

New Sewickley Township

Planning Commission

Chairman Albert Horn

***233 Miller Road
Rochester, Pa 15074***

Vice Chairman Ed Eisenbrown

Secretary Jenny Fessler

MINUTES

June 15, 2023

June 15, 2023, the New Sewickley Township Planning Commission held its regular monthly meeting at the township municipal building. Chairman Al Horn called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Present were:

Planning Commission Members: Secretary Jenny Fessler, Mike Phipps, Art Craig, and Gary Braun

Absent: Vice-Chairman Ed Eisenbrown and Ed Majors

Township Officials: Manager Ronald Leindecker, Secretary Lawrie Borgman and Township Planner Joanne Shelly

Guests: Larry Hough, Amanda Peterson, Dan Matko, and Ron Walker

Call to Order and Pledge: Chairman Horn called the meeting to order and announced security cameras were installed. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Amendments to the Agenda

Motion by Fessler to accept the following amendments to the agenda: Add 11e – Holding Tank Ordinance; add 11f - Zoning Hearing; Add 10c Tiny homes, seconded by Braun. Vote of 4-0 in favor.

Opening Comments

Public Comments

Ron Walker and Dan Matko, representing American Legion Post 512, expressed concerns over the township Sewage Enforcement Officer's requirement of a holding tank for a new outdoor bathroom facility. Chairman Horn explained the Planning Commission does not oversee the township SEO and it is the DEP that enforces such requirements. Chairman Horn suggested they schedule a meeting with the DEP and township SEO to discuss their concerns.

Minutes

Motion by Braun to approve the May 18, 2023 meeting minutes as written, seconded by Craig. Vote of 4-0 in favor.

Pre-Application

None.

Preliminary Plans

None.

Chairman Horn stated the plans for 39th St Commons and William Harper that were passed contingent upon the closure counts being added, were fixed, signed, and will be recorded.

Old Business

Comprehensive Plan Updates

Joanne Shelly stated approximately 350 responses have been received to date. Ms. Shelly would like to schedule time prior to the next meeting to be available to residents who have questions or concerns. It was decided to schedule at 5:30 pm prior to the July meeting. The staff will advertise to inform township residents.

Traffic Impact Plan

Mike Phipps stated one of the recommendations from the Strategic Management Planning Program is to have a traffic impact plan. This will be discussed after the completion of the Comprehensive Plan.

Conditional Use Submission

None.

Ordinance Review

Noise Ordinance

Ms. Shelly met with a company regarding the process for measuring sound. They were sent sound bites and another meeting is scheduled next week. Ms. Shelly will have a draft sent out for review prior to the next meeting. Discussion will continue in July.

Short Term Rentals Ordinance

Discussion occurred on the differences between short term rentals, bed and breakfasts and motel/hotels. Ms. Shelly stated short term rentals are not covered under the bed and breakfast or motel/hotels. She asked the commission to think about what they would like to allow or restrict. A draft will be sent out prior to the July meeting for continued discussion.

Tiny Homes

Ms. Shelly stated the current zoning ordinance does not have anything that covers tiny homes or accessory dwellings and asked if the commission is interested in further discussion. After discussion, it was decided Ms. Shelly will continue to research and the Commission will review further in July.

Discussion

Shipping Containers

Manager Leindecker stated he had a resident complaint about a neighbor placing a shipping container in the back yard of a one acre lot. The container is small enough that it does not require a building/zoning permit.

Chairman Horn stated if there is not something in the current ordinance that covers this issue, an ordinance should be written. Discussion occurred on restrictions for properties of less than 10 acres. Discussion will continue.

Fencing

Manager Leindecker stated a zoning permit is not required to put up fences and questioned if the commission thought it should be. Discussion occurred on what is in the current ordinance. Ms. Shelly suggested the township give people written rules on fence placement in lieu of them trying to figure it out by reading the ordinance. Chairman Horn thinks it should be inspected after being placed.

Driveway Permits on State Roads

Manager Leindecker stated there is an issue with someone on a state road placing a new driveway that extends into the neighboring property. Since the township does not require permits on state roads, there is no one monitoring the zoning. Chairman Horn stated the permitting is an administrative matter. He asked Manager Leindecker to work with Joanne Shelly on the process of adding permits. Manager Leindecker will consult the township solicitor also. If necessary, the commission can add changes to the current ordinance.

Penn Energy Meter Station Close-Out

Amanda Peterson, Penn Energy, stated the landowner signed off on the lease turn-over and it will be recorded. Penn Energy will send a letter to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors when that is complete.

Holding Tank Ordinance

Manager Leindecker stated the township has three different situations in which a holding tank ordinance is necessary for DEP approval. Discussion occurred on whether this ordinance would be a zoning change or a standalone ordinance. It was determined it is a standalone ordinance. The commission reviewed a sample ordinance provided by the Sewage Enforcement Officer. Joanne Shelly will prepare an ordinance that will be ready for approval in July so the Board of Supervisors can consider it at their August meeting.

Zoning Hearing

Chairman Horn stated that four ordinances were sent to the Board of Supervisors and the commission asked that they hold off on scheduling a hearing since they were working several others. Those ordinances are still under discussion and Chairman Horn feels the Board should be notified to proceed with a hearing for the ordinances they have been given. Township staff will discuss with the Board and make the arrangements.

Educational Training

Joanne Shelly presented material from a seminar on Ethics and Case Law to the commission from a conference she attended.

Closing Comments

None.

Adjourn

Motion by Braun to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Fessler. Vote of 4-0 in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:22 pm.

Respectfully,
Lawrie Borgman, Township Secretary