

SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

April 4, 2019

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

The Planning Commission of South Strabane Township held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, April 4, 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. Paula Phillis, Mr. Jay Gordon, and Mr. William Ursic.

Absent: Chairperson Joseph Kopko, Mr. Thomas Steele and Ms. Susan Bayard

Also present: Township Manager Brandon Stanick, Assistant to the Township Manager Patrick Conners, Solicitor Christopher Furman and Township Engineer Michael Sherrieb

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

A list of 1 visitor is on file at the Municipal Building.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Charlene Scuvotti (resident on Pine Valley Road) came before the Planning Commission to discuss her concerns regarding open space requirements set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. Ms. Scuvotti highlighted that her property is surrounded by a natural wooded buffer that has never formally been recorded. Mrs. Scuvotti also discussed her concerns regarding buffer areas surrounding Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) facilities. Ms. Phillis stated that the Township has its own open space and buffer standards that are outlined in the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Pozzuto stated that the terrain in Western Pennsylvania makes it difficult to install “soft” MS4 facilities. Ms. Scuvotti discussed her preference for the installation of fencing around MS4 facilities in order to protect children. Mr. Pozzuto stated that fencing would make it difficult for property owners and home owners associations to properly maintain the facilities. Ms. Scuvotti thanked the Planning Commission for their time.

APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES – MARCH 7, 2019

Mr. Gordon moved to approve the March 7, 2019 regular meeting minutes. Mr. Ursic seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

APPLICATION FOR FINAL MINOR SUBDIVISION APPROVAL FOR THE OLD MILL LOT 3-1 CONSOLIDATED SUBDIVISION PLAN:

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

**CHAPTER 206 SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT
ARTICLE IV – MINOR SUBDIVISIONS
§206-13.A. Application Completeness Review**

- The Application was reviewed for completeness based on the requirements of Article IV, §206-13 of the Township Code. The Application submitted was found to be complete.

The following items need to be addressed for the minor subdivision plan to comply with the Subdivision and Land Development requirements of §206.

- Waiver request letter dated March 2019 from Gateway Engineers requesting a waiver for a plan scale of 1 inch equals 80 and a waiver for the maximum of 4 lots that are permitted to be subdivided on a private street must be approved by the Board of Supervisors to comply with the requirements of §206.

ARTICLE X C-2 GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

- The Application was reviewed for compliance with the requirements of Chapter 245 Zoning, Article X, §245-62. of the Township Code. The Application, as submitted was found to be in compliance with the requirements of Chapter 245, Article X, §245.62 for the C-2 General Commercial District.

GENERAL COMMENTS

1. The Township may have additional comments.
2. On behalf of the Township of South Strabane, KLH Engineers, Inc. reserves the right to amend this review and/or add additional comments when new or revised information is submitted for consideration.

Township Engineer Sherreib discussed the evaluation and review of the application submitted by HCB Foundry, LLC for Minor Subdivision Approval of the Old Mill Plan of Lots Revision No. 2 Subdivision Plan. Township Engineer Sherreib highlighted that the application was found to be complete and stated that he recommended the Planning Commission recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve the waiver requests of the Applicant regarding the scale of the plat and the maximum number of lots that are permitted to be subdivided on a public street. Township Engineer Sherreib also recommended that the Planning Commission recommend final minor subdivision approval for the Old Mill Plan of Lots. Township Engineer Sherreib deferred to Township Solicitor Furman regarding easements identified on the subdivision plat.

Township Solicitor Furman stated the Applicant needs to craft a formal document stating that any existing easements on the subdivision plat have been relinquished. Township Solicitor Furman highlighted that this action must be formally recorded in order for a land title company to vacate the easements. Township Solicitor Furman stated that the formal agreement must also be forwarded to the owner of the easements. Mr. Pozzutto discussed various methods to acquire the contact information for owners of the easements.

Mr. Sam Adler, representing HCB Foundry, LLC, and Mr. Mark Reidenbach of Gateway Engineers discussed the subdivision project, highlighting that a title search had been completed. Mr. Reidenbach also highlighted an error on the original plat, stating the current plat correctly outlines the borders of the lots. Mr. Reidenbach highlighted that since the remaining tasks are of a legal nature, the Applicant will need to consult their legal counsel moving forward. Township Solicitor Furman requested that the Applicant's legal counsel contact his office to address the outstanding issues regarding the easements.

