

SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

December 3, 2020

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

The Planning Commission of South Strabane Township held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, December 7, 2020 at 7:00 P.M. in the Mae C. Reynolds Meeting Room of the Municipal Building, 550 Washington Road, Washington, PA 15301.

Present: Chairperson Fred Pozzuto, Vice-Chairperson Joe Kopko (via phone), Ms. Susan Bayard, Mr. Jay Gordon, Ms. Paula Phillis, and Mr. Thomas Steele

Not Present: Mr. William Ursic

Also present: Township Manager Brandon Stanick, Assistant to the Township Manager Patrick Conners, Township Solicitor Chris Furman (via phone), and Township Engineer Scott Groom.

Chair Pozzuto led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Charlene Scuvotti of Pine Valley Road came before the Commission to express her concerns with the Pre-Application submission of Meadows Landing for a proposed Planned Residential Development (PRD). She noted her property is next door to the proposed PRD. She continued by highlighting the existing stormwater infrastructure is insufficient to prevent further erosion of the stream that runs through her property. She then cited concerns with the overall timeline of the most recent stormwater inspection conducted by the Township Engineer. She concluded by reporting her property has experienced an influx of rodents, citing the poorly maintained neighboring property owned by Meadows Landing.

**APPROVAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES –
November 5, 2020**

Mr. Gordon moved to approve the November 5, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Ms. Phillis seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

**PREAPPLICATION MEETING WITH MEADOWS LANDING ASSOCIATES, LP
REGARDING THE PROPOSED MEADOWS LANDING PLANNED RESIDENTIAL
DEVELOPMENT LOCATED ALONG LANDINGS DRIVE**

Mr. Ryan Klousnitzer, representing NVR homes, began the discussion by highlighting the Planning Commission would be presented with three separate Pre-Applications for Planned Residential Developments (PRDs) within the Township. He cited that NVR will serve as the builder for all three developments. He highlighted that each project will offer unique housing stocks to specifically targeted demographics. He then briefly outlined the specifics of each project.

He concluded by reporting that each proposal would require a Zoning Map Amendment to allow residential development.

Mr. Allen Beechey of Scheffler & Company, representing the Meadows Landing Development, came before the Planning Commission seeking a Pre-Application discussion for the proposed PRD along Landings Drive. He noted the parcel under review is zoned C-2 General Commercial. He noted his client would be seeking a Map Amendment to re-zone the parcel R-4 to allow for the construction of single-family dwellings of various build and design. He highlighted the current proposal calls for a total of 334 dwelling units. He highlighted the draft site plan did not include any passive or active recreation amenities citing he wanted input from the Planning Commission prior the formal submission of a Master Plan for consideration. He noted a desire to implement amenities that the residents and community desire, including connectivity through a trail system.

He continued by discussing the Applicant's overall vision for the project, stating that it would offer unique pocket neighborhoods within the development. A discussion regarding a designated archeological site on the property ensued. Mr. Beechey highlighted no development would occur within that area. He then outlined the slope contour of the site as well as the stormwater infrastructure. He concluded by illustrating the anticipated housing stock noting both attached and detached single-family options would be available to buyers. Mr. Pozzuto inquired regarding a proposed senior living facility that was previously discussed. Mr. Beechey reported that project has been cancelled. He highlighted the neighboring lot which would have hosted the proposed senior living facility will remain zoned C-2.

Mr. Pozzuto then inquired regarding the proposed grading and falls associated with the development. Mr. Beechey stated that a full geotechnical analysis will be performed on the property. He noted the results will be shared with the Planning Commission when the formal applications are submitted. Mr. Steele highlighted that a spotlight will be put on stormwater infrastructure and grading within the development. Mr. Pozzuto expressed a desire to see a trail system noting such amenities are becoming more in-demand. Mr. Beechey noted the developer seeks to adhere to all Township zoning standards and will work with the Township throughout the process. Mr. Steele inquired regarding the timeline of the project. Mr. Beechey stated the development should begin construction during the fall of 2021. He noted the timeline is dependent on garnering the proper re-zoning approvals.

Township Manager Stanick highlighted the three developments being presented will undergo the same approval process with Master Plan approvals and re-zonings. He reported the strategy for all three developers will revolve around the construction of a formal Master Plan prior to re-zoning or land development and zoning approvals for the Board to consider.

