

THE SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND
SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
JOINT WORK SESSION – DECEMBER 12, 2024, AT 6:00PM

A Joint Work Session of the Smithfield Township Board of Supervisors (“Board”) and Planning Commission (“Commission”) was held on December 12, 2024, at the Smithfield Township Municipal Center, at 1155 Red Fox Rd, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301, and via Zoom.

Present are Supervisors Jacob Pride, Robert Lovenheim, and Michael Albert; Commissioners Scott Amori, Chris Bowers, Robert Moses, James Munet, Douglas Schryver, and David Strunk; Conservation & Recreation Director Alex Jackson; and Township Manager Julia Heilakka. Commissioner Dr. Nicole Carney is not present.

Also present are Brett Cartwright, Jean Turn, Kristine Karol, Frances Schryver, Barth Rubin, Alice Olenick, David Olenick, and Barth Rubin.

1. **Chair Jacob Pride calls the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Quorums are present.**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance.**
3. **Old Business:**
 - a. **Discuss: Draft Signage Ordinance.** Alex Jackson summaries the activities from the last joint meeting, where the Board and Commission (the “Group”) discussed sign illumination standards, waivers, and examples of existing signs. Tonight’s discussion begins at Section 17.d. Michael Albert states they need more detail for what constitutes abandoned, unsafe, and unlawful signs.

Robert Lovenheim discusses an ordinance for false advertising/advertising for unlawful uses. Robert Lovenheim and Michael Albert discuss the difference between a screen and a sign. Ron Karasek suggests keeping advertising in a separate ordinance. The Group concurs to add specific language regarding legal costs per Ron Karasek’s suggestion.

The Group discusses Section 18.2, requirements for the permit application process and sign repairs. Section 18.3 will be changed to demonstrate an appeal must occur thirty days from the date of denial, and “Board of Supervisors” will replace “Smithfield Township.” Kristine Karol asks about limited duration. The Group discusses Section 18.9, and Doug Schryver expresses concerns regarding enforcement. Julia Heilakka states the information of a person who files a complaint is not disclosable.

The Group discusses Section 19. Michael Albert states banners are defined as temporary. Scott Amori states banners were never allowed, and there must be a lawful starting point before they can become nonconforming. Kristine Karol requests clarification on Section 19.b. Michael Albert replies it is 50% of the structure. The Group discusses possible permit requirements and geolocating signs. Michael Albert states this section is written so staff can design the permit application.

Section 19.3 proposes no changes. Section 19.4 will change to reflect 50% of the area of the sign. For Section 19.5, Michael Albert suggests striking item 'a' and inserting "historic and/or unique nature" to 19.5.b. Section 19.6 was already reviewed.

Alex Jackson discusses Section 20.1 and Ron Karasek's requirements. The Group decides to remove the example, change "special exemption" to "special exception", and that this will go before the Board of Supervisors. Michael Albert leaves at 6:45PM. Robert Lovenheim suggests standard sign sizes to simplify the ordinance and suggests 60 ft², 300 ft², and 600ft². Jacob Pride states the group will revisit other sections after going through the entire ordinance once.

Alex Jackson discusses Section 21, which is required because of Reed v. Town of Gilbert. Ron Karasek states the Township cannot control content-based language. Kristine Karol asks if a strip club could advertise near a school. Alex Jackson replies profane messages are prohibited. Ron Karasek states the Township cannot regulate content. The group decides not to change Section 22.

- b. **Discuss: Next Steps for Draft Ordinance.** The Board and Commission will meet next to discuss the signage ordinance draft on Thursday, January 9, 2025 at 6PM.

4. Public Comment:

- a. Barth Rubin commends the Board and Commission for discussing sign ordinances and has three suggestions: make it simple for customers to determine the size of the sign they are allowed to have, review how close a sign can be from parks, cemeteries, schools, and residential districts, and making signs 1,500 feet apart is probably not practical. Robert Lovenheim clarifies the spacing relates to billboards.

5. Commissioner Amori motions to adjourn, Commissioner Schryver seconds: meeting adjourned at 7:02PM.

Minutes recorded by Julia Heilakka

Respectfully submitted:



Julia Heilakka
Township Secretary