

Minutes of South Beaver Township Regular Meeting

February 26, 2025

The second February meeting of the South Beaver Township Board of Supervisors held in the South Beaver Municipal Building located at 805 Blackhawk Road was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Chairman John Onuska. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Officials present: Jack Mintier, Tom Miller, John Onuska, John Heyl, Nathan Morgan, Daniel Petrich, Ashley Carr

Others present: James Rich, Diane Ott, John Ott, Johnna Ott, Isack Turnbull, Tom Edwards, Jackson McMillen, Eva & Dan Ziegler, Shelley Shuster, Jim Stoker, Ron Neff, Linda & Garry Johnston, Dominic Degidio, Tim Hammond, James Anthony, Dan Riley, Brienne Krut, Pam Kerry, Kurt Kerry, Jake Rosenberger, Jim Perenovich, Pete Cosky, Zack Moran, Jeff Martin, Karen Leech, Andy Leech, Stacie Fuller, Brandon King, Carol Brewer, Randy Brewer, Jason Krepps, Nick Snyder, Cory Gallagher, Diana Campbell, Pat Mayer, Mark Solley, Eric Deiseroth, Rafael Paras, Jesse Kubick, Dan Rastatter, Rick Happ, Ray Miller, Bert Sanders

Jack Mintier made a motion to approve the regular February meeting minutes. Tom Miller seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Josh Krut introduced himself as the new road foreman, lifetime resident of South Beaver, director at the Beaver Falls Sportsman Association, Director of Youth Recreation for Western PA Youth Outdoorsman and NRA Certified Range Safety Officer and Blackhawk Clay Team Target Coach. Josh addressed speculations and assured residents that none of board members are anti-gun or want to take away gun rights. He introduced each Supervisor and their involvement with the community. Josh mentioned that the board wanted the draft ordinance to be public and requested it be on the website for all to view. Josh requested that everyone look at facts when addressing their concerns and stay civil and not make any personal attacks.

John Onuska thanked everyone for their attendance and engagement in the community. John addressed the online discussions regarding the ordinance and zoning changes and wanted to make sure everyone has access to accurate information. John explained the process for adopting a new ordinance and emphasized that no one was attempting to bypass the public. John addressed the concern that the Township Engineers and Solicitors recommend changes to generate billable services and assured everyone that was not the case, and these individuals only offer recommendations when directed by the board. John assured everyone that the ordinance has not been voted on and will not be voted on without public input with the goal of ensuring that South Beaver is a safe place for all residents. John encouraged those in attendance to reach out the Township and visit the Township Facebook page.

Randy Brewer of the Planning Commission Board was present and wanted to address how things are done in meetings. Randy suggested that moving forward with changes to have any new additions to an ordinance in red and anything that is being removed with a line through it so it is easier to review and catch the changes. Randy commented that Planning Commission asked for some changes to be made to the ordinance and thought it could be sent onto the Supervisors, he agreed that the board should have held it back until it was exactly how they wanted it. Randy read an email he sent to Ashley Carr regarding that it was never his or the Planning Commissions intention to limit in anyway the use of a home private shooting ranges, and his only issue was with commercial ranges, which Randy thinks commercial ranges need to be monitored. Randy remembers asking for clarity between private and commercial ranges, he understands the concern and apologized for any misunderstanding and agreed that this should go back for further review.

Diana Campbell introduced herself. She stated that she started the Concerned Citizens Facebook page as a communication page for the Township residents, not even knowing what was going on with the ordinance changes. Her goal is to get a better idea of how these changes will affect the residents and make sure that

all understand. She is hopeful that the residents and township officials can work together to make sure the changes benefit the Township and continue to make South Beaver a great place to live.

Dan Riley was present and stated that he moved to South Beaver 3 ½ years ago from the city of Pittsburgh, because he was being taxed too much, not being represented, not having road work done, and wanted to be left alone. Dan questioned how long the board had the document and how long it takes to read 300 pages. Dan's concern is that if this is getting through what else is getting through, he questioned who proposed it and who was responsible for the shooting range section.

Jake Rosenberger was present and stated that he keeps hearing you must come to meetings to know what is going on and will try to attend from now on. Jake commented on the December 11th Supervisors meeting minutes where it was reported that Planning Commission had a great meeting working on the ordinance but could not find minutes to reflect that mentioned meeting. Jake asked why the Township has a new zoning document and from reading past meeting minutes he believes it is because of solar farms. Jake questioned that if solar farms are the issue, then why rewrite the entire zoning ordinance and if there was any motivation to rewrite the document. Jake believes that if you read the ordinance, it would be easier to get a commercial solar farm instead of a private shooting range on your property. Jake questioned if there was any requirement to post a bond for outdated equipment to be removed, and asked why there is a limit on chickens but no limit on the size of solar farms. Jake also asked if community impact studies have been done.

John Onuska addressed a few of the comments. He stated that the current ordinance does not allow chickens unless you have 5 contiguous acres and with the new draft chickens would be allowed on 1 acre. It was a recommendation that if the Township did not put something into effect and limit solar to certain districts, these solar industries can take the Township to court. John stated the Township does not go looking for violations, but have a path to enforce them.

Eric Dieseroth was present and stated that the requirement of a zoning permit for chickens is unnecessary and the section is too broad. Eric said that 20 chickens per acre may sound like a lot but is over 4000 sf per chicken and believes that you can raise about 600 chickens on 1 acre. Eric thinks the it is too restrictive to require permits on chickens and does not believe there should be a limit on the number per acre.

