

SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

September 5, 2019

**APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

The Planning Commission of South Strabane Township held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, September 5, 2019 at 7:00 P.M. in the Mae C. Reynolds Meeting Room of the Municipal Building, 550 Washington Road, Washington, PA 15301.

Present: Chairperson Joe Kopko, Ms. Susan Bayard, Mr. Jay Gordon, Ms. Paula Phillis, Mr. Thomas Steele, and Mr. William Ursic

Not Present: Vice-Chairperson Fred Pozzuto

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

Chair Kopko led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

No visitors were in attendance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No public comments were received.

**APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES – August 1, 2019**

Mr. Gordon moved to approve the August 1, 2019 Regular Meeting minutes. 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**

With many members of the Planning Commission being absent from August's Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission, Assistant to the Township Manager Connors reviewed the presentation from the previous meeting. He highlighted 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 Connors outlined the current tree requirements in the Township Code. 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. Assistant to the Township Manager Connors continued by outlining tree planting requirements in new developments, both residential and non-residential. Chair Kopko highlighted that single-family developments are not required to abide by the Code's multi-family development tree planting requirements. Township Engineer Sherrieb confirmed that single family developments do not have the same landscape requirements, specifically pertaining to tree plantings, as multi-family developments. Chair Kopko continued by citing the Trinity Point Development as an area for landscaping requirement modification, highlighting the vast concrete parking area

with very little greenery. Township Engineer Sherrieb stated that commercial developments such as Trinity Point are obligated to follow the landscaping requirement set forth in the Township Code. He then outlined parking lot landscape requirements set forth in section 245-182 J of the Township Code. Ms. Phillis cited her recent experience visiting a commercial shopping area in Ohio, highlighting that there were more plantings in their parking areas, though she reported that many of the plantings were not properly maintained. Mr. Gordon inquired how a municipality could enforce planting maintenance and upkeep. Mr. Steele stated that the Township could deploy code enforcement officers for routine inspections/evaluations. Chair Kopko discussed requiring bi-annual arborist inspections of commercial development planting areas, highlighting that the cost burden should fall to the property owners and not the Township. Mr. Gordon stated that Cameron Wellness Center's landscaping islands were removed due to frequent damage. He reported that the Township required the property owner to re-plant a set number of trees which were subsequently planted in a cluster. He highlighted that a more comprehensive common-sense planting approach should be considered for developments moving forward.

Next, Assistant to the Township Manager Connors outlined the zoning regulations for South Strabane's R-1, R-2, R-3, & R-4 Residential Zoning Districts. He provided a table which outlined the zoning requirements for single family dwellings in comparable zoning districts in other municipalities. He reported the Township does not outline a maximum impervious surface limit in residential zoning districts. He highlighted that many nearby developing townships do enforce a maximum impervious surface percentage. Township Engineer Sherrieb read aloud the definitions for impervious surface and lot coverage to distinguish the two terms. Chair Kopko stated that he would be in favor of instituting a maximum impervious surface limit for residential zoning districts. Assistant to the Township Manager Connors highlighted that a flat 25% lot coverage maximum is currently permitted throughout all residential zoning districts in the Township. He stated that typically the number varies depending on the density of a given zoning district.

Assistant to the Township Manager Connors next briefly outlined the Township's rules and regulations concerning development on and around steep slopes. He reported that he would provide the Planning Commission with further detail and benchmarking tables for all three areas discussed at the next meeting. He concluded by briefly discussing projects that are expected to come before the Planning Commission for review in the coming month(s).

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Gordon moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. Ms. Phillis seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully,

Patrick M. Connors  
Assistant to the Township Manager