

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
PLANNING COMMISSION**

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2018

The West Reading Planning Commission met for their regular meeting on Wednesday, September 5, 2018 at Borough Hall with the following persons present: Chair Philip Wert; Jennifer Bressler, Christin Kelley, Terry Siggins, Daniel Horman, Joseph Scoboria, Oswald Herbert, Borough Manager Cathy Hoffman and Assistant to the Manager Cynthia Madeira. Nicholas Imbesi and Vice Chair Christopher Lincoln were unable to attend.

Visitors: Karen Livingood, Resident
John Hoffert, Hoffert Surveyors
Reading Eagle Reporter

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the August 1, 2018 minutes. **Moved** by Mr. Siggins and seconded by Mrs. Bressler.
Motion carried 7-0.

Old Business

- a. **Barrer & White Annexation Subdivision Plan** – Mr. Hoffert provided an overview of the annexation request of an existing parking area, allowed by a variance in 1999, that is located within a residential district to annex the land to the adjacent commercial property. Following a legal review of a Declaration of Merger filed at the Recorder of Deeds office, which was found to be insufficient to merge the parcels, deed descriptions have been drafted and are currently under review. The deed descriptions clarify ownership of the parcels and provide consolidation of the parking area, illustrated as Parcel “A” of the revised plans from the residential parcel to the commercial parcel. The following engineer review comments were discussed:
- A letter was provided to the Planning Commission requesting a waiver of Section 400-23(A)(1) of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, which requires plans to be drawn to a scale of one-inch equals 50’ to an increased plan clarity and legibility scale of one-inch equals 20’.

Motion to grant waiver request of Section 400-23(A)(1) to allow increased plan clarity and legibility. **Moved** by Ms. Kelley and seconded by Mr. Herbert. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- The revised plans provided this evening must be signed and notarized by both entities: James Barrer and Douglas White and Barrer & White Real Estate, LLC;
- Lot pins/markers have been set;
- Landscaping and buffering improvements are unnecessary due to no proposed expansion or improvements;
- Clarification of the overhead electric line easement located at the rear of the residential and commercial properties was received from First Energy Corporation. The easement allows the crossing and trimming rights to 15’ on each side of the centerline;
- Outdoor lighting improvements are unnecessary due to no proposed expansion or improvements;
- Berks County Planning Commission comments have been received.

Mr. Hoffert requested final plan approval pending signing of plans and copies of deed descriptions and noted his intent to attend the September 19th Council meeting where he will provide six complete copies of plans and deed descriptions.

Motion to recommend final plan approval contingent upon obtaining signatures and deed descriptions. **Moved** by Mr. Herbert and seconded by Mr. Siggins. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- b. **Joint Comprehensive Plan Update** – Mr. Wert noted a presentation of the Suburban Berks West Joint Comprehensive Plan Update by a member of the Berks County Planning Commission during the August Council meeting. A hearing has been scheduled with possible adoption of the plan during the September 19th Council meeting.
- c. **Zoning Amendments** – Mr. Wert reported a redlined version of proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments has been provided to the Berks County Planning Commission for review. Upon receipt of County comments a zoning hearing will be scheduled.
- d. **Solicitation Ordinance Update** – Although absent, Christopher Lincoln provided comments for consideration. Further discussion of the proposed revisions will take place next month to allow new Commission members time to review the ordinance and comments.
- e. **Codes Review** – Tabled until next month.

New Business

- a. **International Property Maintenance Code** – Mr. Wert noted the Code Enforcement Department has been following the 2006 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) as regulated by ordinance and noted updates/revisions to the IPMC that are released every three years. Per suggestions from the Code Enforcement Officer, newer versions of the IPMC, specifically the 2018 version, provide clarification to sections that were previously open to interpretation. Notable revisions include additions to sections pertaining to exterior/interior structure and component serviceability that provide a number of conditions that determine whether an existing building should be repaired or replaced due to unsafe conditions. Also, the section pertaining to overcrowding has been expanded to include a table outlining minimum area requirements. Committee members discussed past overly aggressive enforcement of regulations that are difficult to follow with older housing stock. Mrs. Bressler plans to locate an electronic copy of a redlined 2018 version, noting revisions from the 2015 version, to share with fellow members for review and comment during the meeting next month.
- b. **Signage** – Mr. Wert suggested committee member’s focus on procedures in order to move forward with sign standard revisions to implement continuity and enhance the aesthetics of signage along Penn Avenue. Ms. Kelley suggested budgeting of funds to hire a professional consultant and the formation of a separate committee to gather information to present to the Planning Commission during the request for proposal phase. Mrs. Hoffman noted a recent planning grant application submission by the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation that is awarded, may provide a good foundation for enhancements to the Avenue.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Assistant to the Manager

Cathy Hoffman
Borough Manager