

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
JANUARY 5, 2022**

The West Reading Planning Commission met for their regular meeting on Wednesday, January 5, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at Borough Hall with the following persons present: Chair Philip Wert; Vice Chair Christopher Lincoln; Members Jennifer Bressler, Cody Rhoads, Kacie Rodriguez and Mariella Napoli; Zoning Officer Cathy Hoffman, and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

**Visitors**           Mike Rohrer, SDE Planner  
                          Daniel Becker, Borough Solicitor (arrived at 6:16 p.m.)

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. noting that Zachary Shaver whom has taken his seat as a member of Borough Council earlier this week has volunteered to step down from the Planning Commission since this would create a majority of Council members on this board. Also, Terry Siggins has decided to retire from the Planning Commission after twenty-five years of service. There are plans underway to recognize his years of service during the upcoming Council meeting. The vacancies have been advertised on the Borough's website.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve the December 1, 2021 minutes. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mrs. Bressler. **Motion carried.**

**New Business**

a. Zoning amendments:

Mr. Wert referred to the draft ordinance amendment provided by Mr. Rohrer which outlined previous mixed-use discussions, proposed definitions of an undeveloped lot and convenience store, and the addition of a General Business Overlay to the Institutional parcels immediately adjacent to the traffic circle.

Derck & Edson's Master Plan recommendation to modify front yard setbacks to align with existing front yard conditions were discussed. It was noted that the 400 and 500 blocks of Penn Avenue average 0 to 10 feet from the front lot line while the 600 and 700 blocks average 5 to 15 feet. The minimum front yard setback of 8 feet is incompatible with both existing conditions. The plan recommended 4 feet or the average of adjacent building setbacks. To best define front yard conditions, it was recommended that a maximum setback be established to ensure that the front walls properly define the street wall and discourage or prohibit the placement of parking within the front yard.

It was thought that a 4-foot setback would not provide a sufficient pedestrian walkway and it was noted that the American Disabilities Act (ADA) requires a 5-foot-wide surface. Current regulations do not include a maximum build to setback. It was thought that the minimum setback should remain at 8 feet, and the maximum setback, as recommended by Derck & Edson, should be 15 feet. The percentage of façade of the primary structure that was proposed to meet the build to zone was 60%. Consideration of corner lot setbacks and renovations versus replacement standard difficulties will be reviewed and suggestions provided by Mr. Rohrer next month.

The definition of convenience store with or without fuel pumps, including allowed use zoning districts were discussed. It was thought that the Light Industrial and General Business Districts would be optimal locations for a convenience store with the potential to offer fuel pumps through special exception. A

slightly revised definition of convenience store was agreed upon: "Stores that offer for sale primarily packaged and "quick service" food products, and are designed to offer greater convenience than larger Supermarket/Grocery Stores".

Motion to recommend Council to approve amendments to the Zoning Ordinance that includes supplements to defined terms, revised regulations governing mixed-use development and apartments on the upper levels of buildings, and the addition of a General Business Overlay to the Institutional District parcels immediately adjacent to the traffic circle. **Moved** by Ms. Rodriguez and seconded by Mr. Rhoads. **Motion carried.**

b. Rental Occupancy Ordinance Amendment:

Mr. Becker noted that the Pottstown case has been delayed due to the pandemic. It is thought that the administrative warrant portion is the aspect that is being challenged as a constitutional or legal concern. Mrs. Hoffman indicated that her office generally works with the owner of the property to gain access for a rental inspection and would not initiate an administrative warrant to the tenant to gain access. It was recommended to review the latest redlined proposed rental ordinance amendment and the memorandum from the solicitor's office for further discussion next month.

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m. was made by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Rodriguez. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira  
Borough Secretary