

## ROSS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

### MONTHLY MEETING

August 19, 2025

The Ross Township Planning Commission Meeting, scheduled for August 19, 2025, was called to order by Chairman Roger Christman at 7:00pm. The meeting was held at the Township Municipal Building.

In attendance were the following Planning Commission Members: Chairman Roger Christman, Vice-Chairman Rick Meixsell, Roger Green Jr, Herb Stecker, David Labar and Frank Piraino Jr.

Planning Commission Member Lauri Lapping was absent.

Also in attendance were Attorney Michael Gaul, of the King Spry Law Firm, Planning Commission Solicitor and Alternate Township Engineer Tighe Meckes, from Keystone Consulting Engineers.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2025 meeting as presented was made by David Labar and seconded by Herb Stecker. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS:**

None

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

##### 1652 Bonser Road Minor Subdivision Plan

The plan preparer for the 1652 Bonser Road property, surveyor Jonathan Shupp, attended the meeting. Engineer Tighe Meckes stated there had only been a few changes since the original submission from June 26<sup>th</sup> including the driveway, slope and septic testing. The plan preparer did not bring hard copies of the full-sized revised plans to the meeting and had not provided hard copies for the Planning Commission in advance of the meeting.

Chairman Roger Christman asked Secretary Melissa Monaco about receiving copies of the revised Plan that should have been submitted, which she went and looked for. Attorney Gaul asked Chairman Roger Christman to check whether a Planning Module had been submitted and then asked Engineer Tighe Meckes if he had seen the module which was dated August 15<sup>th</sup>. Secretary Melissa Monaco reentered the meeting asking if the revised Plan they were looking for had been attached to the Sewage Plan as that was all that she had received. She left again to continue looking.

Engineer Tighe Meckes repeated that the revised subdivision plan did not contain many changes. These changes included adding the driveway location, steep slope and perc test. The Plan representative had a small copy that he offered to share with the Planning Commission to review. He further stated they had received a review from Engineer Tighe Meckes with corrections and for Review 2 leaving only a few comments left on the Plan to be addressed. The representative further stated the Planning Module would be sitting for a few months now as they would need confirmation on the presence, or lack thereof, of Bog Turtles on the property. Secretary Melissa Monaco returned again stating she did not find any other items delivered for the Planning Commission.

Attorney Gaul stated that Engineer Tighe Meckes is familiar with the Plan; so, he would be able to go over comments that had been made for the revised Plan. Engineer Tighe Meckes stated remaining items included notes from the Zoning Officer, the Owner's Certification Statement needed to be signed and one waiver request from the applicant. The waiver request was in regards to the requirement to locate

and map existing above and below ground utilities. Mr. Shupp believed the requirement was unnecessary because only one new lot was being created and no new construction was proposed at this time.

Chairman Roger Christman asked if this request would need to be added as a note to the Plan. Attorney Gaul recommended that the waiver be noted on the Plan along with explanatory language so as to avoid the impression that no utilities were present on the property. Attorney Gaul further stated the Zoning Officer had issued a letter and asked Engineer Tighe Meckes about whether he believed a Stormwater Plan would be required to build a house on the property. Engineer Tighe Meckes stated the requirement of a Stormwater Plan could not be determined at this time. The square footage of additional impervious surface would need to be reviewed when a new house is proposed in order to determine whether or not an exemption for a Stormwater Plan existed.

Attorney Gaul advised the Planning Commission that, if the subdivision plan is approved, the property owner will not need to submit another plan to the Planning Commission when he wants to build a house on the new lot. As a result, the Planning Commission will not be able to review what steps the property owner takes in regards to utilities when a house is built. However, the property owner will need to obtain a building permit, and will probably be required to submit a grading plan so the Building Code Official can determine whether an E & S Plan, and possibly a Stormwater Plan are required.

Chairman Roger Christman asked if there were any issues or questions on the waiver request and if everyone understood the request. Frank Piraino Jr answered he did not. The representative of the Plan explained the request is not to show above and underground utilities of the entire site as there is no new construction. Chairman Roger Christman stated the waiver would be noted on the Plan and could further state a requirement to show the utilities before any future Building Permits would be issued.

Attorney Gaul stated the waiver would be noted on the Plan with the condition stating the waiver had been granted and that such utilities may still exist on the property. This would be to avoid future confusion of someone reviewing the Plan and thinking there were no utilities present as they were not listed in the Plan. He continued with stating the condition example given by Chairman Roger Christman could be added to the Plan, but any future construction would require an 811 call to determine lines and the utilities would need to be reviewed for a Building Permit.