PREAPPLICATION MEETING WITH VICTOR-WETZEL ASSOCIATES REGARDING THE PROPOSED BURKETT MANOR PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT LOCATED ALONG BURKETT LANE

Mr. Steven Victor of Victor Wetzel Associates came before the Commission for the consideration of a Pre-Application submission for a PRD along Burkett Lane. He noted that he is not the developer, but represents PA Financial One, which is the owner of the parcel. He illustrated the parcel and overall vision for the PRD. He highlighted the terrain citing the site experiences

approximately 200 feet of grade fluctuation. He noted the site has slopes in excess of 25% grade highlighting that some are in excess of 50%. He continued by outlining a proposal to re-zone 46 acres of the parcel to R-2 while maintaining a 4-acre parcel as C-2 General Commercial. He continued by reporting the development would have one point of ingress-egress coming off of Burkett Lane. He noted the lack of connectivity serves as the primary reason to down-zone the property to R-2. He reported that 104 single-family homes would be constructed within the development. He stated the housing would be targeted to the empty-nester and would skew to an older demographic. He highlighted that a recreation plan is under review but noted the amenities would be resident-driven according to the demographics of the neighborhood (i.e. pickleball courts and walking trails). Mr. Klousnitzer illustrated the anticipated housing stock for the development noting that the price point would be in the high 400s. He noted a similar development, Waterdam Farms, in North Strabane Township.

Mr. Victor then discussed the 4-acre parcel which will remain zoned C-2. He stated the developer intends to construct a state-of-the-art multi-storied climate-controlled storage unit. He highlighted the development would require a Text-Amendment to permit the use as a Conditional Use within the C-2 zoning district. He stated the property would be managed by Extra Space Storage. He continued by discussing the zoning history of self-storage units. He stated the current zoning designation and definition does not account for the proposed use. He then outlined the amenities of the structure including drive-through entry and climate-controlled units. He continued by discussing the anticipated procedure for the parcel's re-zoning and text amendment. He reported the text amendment and storage unit development is anticipated to move much more quickly.

Mr. Steele inquired regarding the lot width for the PRD. Mr. Victor stated that in his opinion the Development follows the intention of the PRD requirements within the SALDO. He then highlighted that a complete geotechnical analysis would be conducted on the property. He reported the results would be presented to the Planning Commission and Township Engineer when available. He continued by stating a traffic analysis would be conducted. A discussion ensued regarding an alternate right turn lane along Route 19.

Ms. Phillis noted her concerns with emergency access into the development. She highlighted the Developer should consult the Fire Chief to verify sufficient access for emergency vehicles. Mr. Victor affirmed he would consult the Township's Fire Chief. He also noted the topography prohibits easy access for alternate connectivity. Ms. Phillis inquired regarding the data concerning potential buyers highlighting her concerns with the stated price-point. Mr. Pozzuto noted the construction of the housing stock is the risk of the developer. Mr. Gordon stated it is their business decision. A discussion regarding the housing market ensued. Mr. Steele inquired regarding the status of Burkett Lane. Township Manager Stanick stated the road is private. Mr. Victor stated the it is the opinion of the property owner that they have a legal right to use the road. He noted the Developer would work with the Township to make it public. Township Manager Stanick stated the Township will do its due diligence regarding the incorporation of Burkett Lane into the Public Street system.

**PREAPPLICATION MEETING WITH SANDY HILL DEVELOPMENT REGARDING
A PROPOSED PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ALONG QUARRY ROAD**

Mr. Gregg Heineman of the Sandy Hill Development Group came before the Planning Commission for the continuation of a Pre-Application discussion for a proposed PRD along Quarry Road. He noted his last appearance before the Commission was during the August 6th meeting. He highlighted that he had made various revisions to the site plan, including relocating the development's entry to allow for a greater vehicular sight distance. He then summarized the core features of the PRD noting the site is 134 acres and is currently zoned Industrial. Mr. Scott Turner, owner of the parcel under discussion noted that his family has owned the property for many decades. He provided a brief history of the parcel highlighting that it once served as a stone quarry during the mid-20th Century.

Mr. Heineman continued by discussing the geographical barriers to an alternative entry point. He noted the development will be served by a two-lane ingress-egress (4 lanes total) cart way which should allow ample space for emergency access into and throughout the neighborhood. He cited there will also be a three-way roundabout installed within the community to ensure the ample flow of traffic. He then illustrated a similar community, the Berkshires, South Fayette Township. He reported that he had met with the Washington East Washington Joint Authority (WEWJA) to discuss public sewage access for the development. He stated the development would not require an additional pump station, but could be served by gravity flows. He noted the existing pump stations would need updated at an estimated cost of \$750,000, which would be entirely absorbed by the Developer.

Mr. Heineman reported that a total of 314 single-family dwellings are proposed for the development, citing there would be a mix of housing options for buyers. Mr. Gordon inquired as to which roads would serve the community. Mr. Heineman stated that Lakeview and Quarry Roads would provide access to and from the development. Mr. Gordon expressed his concerns with the current condition of Lakeview Road citing its narrowness. After a brief discussion, Township Manager Stanick affirmed that Lakeview Road is a state road while Quarry Road being a Township road. Mr. Heineman noted that the existing zoning designation is Industrial, highlighting the property owner has fielded interest in developing it as such. Mr. Turner noted the property is also serviced by a rail line.

