

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
PLANNING COMMISSION**

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1, 2018

The West Reading Planning Commission met for their regular meeting on Wednesday, August 1, 2018 at Borough Hall with the following persons present: Chair Philip Wert; Vice Chair Christopher Lincoln; Oswald Herbert, Nicholas Imbesi, Jennifer Bressler, Christin Kelley, Engineer Thomas Unger, Borough Manager Cathy Hoffman and Assistant to the Manager Cynthia Madeira.

Visitors: Karen Livingood, Resident
Karen Krater, Hoffert Surveyors
James Barrer, Property/Business Owner

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the July 5, 2018 minutes. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Old Business

- a. **Barrer & White Annexation Subdivision Plan** – Mr. Wert noted the County of Berks Planning Commission review letter, dated July 20, 2018, which indicated there were no adverse comments to the proposed annexation of land. Mr. Unger provided an overview of the annexation request, which indicates that no new improvements are proposed to annex an existing parking area from the parcel known as 308 Reading Avenue, illustrated as “Parcel A” on the plans to 311 Penn Avenue. The following review comments were discussed:
- The Zoning Hearing Board granted Special Exception for various variances to construct a non-commercial parking lot on October 13, 1999 with conditions. A Declaration of Merger was required to be executed and recorded with the Berks County Recorder of Deeds. Following a review of online records, Mr. Imbesi noted an affidavit had been filed; however this type of document was insufficient to cause the merging of parcels.
 - Additional zoning comments pertained to parking areas serving nonresidential uses located within a residential district maintaining less than 250’ walking distance for the principal use served and provisions for screening and lighting. The parking lot is within 250’ of the principal use, though the plan does not indicate adequate detail to determine full compliance; however this is an existing use and no new construction is proposed.
 - Per SALDO requirements: provide a deed of consolidation and deed for residue lot;
 - Plan scale provides a larger, legible plan, however a waiver would be appropriate;
 - Lot pins/markers should be set prior to final plan approval to avoid an improvement agreement/financial security;
 - Overhead electric line easement at the rear of the property should be shown and labeled accordingly.

Committee members requested solicitor comments regarding the Declaration of Merger prior to making a recommendation to Council to approve the annexation of land.

- b. **Joint Comprehensive Plan Update** – An executive summary of the July Suburban Berks West Joint Comprehensive Plan Update was provided to committee members. The County Planning Commission will be invited to present the plan to Council members, a full copy of the plan will be provided to Council for review prior to the presentation.

Motion to recommend Council to adopt the Suburban Berks West Joint Comprehensive Plan Update. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried 6-0.**

c. **Zoning Changes:**

- i. **Sign amendments** – Mr. Wert discussed the proposed signage option with the solicitor that would allow Council to permit larger signs than the ordinance permits by right in the Central Business, General Business, Institutional and Light Industrial Zoning Districts through Conditional Use Hearings. The solicitor noted that governing bodies often permit certain uses or deviations from the zoning hearing board when they feel that the decision to be made is one that should be made by the governing body rather than the zoning hearing board. A copy of all redlined, proposed zoning amendments, including the On-Premise Sign Conditional Use option added to the noted districts were provided to the committee for review.

Motion to recommend Council to advertise the zoning changes as proposed by the Planning Commission and to set a date and time for a public hearing. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Mr. Herbert. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Mr. Imbesi, Ms. Kelley and Mr. Unger departed the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

- d. **Solicitation Ordinance Update** – Mr. Wert noted an interest in the community to allow the operation of food truck vendors. A copy of the existing Transient Retail Business Ordinance and draft Peddling, Soliciting and Transient Sales Ordinance were provided to Committee members for review.
- e. **Codes Review** – Tabled until next month.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Assistant to the Manager

Cathy Hoffman
Borough Manager