Frank Piraino Jr stated his confusion was over Blue Star Construction being the owner of the property located off of Bonser Road and that they agenda should have reflected 'Blue Star Subdivision' instead of '1652 Bonser Road'. Vice Chairman Rick Meixsell stated if the applicant remained under the 5,000 sqft of disturbance further items, such as a Stormwater Plan, would not be required. Attorney Gaul confirmed the address of 1652 Bonser Road referred to the already existing home's address on the property and that the current home would not meet the standards, such as well location and setbacks, of a modern construction property.

Chairman Roger Christman asked if there were any motions in regards to the waiver request. Attorney Gaul stated the form of the motion would be to recommend to the Board of Supervisors to grant the request for waiver with the condition the waiver be reflected on the Plan along with a note that such utilities may exist on the property.

Roger Green Jr made a motion to recommend granting approval for the requested waiver for not needing to show the current above and underground utilities with the condition that the waiver be

noted on the plan together with text about possible presence of such utilities. The motion was seconded by Frank Piraino Jr and carried unanimously.

Engineer Tighe Meckes stated the next item was in reference to the copy of the received Planning Module. Attorney Gaul stated he had a question as the module had been received on August 15<sup>th</sup> by the Township and asked about the module not having been signed. The representative for the Plan stated it would be signed by the SEO of the Township. Attorney Gaul then asked if the applicant and representative would like the next step to be for the SEO to review the Plan for comment. The representative stated Secretary Melissa Monaco had a copy for the SEO for review.

Attorney Gaul then stated the usual timeline for when a Plan was received by the Township would be as follows. Once received, the Township has ten days to distribute the Plan to the SEO and Planning Commission. The SEO will then have twenty days to provide their comments and the Planning Commission would have sixty days to provide their comments. As this is an Exemption Planning Module, all that is being asked of the Planning Commission is review for Consistency Determination for Land Use Regulations and would not include Sewage Planning. Attorney Gaul further stated the Planning Commission could take action on the Plan that evening with the idea to move the Plan to the Board of Supervisors as it is a simple plan. The Planning Commission could also approve the Planning Module for the Chairman to sign based on the first review of the Township Engineer. Chairman Roger Christman stated he would not usually sign until the Plan was final. Attorney Gaul stated it would be a conditional approval and could allow for the Plan to not have to be brought back before a Public Meeting after Engineer review.

Attorney Gaul then stated what is important for this type of Planning Module would be whether there was soil that would support on lot septic disposal. If the soil was not right, it would lead to Marginal Conditions with secondary septic testing and other secondary site testing. He then asked if testing had been completed. Mr. Shupp said it had and there were no Marginal Conditions.

With a simplified plan, the Planning Commission would be reviewing for a Consistency Determination to be made. The Zoning Officer had confirmed the Plan was consistent with the Township's Land Use Regulations and that there were no issues per Engineer Tighe Meckes' review. Attorney Gaul stated the Plan would not need to be signed that evening, but taking action could allow for the Plan to be signed in the future, after review, without being brought before another public meeting. Chairman Roger Christman asked for confirmation on the action Attorney Gaul was recommending. Attorney Gaul stated a motion could be made to authorize the Chairman to sign the Planning Module after review and consultation with the Township Engineer which would be completed after the SEO signs to allow for the Plan to be more complete.

Vice Chairman Rick Meixsell made a motion to authorize Chairman Roger Christman to sign the Planning Module after consulting with the Township Engineer. The motion was seconded by Roger Green Jr and carried unanimously.

Engineer Tighe Meckes stated the Board of Supervisors would determine what open space fees would be required. Attorney Gaul stated the SALDO only requires open space fees if the Plan requires a Preliminary Plan and this is only a minor subdivision, which does not require a preliminary plan. Attorney Gaul then read from SALDO Section 1007.B that the section applies to any subdivision or land development in which a preliminary plan or combined preliminary/final plan is submitted. Since the minor subdivision does not require a preliminary plan there would be no additional fees.

Engineer Tighe Meckes stated the property owner had asked for verification from the Tax Office if the subdivision would comply with the Act 319 Regulation and the confirmation would be forwarded. Attorney Gaul stated this would not be a condition of approval, but was from an advice standpoint. Engineer Tighe Meckes then stated the final item was that the new deed descriptions should be provided before final approval.

Chairman Roger Christman asked if there were any further questions and stated that he did not see any problems with approving the Plan with a few conditions. Attorney Gaul asked if any improvements would need to be made prior to final Plan approval. Mr. Shupp stated there may be a few spots where a monument or marker needs to be added, but that would be done before final Plan approval, and that a Certified Letter would be sent. Attorney Gaul then asked if a driveway location had been specified on the revised Plan, which it had. He then stated the Planning Commission could move the Plan onto the Board of Supervisors with included conditions for compliance with the Township Engineer's letter and DEP Approval of the Planning Module. Once all items had been reviewed and signed then the Plan could receive final approval from the Board of Supervisors.