Several residents expressed their concerns with the proposed development citing an increase in traffic to already insufficient roadways. Mr. Steele highlighted that the previous presentations and residential developments were accessed by roads which were better suited to handle the addition of hundreds of homes. After reiterating that he would be in favor of the re-zoning from Industrial to Residential, he noted his biggest concern was the overall density of the proposal.

Mr. Heineman highlighted the parcel is ideally located next to the Township's Community Park which would serve as a notable selling point to potential buyers. Mr. Dave Hilton, Vice President of Ryan Homes, provided the Planning Commission with a market analysis of the South Strabane housing market. After some discussion, Ms. Mary Helicke of Lakeview Drive expressed her concerns with the potential increase of vehicles along Quarry Road and Lakeview Drive during the construction phase of the development. Ms. Paula Nicolella of Lakeview Drive expressed her concerns with the development noting that the zoning designation was assigned to that parcel for

a reason. She also noted her concerns with the increasing density of South Strabane Township noting the local wildlife is being pushed out of the area. Noting the previous presentations, she inquired if South Strabane could handle another 700 households highlighting the potential strain on emergency services as well as the local school district.

Addressing a concern regarding stormwater runoff, Mr. Heineman highlighted that the development would include a full stormwater infrastructure review and would abide by Township and DEP standards. Mr. Pozzuto noted that the constituents along Lakeview Drive and Quarry Road need to lobby PennDOT to have their concerns addressed concerning the standard of the roads as there is a regional demand for new homes. After some discussion regarding density, Ms. Cynthia Rossi of Zediker Station Road expressed her desire to see larger lot sizes, similar to estate zoning for the development. Mr. Kopko noted should the lot be developed as Industrial the traffic impact would likely be far worse for the current residents. Mr. Gordon noted that with existing infrastructure conditions, the lot is not likely to be developed at all.

REVIEW OF THE ZONING DESIGNATION FOR THE PANCAKE NEIGHBORHOOD

Mrs. Frances Shrontz of Pierce Lane came before the Commission regarding their consideration of a re-zoning of the Pancake neighborhood. She highlighted that she is in the process of selling a parcel within the Pancake neighborhood. She proceeded to introduce Mr. Joshua Devell to the Commission, highlighting that he would be seeking to erect a pole barn office and garage for an electrical contracting business. Mr. Devell provided an overview of his business reporting that all equipment would be stored indoors. Township Manager Stanick noted that the property is currently zoned C-2, but is under consideration for a residential designation. A discussion regarding the surrounding properties ensued.

Mr. Gordon expressed his concern for existing businesses within the Pancake neighborhood that would be impacted by the zoning change, in particular the newly established boutique winery at 10 McCoy Lane. He noted that the property was purchased under a good-faith assumption that it would remain a Commercial lot. Township Solicitor Furman highlighted case law that could protect the aforementioned property should it be sold for a similar use. Mr. Gordon inquired who would make the determination for the like-use. Township Solicitor Furman advised that the Zoning Hearing Board and Common Pleas Court, if necessary, would render judgement.

Township Manager Stanick proceeded to discuss the history of the Pancake neighborhood with the assistance of a PowerPoint presentation. He outlined the various permissions, setbacks, and restrictions associated with the R-3 and R-4 Residential Zoning Districts. Mr. Pozzuto noted the R-4 designation for a portion of the Pancake neighborhood may be best, citing it would be the least restrictive for future housing development. He highlighted that all developments presented during the evening's meeting were dense and included a mix of attached and detached dwellings. Mr. Steele stated that it would be unlikely to see a push for increased commercial development in the Pancake neighborhood. Township Manager Stanick noted that the neighborhood has been zoned commercial for over 50 years. A discussion concerning the existing businesses and a nearby powerline ensued. Mr. Kopko noted that the Planning Commission cannot prescribe what development occurs below or nearby a utility line.

After some discussion, Mr. Pozzuto moved to recommend the Board of Supervisors re-zone a portion of the Pancake neighborhood from C-2 to R-4, as well as re-zone parcel ID 600-006-00-0032-01 entirely Commercial as presented by Staff. Mr. Kopko seconded the motion. The motion passed on the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Bayard, Gordon, Kopko, Pozzuto, Phillis, Steele

Nays: None

REVIEW OF SECTION 245-175 OF THE TOWNSHIP CODE CONCERNING STANDARDS FOR DRIVE-THROUGH FACILITIES

Due to the late hour, Mr. Pozzuto moved to table the matter. Mr. Kopko seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Gordon moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:50p.m. Ms. Phillis seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully,

Patrick M. Conners
Assistant to the Township Manager