

New Sewickley Township

Planning Commission

233 Miller Road

Rochester, PA 15074

Chairman Albert Horn

Vice Chairman Jenny Fessler

Secretary Ed Eisenbrown

MINUTES

January 19, 2025

On January 19, 2025, the New Sewickley Township Planning Commission held its monthly meeting at the township municipal building. Chairman Albert Horn called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Present were:

Planning Commission Members: Vice-Chairman Jenny Fessler, Secretary Ed Eisenbrown, Ed Majors, and Art Craig

Absent: Gary Braun and Chris Brenckle

Township Officials: Manager Ronald Leindecker, Secretary Lawrie Borgman, Engineer John Wright, and Planner Ashley Harris

Guests: Amanda Peterson, Alex Meeder, Mike Phipps, and Laura Dengel

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

Reorganization of Officers

Chairman

Motion by Craig to nominate Albert Horn as Chairman, seconded by Eisenbrown. Vote of 4-0 in favor.

Vice-Chairman

Motion by Eisenbrown to nominate Jenny Fessler as Vice-Chairman, seconded by Majors. Vote of 4-0 in favor.

Secretary

Motion by Craig to nominate Ed Eisenbrown as Secretary, seconded by Fessler. Vote of 4-0 in favor.

Amendments to the Agenda

None.

Opening Comments

Zoning Hearing Held on January 15, 2025 – 441 Big Knob Road

Ed Majors reported the resident was seeking relief for an additional use area above 20% for a home business hair salon. She met all other requirements of the ordinance. The request was granted.

Discussion occurred on the wording of the current ordinance and how it could be changed. Ashley Harris suggested that the wording be changed to 20% of the square footage of the dwelling rather than of a single floor. Art Craig suggested that the percentage be eliminated and state a home business cannot go over 500 square feet because parking is the main concern which has its own requirements. Jenny Fessler suggested that they include both 20% of total dwelling space and not to exceed 500 square feet. Manager Leindecker asked that something be added to ensure the permitted space can meet the state requirements also.

The ordinance will remain on the agenda for further consideration.

PSATS Conference

Jenny Fessler was approved to attend the conference in May.

Public Comments

None.

Minutes

Motion by Craig to approve the December 19, 2024, meeting minutes as submitted, seconded by Fessler. Vote of 4-0 in favor.

Pre-Application

None.

Preliminary Plans

None

Old Business

None.

Conditional Use Submission

None.

Ordinance Review

Section 502 – Area and Yard Requirements

Ashley Harris submitted suggested changes to Section 502 for corner and irregular lots as they relate to accessory structures. Most municipalities permit accessory structures on corner lots if the front setback line is met. For irregular lots, she suggested giving the zoning officers room to establish the lot line on a case-by-case basis.

Discussion occurred over the ordinance which considers front yards to be any area that is in front of a house rather than directly in front of a house. Craig suggested that be changed in agricultural areas. Manager Leindecker stated even in areas with smaller yards residents are forced to put the accessory structure in the front yard because of the space limitations. Eisenbrown suggested they not be permitted directly in front of the home but permitted if offset with set-back requirements.

Discussion occurred on the heights of fences in front yards. Ashley Harris stated that 4 feet is standard.

Chairman Horn stated the ordinance review will remain on the agenda for further consideration.

Section 606 – Electronic Signs

The Zoning Hearing Board suggested the Planning Commission consider permitting electronic signage in the general commercial district. The Commission agrees. The update will be discussed at the February meeting.

Educational Programs

Ashley Harris contacted DCED. They offered to speak regarding different resources and grant opportunities at February's meeting. Chairman Horn agreed to put DCED first thing on the February agenda.

Discussion

Chairman Horn said Supervisor Phipps asked the Commission to get information on the Affordable Home Act Governor Shapiro signed. Ashley Harris said the act was to form a committee and there is not a formal mandate in place. She stated there is a survey that anyone can fill out and would send the link to the Commission.

Amanda Peterson said Penn Energy will begin drilling at the B25 pad on Rt 989 and hopes to begin fracking in June.

Closing Comments

None.

Adjourn

Motion by Craig to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Majors. Vote of 4-0 in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully,

Lawrie Borgman,
Township Secretary