Ron Neff was present and introduced himself as the current president of Beaver Falls Sportsmen's Club. Ron wanted to talk about the commercial firearm guidelines, and read PA section 2962 title 53 chapter 29 which prohibits Townships from enforcing ordinances that are to restrict, prohibit or limit shooting ranges on Sportsmen's Associations beyond which is already established under state law. Ron said that Jim Stoker of FOAC was present and a valuable resource for the Township. Ron said the Sportsmen's Club has been around since 1939, and the 9PM time restriction does not work as most events start at 7pm. Ron says the ordinance just states the caliber but not the type of gun which would restrict shotgun use. Ron touched on the decibel readings from property line and understands that the current board will not interfere if there is not a complaint, but worries because the board members will change and someone may come in and enforce it. Ron stated that the Sportsmen's Club is currently zoned Agricultural Residential and in that zoning district you can't have a commercial shooting range and would like see an exception where commercial shooting ranges are listed as permitted in the AR district.

John Heyl commented that the draft is not a new ordinance, but an amendment to certain sections of the current ordinance. John Heyl said that is important for the Township to include all uses in the Ordinance because if someone wants to build a use that is not listed, they can build it wherever they want. John Heyl said there is a chart in the ordinance that says what is a permitted use and what is conditional use and the boards have been working on what zoning districts to all these uses. John Heyl stated that six uses were added to the draft and if they are a conditional uses then conditions were also added. John Heyl stated

that the PA Attorney General made a ruling that the Township's logging ordinance was not in compliance with the ACRES Act so the Township was required to amend the ordinance.

Dan Riley asked if the layout of the zoning districts have changed. John Onuska said that no changes were made to the Zoning Chart.

Linda Johnston was present and asked about roosters in the ordinance. John Onuska said that section needs amended, but the intention was for the residential areas not to end up with multiple roosters.

Randy Brewer stated he has been on Planning Commission since 2001 and invited everyone to attend their meetings the first Wednesday of the month and said that the board can use help and input from everyone. Randy said a lot of times these ordinances come from other communities because there is no reason to reinvent the wheel.

John Onuska addressed Jake Rosenberger comments about minutes not being updated and explained that minutes must be approved at the next meeting and then placed on the website and that Planning Commission does not meet every month.

Eva Ziegler was present and asked what the percentage of the Township is Agricultural versus Residential. Eva stated that it is mostly agricultural and thinks that should be taken into consideration. John Heyl said the current ordinance states the only place you can have chickens is on a 5-acre farm, planning commission tried to correct that for people who want to have chickens on small pieces of property. Eva believes that there needs to be some clarification between Agricultural and Residential because it does not make sense to ask a farm to get permits for its animals.

Dan Rastatter a member of the Planning Commission board introduced himself and stated that the Township's comprehensive plan was updated in 2018 and encouraged everyone to look at it online because the boards use that as a guidance on how to move forward.

Jeff Martin asked under the current ordinance how many chickens he is allowed if he has five acres but does not have a farm. John Onuska commented that the current ordinance states you can have chickens if you have 5 acres and live in the AR or R1 zoning district.

John Onuska explained the reason why so many changes are being done at once is to make it more cost effective and that it costs the Township money to advertise these changes and hire a court stenographer.

Jake Rosenberger wanted clarification on the Planning Commission meeting minutes and the reference to a great Planning Commission meeting in the Supervisors December minutes, because there weren't any minutes from Planning Commission to reflect that. Ashley Carr and John Heyl stated that per the current solicitor's guidance a work session was held in December for Planning Commission and that no voting took place that is why there were no minutes to reflect that meeting.

Jim Stoker the president of Firearms Owners Against Crimes Institute who does education, litigation, and legal work across the state for firearms issues was present. Jim sent a letter out to the Board of Supervisors and understand the concerns of the board but said it is illegal for them to have any restrictions on commercial and private shooting ranges. Jim said that if the Supervisors pass the ordinance, they would commit a misdemeanor offense and that most people do not know the statues exists due to a lack of knowledge on the subject. He offered his services and told the Board they cannot pass the draft shooting range ordinance or he will have to take a different approach.

Mark Solley was present and said he lives in South Beaver because he wanted freedom and to bring his children and grandchildren on the property he purchased. Mark stated that he understood the safety aspects with the gun ordinance but said when it comes to solar farms it becomes a slippery slope that turns into land owners' rights versus the people next to them. Mark said North Beaver Township passed some solar ordinances and they are in the middle of a lawsuit at state level.

Randy Brewer said he moved here in 1979 and got on the Planning Commission Board in 2001 because he came to a meeting with concerns just like everyone in the room and assured those in attendance that he and other board members are on their side and that they just need to get it right.

John Onuska thanked everyone for coming and for their input, and encouraged residents to reach out the Township by phone or email with any questions.

Thomas Miller made a motion to rescind the motion to advertise the public hearing of the draft zoning ordinance and send it back to Planning Commission for further review. Jack Mintier seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried. The Board asked Andy Leech to remove the draft ordinance from the website.

Josh Krut asked for two satellite radios through First Net for safety and communication needs for the road department. The monthly cost is \$17.99 and cost of the devices is \$0.99 each. Jack Mintier made a motion to approve the purchase of the satellite radios. Tom Miller seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Tom Miller made a motion to approve Resolution No. 7 of 2025 declaring a state of emergency due to the lack of salt. The purpose of this resolution is so the Township can purchase salt using liquid fuels money and bypass bidding requirements. Jack Mintier seconded the motion. Motion carried.

John Heyl reported that the Township received a \$100,000 grant improving pedestrian access in the park.

John Onuska adjourned the meeting at 8:07 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Carr