

Minutes of the Public Hearing

of the South Park Township

Board of Supervisors

May 11, 2026

Roll Call

Ed Snee presiding. Board members present: Lawrence Vogel, Sharon Adams, Debra Duncan, and Whitney Gastmeyer were present. Also in attendance were Karen Fosbaugh, Township Manager; Chief Rozzo; Irv Firman, Solicitor; Joe Sites, Township Engineer; Derek Parker, Code Enforcement Officer and Aaron Laughlin, Director of Public Works.

Purpose of Hearing

The purpose of the Public Hearing is to take oral or written testimony on the following Ordinance:

ORDINANCE NO. 723

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH PARK, COUNTY OF ALLEGHENY, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING THE SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE, CHAPTER 118, SECTION 44 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH PARK TO ADD A SUBSECTION REQUIRING MULTIPLE VEHICULAR ENTRANCE POINTS FOR SUBDIVISIONS AND LAND DEVELOPMENTS MEETING CERTAIN CRITERIA.

Testimony

Tim Foster, 1046 Westchester – Mr. Foster stated that his original ordinance was designed to strongly protect public safety, while the Solicitor’s revised version significantly weakens those protections. His proposal required true secondary access to developments (not just two nearby entrances), meaningful separation of access points, and contingency planning for emergencies like blocked roads or bridges. It also enforced strict standards for waivers, requiring proof that compliance was physically impossible—not just inconvenient or costly—and still required at least emergency-only access if full access couldn’t be built. Additionally, his ordinance emphasized long-term planning by requiring connectivity between developments and preventing isolated neighborhoods. It mandated documented engineering evidence and written justifications for any exceptions, ensuring accountability and a solid legal record. Mr. Foster stated that the Solicitor’s version removes or dilutes these safeguards, allowing vague interpretations that favor developers over residents and shift decision-making power away from elected officials. Using the Sleepy Hollow development as an example, he argues that weak standards can lead to unsafe conditions, especially in emergencies. Mr. Foster stated that strong, clearly written ordinances empower local officials to confidently approve or deny developments based on public safety. In contrast, vague ordinances create ambiguity,

increase legal risk, and transfer real control to solicitors and consultants rather than elected representatives.

Mr. Firman - Mr. Firman stated that this Ordinance draft was intentionally narrow in scope. The Board of Supervisors had directed him only to prepare an ordinance addressing one specific issue—requiring two entrance points for certain developments—not a comprehensive overhaul like Mr. Foster expected. He stated that this draft was meant as a starting point to begin public discussion, not a finished or complete ordinance. Mr. Firman stated that Mr. Foster’s and Mr. Sobek’s proposals are thoughtful, detailed, and worth serious consideration, but says those broader ideas were outside the initial assignment. Mr. Firman stated that the process would go through phases: introduce a basic draft, gather public input, consult with planners and engineers, involve the Planning Commission, and then refine the ordinance over time. He stated that all suggestions, including stricter safety, access, and planning measures—can still be incorporated as the process moves forward. Mr. Firman stated that nothing was intentionally excluded or dismissed. The current version reflects only what the Board initially authorized, and future revisions can expand, based on feedback and expert review to create a more comprehensive final ordinance.

Mrs. Duncan – Mrs. Duncan questioned that if Mr. Foster’s draft ordinance was well thought out and had been provided as a starting point, why was it then stripped out and narrowed down?

Mr. Firman – Mr. Firman stated the item had been added to the agenda at the end of the meeting, to prepare a SALDO ordinance that had two entrance points. It was not stated for him to follow the draft ordinance and incorporate as much as possible. He stated that while he did incorporate the 25 or more lots information from Mr. Foster’s ordinance, he cannot produce an ordinance that is not specifically requested. Mrs. Duncan apologized for not being clear in her expectations for the ordinance preparation, and asked about the next steps. Mr. Firman responded that after the public hearing, it could go to the Planning Commission for further comment, it would not be eligible to be voted on at the Board meeting tonight, however, after hearing the public comments, the Board could request an update to the SALDO that includes specific language from various documents.

Ms. Adams – Ms. Adams stated that she provided Mr. Firman with a folder containing comments, with the expectation that those comments would have been included in the draft SALDO ordinance. **Mr. Firman** stated that the direction he received from the previous Board of Supervisors meeting was to prepare an ordinance with two entrances. Even with additional drafts and commentary provided, he needs the Board, as a whole, to vote before he can take additional steps. That is all part of the public process; present information, gather commentary from the public and the Planning Commission, and then make an official motion.