Chairman Roger Christman asked if there was a motion to recommend approval with conditions. Herb Stecker made a motion to approve the Plan with the conditions that the Township Engineer's letter, dated August 1<sup>st</sup>, be satisfactorily addressed and DEP Approval of the Planning Module. The motion was seconded by Roger Green Jr and carried unanimously.

#### Gateway Industrial

Chairman Roger Christman stated communication had been received from Gateway, through Township Engineer Russ Kresge, that they would like the item tabled. Attorney Gaul stated they wanted to revise the Plan to address Engineer Russ Kresge's comments before presenting before the Planning Commission again.

David Labar made a motion to table until the September meeting. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Rick Meixsell and carried unanimously.

Chairman Roger Christman stated there was a comment from the County that the Gateway building could only be addressed as a warehouse. Attorney Gaul stated that it can only be marketed and used as a warehouse so the Plan would need to be addressed as such. The Plan will be before the Zoning Officer for determination on whether what they are proposing is consistent with the prior Zoning Hearing Board decision.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

##### **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:**

#### Trumbauer – 3 Lady Slipper Court

Chairman Roger Christman asked Mr. Trumbauer to come forward and explain what he was looking to do. Mr. Trumbauer stated he has three adjoining lots that had been bought over the years between him and his parents. He stated he had spoken with the Zoning Officer as he would like to build a new garage and storage building adjacent to the house which is on Lot 2. He was told by the Zoning Officer that, under the Ordinance, it wouldn't be large enough as the lot is only about 1 ¼ acres, but if all lots were combined it would be a total of 4 ¾ acres which would enable him to build the garage. Mr. Trumbauer further stated he would like the garage to be able to be built so he could do future renovations to the house which would include converting the current garage into an additional room for the house.

Chairman Roger Christman asked if Mr. Trumbauer was before the Planning Commission to determine how to best move forward. Mr. Trumbauer confirmed and stated he had spoken with his attorney who told him it would usually be completed through a Deed change stating the three properties are considered as one and would never be separated or sold as separate properties. Attorney Gaul stated there are Lot Joiners for taxing purposes which allow people to join lots on a deed to act as one with a condition that the lots can then not be separated back without Municipal Approval. This would be done to help save money on Tax Assessments and so the Tax Assessment Office has set procedures for municipalities to follow to approve such requests. Attorney Gaul stated he was not sure if Ross Township had something in place or if Mr. Trumbauer would have the other option to complete a formal application to the Township to consolidate the lots, which would include a new survey of the property and possibly establishing new easements on the property.

When asked if Ross Township had anything in place, Vice Chairman Rick Meixsell stated Ross Township did have joiners. Engineer Tighe Meckes stated Ross Township did have a simplified process to join the properties.

Engineer Tighe Meckes stated, according to Engineer Russ Kresge, a Plan would still need to be submitted. Attorney Gaul stated Ross Township does not do Lot Joiners and so the only way would be through a submitted Plan along with needing to know what the Zoning Officer's opinion may be for what permits may be required.

Engineer Tighe Meckes then read from Section 705 for Joiner of Adjacent Lots with Easements Preserved. He stated if Mr. Trumbauer were to extinguish the easements and put a building up, it would fall under Section 704 which is a Minor Plan done by a surveyor for a formal Plan before the Planning Commission. Section 705 with easements preserved would go straight to the Board of Supervisors. It would all be determined based on where the garage would be built if it would be blocking any easements. Attorney Gaul stated either way, Mr. Trumbauer would still be recommended to have the properties resurveyed.

Engineer Tighe Meckes then continued reading from the SALDO in regards to joining. After reviewing, Attorney Gaul stated, when Ross Township approved their SALDO there was a simplified procedure added which would not require a Plan and would just require a Deed acceptable to the Board of Supervisors that would contain satisfactory language for the Tax Assessment Office. Attorney Gaul recommended Mr. Trumbauer speak to his attorney and that they could also speak with Engineer Tighe Meckes who could provide the section they were referring to for review.

Vice Chairman Rick Meixsell asked if all the tax papers were in his name which Mr. Trumbauer confirmed they were after his parents had passed which would have been a possible complication. With this, Mr. Trumbauer left the meeting.

#### **PENDING:**

Chairman Roger Christman stated he had a question about the owners of Elmer Road needing an HOP. Attorney Gaul stated the item was not on the agenda and, with the applicants not present, they should not discuss further, but that comments could be made to the Board of Supervisors. The Plan has been extended through October.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:38pm. The motion to adjourn was made by Herb Stecker, seconded by Frank Piraino Jr, and carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lizzy Stortz  
Temporary Recording Secretary