After further discussion, Mr. Pozzutto highlighted that note no. 9 listed on the survey was not addressed. Mr. Reidenbach apologized for the omission and stated that he would address this matter as soon as possible.

Mr. Pozzutto moved to recommend approval of Final Minor Subdivision for the Old Mill Lot 3-1 Consolidated Subdivision Plan to the Board of Supervisors subject to the Board of Supervisors granting waiver requests for the scale of the submitted plan and the maximum number of lots permitted on a private street, as well as note

no. 9 being adequately addressed. Mr. Gordon seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

CONTINUED REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE TOWNSHIP'S LAND DEVELOPMENT AND ZONING REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION:

Township Manager Stanick reviewed the Planning Commission's prior discussion concerning open space and recreational requirements for Planned Residential Developments (PRDs) in the Township. Township Manager Stanick disseminated a memo highlighting the four major points that were identified by the Planning Commission over the course of its review and reviewed the following consensus points:

- i) Adhere to and uphold the Township's regulations concerning open space and recreation requirements for residential development. This is evidenced by the \$250 per unit fee in Strabane Manor in exchange for providing active open space. Additionally, the Township must be more proactive with enforcement of approved plans. Again, this is evident with the lack of sidewalks and walking trails connecting the phases of Strabane Manor that are indicated on the final approved plans.
- ii) Do not allow stormwater facilities to count toward minimum open space requirements as stormwater facilities are currently required by the Code and are imperative to the functionality of any land development. It is anticipated that this will result in more open space in residential developments.
- iii) Combine active (ballfields, some type of facility, etc.) and passive (trails, etc.) open space into one calculation. Currently, the Code does not address passive open space under the requirements. This would allow the developer to install facilities that would work best for the targeted housing market as active open space may not be needed in age-targeted housing developments.
- iv) Separate buffer yard requirements from open space requirements. Buffer yards are currently required for and are located on the perimeter of each residential development. This encourages open space to be pushed to the fringes and not central to where activity takes place. Also, refrain from having the required buffer yards as part of private property. Typically, buffer yards must be maintained pursuant to any land development plan and relying on private property owners to not disturb the buffer yard creates issues with land development compliance and enforcement.

Township Manager Stanick also highlighted the following decision points:

- i) Allow developers to pay a fee in lieu of providing open space/park areas in residential developments that could be used to enhance existing facilities or create new facilities.

Mr. Gordon stated that if developers can't meet the standards set forth in the Code, they will have to come before the Township and prove hardship before alternative agreements are considered.

- ii) Consider larger lot size requirements.

Ms. Scuvotti stated that requiring larger lots may ease the burden of open space requirements because everyone would have larger yards for recreational activities.

Mr. Pozzutto recommended that Township Manager Stanick write a formal recommendation on behalf of the Planning Commission outlining the aforementioned points. Ms. Phillis asked Township Manager Stanick to relay correspondence from Ms. Scuvotti's to members of the Planning Commission for review. Ms. Phillis proceeded to inquire regarding the limitation of active recreational spaces on steep slopes. Township Engineer Sherreih highlighted that few active recreational spaces (i.e. soccer field, gymnasium, etc.) would be viable or

cost effective to construct on steep slopes. Mr. Pozzutto requested that Township Manager Stanick clarify steep slope & active open space guidelines in the recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

After some discussion, Ms. Phillis moved to request Township Manager Stanick craft a recommendation based on this evening's decision to be disseminated through email by members of the Planning Commission prior to final delivery to the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Gordon seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Township Manager's Update

Township Manager Stanick reported the Board of Supervisors has directed the Planning Commission to review green space, landscaping (trees, etc.) and steep slope requirements in the coming months. Mr. Pozzutto noted that many MS4 mandates hinder the preservation of natural vegetation and growth.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Gordon moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. Ms. Phillis seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully,

Patrick M. Conners
Assistant to the Township Manager