Jason Sobek, 1750 Stoltz – Mr. Sobek stated that he had attended the meeting where the SALDO ordinance had been requested, and when Ms. Duncan made the motion to direct the Solicitor to prepare the ordinance, she specifically said, to prevent another Sleepy Hollow. He stated that this ordinance does no such thing. Mr. Firman stated that that comment is vague, and he didn't believe any Solicitor or any Township Supervisor would specifically enact an ordinance to thwart and restrict intentionally to prevent development. The Board can enact regulations, but it would never be to prevent a development. That's not something a Solicitor could advise upon or a Board could do.

Jason Sobek, 1750 Stoltz – Mr. Sobek stated that he agrees with the Board's goal of improving public safety by requiring multiple access points for larger developments, but states that the current draft ordinance fails to achieve that goal. He stated that simply requiring two entrances 150 feet apart does not guarantee real safety, because both entrances could still rely on the same vulnerable road, bridge, or culvert—creating a single point of failure. He cited Sleepy Hollow, as an example, and he stated that the real issue is not the number of entrances, but whether there are truly independent routes to the broader road network. Without that, the ordinance becomes a “checkbox” that developers can meet on paper without addressing emergency access risks. Mr. Sobek stated that he supports allowing flexibility through waivers, but only if developers can prove through engineering and safety analysis that a single-access configuration is safe. He stated that the burden of proof should be on the developer, and decisions should be based on documented evidence and public safety considerations. Mr. Sobek recommends that the ordinance be rewritten to:

- Require genuinely independent access routes, not just multiple entrances on the same road
- Address downstream constraints like bridges, culverts, and flood-prone areas
- Require detailed engineering analysis for all types of vehicles, including emergency and heavy vehicles
- Clearly define what does not qualify as independent access.

He stated there was a technical drafting error and that the ordinance is overly minimal and poorly constructed, stating that it does not reflect the Board's intent and could favor developers while giving residents a false sense of security. Mr. Sobek requested that the Board reject the current draft and replace it with a stronger, clearer ordinance that truly protects residents and ensures safe, reliable access for all situations, especially emergencies.

Mr. Firman – Mr. Firman responded that there have been numerous comments that have been made that are worth considering, and if the Board would want to proceed with that they should direct the Solicitor, Engineer and Planner to work to prepare a draft ordinance that can then be presented to the Planning Commission. He stated that additional terms and definitions should be included as well.

Mr. Vogel – Mr. Vogel stated that this ordinance is not about one development, but about any developments that could be presented in the future for the Township.

Ms. Adams – Ms. Adams asked about the procedure going forward, stating that all of the comments received tonight, and her previous comments should all be added to this ordinance.

Mr. Firman – Mr. Firman stated that should the majority of the Board agree and vote to add those additional comments, to reflect the goals of those documents, then the Engineer, Planning and Solicitor could create that draft. Next that draft ordinance should be presented to the Planning Commission, to begin addressing any issues and provide public comment, then the final hearing is scheduled.

Mrs. Duncan – Mrs. Duncan asked for clarification about the necessary definitions Mr. Firman had referenced, and whether the Board would need to identify what those definitions would be, or if he would do that.

Mr. Firman – Mr. Firman stated that if the Board requested these additional comments be added, that there are some terms that do not already exist in the SALDO ordinance, and either the Planner or Engineer would be more familiar with the terminology to add to that definition list. Typically the process would start with the Planner, then the Engineer would do a review for more technical compliance, and then Solicitor would do a final review to ensure that nothing stated would cause any violations of laws.

Miss Gastmeyer – Miss Gastmeyer stated this has been a lot of time and effort with various people, to only have this minimal draft ordinance. She suggested forming an ad hoc committee, including residents, who can create the draft and review what is created.

Mr. Snee – Mr. Snee stated the Board should work with the Solicitor to define terms, and incorporate testimony from the residents.

Mrs. Fosbaugh – Mrs. Fosbaugh stated that this public hearing is that the public process does work. There has been a lot of input and discussion to then proceed in the correct direction.

Sheila Petruska, 3110 Shelley Drive – Ms. Petruska stated she is concerned that the current Township Engineer and previous Township Engineer are both from the same firm, Gateway Engineers. She stated that Frank Zokaites had instructed Dan Deiseroth to withhold information from the Township Supervisors, and now we're asking Gateway Engineers to continue to assist. Mrs. Fosbaugh stated that Mr. Deiseroth is no longer representing the Township, Mr. Sites is now the Township representative with Gateway Engineers. Ms. Petruska confirmed the date and time for the next Planning Commission meeting, being May 27, 2026 at 7:00 PM.

Close Public Hearing

Motion by Mr. Vogel and seconded by Mr. Snee to close the public hearing. All members voted aye. Motion carried.

Adjournment

Motion by Mrs. Duncan, seconded by Mr. Snee, to adjourn the public hearing. All members voted aye. Motion carried.

Time: 7:32 p.m.