval, which requires additional approvals and is not a use by right.

Ms. Falvo stated the Applicant has a lack of experience with driving on the roads in the vicinity of the Property.

Janie Deemer, resident on Zediker Station Road, questioned if the Applicant will still pursue the proposal without assistance from PennDOT.

Upon a question from Ms. Falvo, Ryan Klousnitzer of NVR, Inc., stated the homes will average \$340,000 in cost and their buyer profile is an empty-nester, though there will be children in the PRD. He noted other communities have traffic impact fees and they are willing to contribute for improvements.

Ms. Deep stated she has raised children in this location because she wanted them to experience country living. She stated her own children are now doing the same on Lakeview Drive. She expressed her opinion the plan is "putting the cart before the horse" and questioned why this proposal is being seen at this time.

Jim Cropp, resident on Quarry Road, questioned how PennDOT will make improvements to Lakeview Drive and stated it would be impossible. He stated all the traffic will go through Quarry Road.

Ms. Panasik noted that nobody in attendance has stated they want the PRD to be constructed and stated this should mean more than anything.

Mr. Gordon moved to recommend the Board of Supervisors deny the application from Snuffy Investments, LP to rezone two parcels comprising 134 acres east of Quarry Road, more specifically known as Parcel Nos. 600-007-00-00-0036-00 and 600-007-00-00-0039-00, from the I-2 General Industrial to the R-2 Suburban Residential Zoning District and the Master Plan for the Snuffy Planned Residential Development consisting of 294 single-family detached homes and duplexes at the same location. Mr. Pozzuto seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

6. CONTINUED CONSIDERATION OF AN APPLICATION FOR FINAL LAND DEVELOPMENT FROM MENARD, INC. TO CONSTRUCT A HOME IMPROVEMENT STORE ON THE PROPERTY LOCATED ALONG OLD MILL BLVD., MORE SPECIFICALLY KNOWN AS PARCEL ID NOS. 600-003-00-00-0020-09, 600-003-00-00-0020-11 AND 600-003-00-00-0020-00, IN THE C-2 ZONING DISTRICT

Nick Brenner, Real Estate Representative from Menard, Inc. ("Applicant"), stated the last item the Planning Commission requested was an updated traffic study, which has been provided. Mr. Gordon stated Berry Road is 25 miles per hour at Kohl's going down to the Old Mill Commercial Development. He stated he had requested a safety study and it was not provided.

Kyle Brown, representative from Gateway Engineers, stated he had performed the traffic study. He described the methods used and results, stating the study finds a left turn lane is not needed at the intersection with Berry Road. Mr. Pozzuto noted he thought the traffic study would have these findings. He stated Berry Road is substandard, but that it is not the Applicant's problem. Mr. Gordon expressed his preference not to act until a decision is made regarding Berry Road. Mr. Bull stated the entrance should be closed until the issues are rectified. Ms. Phillis stated the Applicant has produced what was asked of them and noted closing the entrance is an option to explore. Mr. Kopko stated Berry Road is the Township's problem and the Applicant is not exacerbating the issue.

Mr. Pozzuto moved to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the application for Final Land Development from Menard, Inc. to construct a home improvement store on the property located along Old Mill Blvd., more specifically known as Parcel Nos. 600-003-00-00-0020-09, 600-003-00-00-0020-11 and 600-003-00-00-0020-00, in the C-2 Zoning District.

Mr. Pozzuto moved to request the Board of Supervisors authorize Township Staff and Engineer to work with the Planning Commission to assess safety and conditions of Berry Road. Mr. Reitz seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

7. CONSIDERATION OF AN APPLICATION FROM WASHINGTON COUNTY TRANSIT AUTHORITY (d/b/a/ FREEDOM TRANSIT) TO CREATE DEFINITIONS FOR TRANSIT FACILITY, CNG, CNG FUELING STATION AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION AND TO ESTABLISH TRANSIT FACILITY AS A PRIMARY CONDITIONAL USE AND CNG FUELING STATION AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION AS ACCESSORY CONDITIONAL USES IN THE I-1 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL ZONING DISTRICT, IN ANTICIPATION OF CONSTRUCTING A TRANSIT FACILITY AT 375 BERRY ROAD IN THE I-1 ZONING DISTRICT

Sheila Gombita, Executive Director of the Washington County Transit Authority (“Applicant”), noted she would provide an abbreviated presentation due to the lateness of the hour. Ms. Gombita provided an overview of the Applicant’s operations and preliminary concept of the proposed facility.

The Applicant reviewed the proposed standards and criteria for a Transit Facility as a Conditional Use. Troy Truax of Michael Baker International, Engineer for the Applicant, noted they do not expect the number of trips generated to trigger the need for a Traffic Impact Study.

Mr. Pozzuto inquired on the safety and setback standards for CNG Fueling Stations and expressed concerns regarding the proximity to the power sub-station and the soccer fields. Mr. Truax stated they are designed to meet certain standards regulated by the State. A discussion on performance standards ensued. A discussion regarding traffic concerns on Berry Road in the vicinity of the facility ensued.

Mr. Pozzuto moved to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the application from Washington County Transit Authority to create definitions for Transit Facility, CNG, CNG Fueling Station and Electric Vehicle Charing Station and to establish Transit Facility as a primary Conditional Use and CNG Fueling Station and Electric Vehicle Charging Station as Accessory Conditional uses in the I-1 Light Industrial Zoning District. Mr. Reitz seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Pozzuto moved to request the Board of Supervisors authorize Township Staff and Engineer to work with the Planning Commission to assess safety and conditions of Berry Road. Mr. Reitz seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

8. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION CONCERNING PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ZONING AND SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT CODES

This item was tabled due to the lateness of the hour.

9. STAFF UPDATE

This item was skipped due to the lateness of the hour.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Mr. Reitz moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:40 p.m. Mr. Gordon seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully,

Brandon J. Stanick
Township Manager