



Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc.
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MEETING MINUTES

ZONING ORDINANCE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING #11

Location: Fairview Township Municipal Building

June 24, 2026

Attendees:

Name	Company	Phone	Email
Dean Severson	HRG	717-893-2636	dseverson@hrg-inc.com
Mark Perry	Zoning Hearing Board	717-649-0552	Mark.Perry@verizon.com
Bob Kostosky	Planning Commission	717-599-2931	Robertkostosky@verizon.net
Dan Alderman	Zoning Hearing Board	717-579-2052	DAlderman@naicir.com
Ron Flowers	Planning Commission		Ron.flowers@citizensdt.com
Steve Waller	Fairview Township	717-901-5222	swaller@twp.fairview.pa.us
Mike Mehaffey		717-439-4752	mmehaffey@gftinc.com

Ron read the following statement and requested that it be entered into the minutes:

“Is it ethical for a member a township steering committee to have a financial interest in projects pertaining to things the steering committee is debating?

No, it is generally not ethical—and in many cases, it is prohibited by law—for a member of a township steering committee (or similar local government body) to participate in debates or decisions on projects in which they have a direct or indirect financial interest. This creates a conflict of interest, where private financial gain could (or could appear to) influence actions meant to serve the public good.

Core Ethical Principle- Public officials, including those on steering committees, advisory boards, or township governance bodies, have a fiduciary duty to prioritize the public's interest over their own. A financial stake in a debated project risks biased decision-making, erodes public trust, and can lead to favoritism or self-dealing. Ethics codes and laws emphasize avoiding even the appearance of impropriety.

Common Legal and Ethical Standards- Laws vary by state and locality (e.g., in Michigan, Ohio, California, New York, Washington, etc.), but the principles are consistent: Disqualification for financial impact: Officials must recuse themselves from matters that could foreseeably affect their personal finances, business

interests, real property, income sources, or those of immediate family/spouse. This includes voting, deliberating, influencing discussions, or preparing related materials.

Prohibited contracts/self-dealing: Many jurisdictions ban officials from having interests in contracts or projects they oversee or approve. The contract may be voided, and participation can lead to civil penalties, fines, or removal.

Disclosure and recusal requirements: If a conflict exists, the member must publicly disclose it, leave the room during discussion/vote, and abstain. Mere non-voting without full recusal is often insufficient.

Broader prohibitions: This extends to gifts, outside compensation, or using official position for private gain. Steering committee roles often fall under municipal ethics rules even if advisory.

Examples from various sources: A board member with a business tie to a project cannot participate in related approvals.

Land-use or development decisions affecting the official's property create clear conflicts. Dual roles (e.g., official + contractor) are often incompatible.

What Should Happen in Practice?

Full disclosure upfront to the committee/chair.

Recusal from all involvement in the specific project(s).

Documentation in meeting minutes.

In some cases, resignation from the committee if conflicts are frequent or unavoidable.

If the interest is remote or affects the public broadly (e.g., a general tax policy impacting all residents equally), it may not trigger disqualification—but specific projects tied to personal finances almost always do.

Exceptions and Nuances. Rare, narrow exceptions exist (e.g., de minimis impacts or specific statutory allowances with full disclosure and governing body approval), but they are strictly construed. Consulting the local ethics board, municipal attorney, or state ethics commission is essential, as rules differ (e.g., by township in New Jersey, Michigan, Ohio, etc.). Ignorance is not a defense—officials are expected to identify and manage conflicts proactively. In short, ethics demand avoiding such situations to maintain integrity. Participation risks legal violations, invalidated decisions, and damage to public confidence.”

Mike asked Steve to ask the Township solicitor how members of the Committee should act if there is a perceived conflict in interest. Steve noted that the solicitor stated that the Steering Committee is a recommending body, not a decision-making body. Dan noted that he disclosed his role as a commercial realtor when he was appointed to the Steering Committee.

- The Steering Committee continued discussion of the Signs section of the Ordinance. They requested that the text “...which is intended to be seen from a parking lot” be deleted from the definition of Sign. Steve asked if the name of a building, such as “the Smith building” should count in determining the permitted signage area of a property. The Committee also asked that in the section Signs prohibited in all zoning districts, subsection A., the words “digital sign” be added after time and temperature signs.
- Steve asked that, under subsection E. the requirement that signs may not use words such as “stop,” “yield,” or “slow down” be deleted because these words are commonly used in advertising signs. He also asked that, under subsection F. the requirement that signs be removed within 30

days of a business closing and leaving the property, be deleted. He said that oftentimes, removing the sign face but leaving the sign structure looks worse than just leaving the sign in place. He also suggested that the requirement prohibiting the use of streamers and pennants be amended to only allow these as a 30-day, one-time temporary use with a possible extension of 30 days. Additionally, Steve asked that the reference to a clear-sight triangle reference the use of that term in the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

- The Committee asked that in Section 300-68, Determination of Sign Area and Height, subsection B. Multi-Faceted Signs, that all sides of the sign are considered when calculating the total permitted sign area. The Committee also discussed required sign setback distances. They asked whether this should be measured from the property line or the right-of-way line of the street. After discussion, the Committee decided that the minimum setback of 10 feet be retained.
- Under Section 300-69, General Provisions for All Signs, the Committee discussed the maximum 600 feet of sign area for on-premise signs, and the maximum sign size of 825 square feet for billboards included in Section 300-70, Specific Sign Uses. The Committee also discussed signs with changeable messages. The zoning ordinance currently requires that messages be displayed a minimum of 8 seconds. Steve asked if the term "Directional Sign" is defined in the Ordinance.
- The Committee discussed the term "Flex Space" which has been broken out of the Light Industrial definition and defined separately in the draft Ordinance. The Committee determined that Flex Space would be permitted in the IB, CB, and AB zoning districts. Similarly, Contractors and General Contractors are also permitted in the CB, IB, and AB zoning districts.
- The Committee discussed a proposed rezoning of a 7.14-acre parcel located on the northeast side of Normandy Drive and southeast side of Lewisberry Drive. The property is currently zoned RMU and the applicant is requesting that it be rezoned to VR. The property would access Springers Lane and a number of smaller parcels between the subject property and Springers Lane would be combined. The property was originally part of the Featherstone development south of the Turnpike but was separated when the Turnpike was constructed.

The Committee recommended that the proposed rezoned to VR be approved.

The next meeting of the Steering Committee is scheduled for July 22nd from 4:00-6:00 p.m.

We believe these minutes accurately reflect the items discussed at the subject meeting. If there are any revisions or corrections to these minutes, please contact the undersigned within ten (10) days of receipt of these minutes. If no revisions or corrections are requested, the minutes will stand approved as submitted.

Sincerely,

[Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc.](#)

Dean Severson, AICP
Senior Project Manager

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Enclosures

