

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
FEBRUARY 2, 2022**

The West Reading Planning Commission met for their regular meeting on Wednesday, February 2, 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, Daniel Horman and Mariella Napoli; Borough Manager Dean Murray, and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

**Visitors**           Mike Rohrer, SDE Planner

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

**Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve the January 5, 2022 minutes. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Horman.

**Motion carried.**

**New Business**

a. Zoning changes:

**Build to Line Setback** - Mr. Rohrer noted that in his research of similar downtown areas the build to line setback is zero feet from the inside of the sidewalk. This would make interpretation or enforcement easier by removing the need to locate a front property line or end of right-of-way. While driving into town tonight Mr. Rohrer noted the varying degrees of building setbacks and the eye appeal this provides. The use of the setback area was discussed in an effort to create welcoming open public spaces for seating or landscaping. A setback range of zero to three feet from the inside of the sidewalk seemed appropriate with setbacks in excess of three feet to a maximum of twelve feet being referred to a definition of court yard and retaining wall height restrictions characterized by a diagram or schematics. Varied adjacent property setbacks were recommended to be a maximum of two times the average or up to a maximum twelve feet. Mr. Rohrer will provide example language next month for further discussion.

**Neon/Rope Lighting** – Mr. Rohrer reported that most municipalities are against rope lighting and completely prohibit this use. An example ordinance was provided by Mr. Rohrer to allow the use to an extent noting the difficulty to enforce regulations pertaining to color, size, or placement. It was thought that low intensity accent lighting would be acceptable as well as seasonal Christmas lighting. Definitions of low intensity accent lighting were requested from Mr. Rohrer for further discussion next month.

b. Rental Occupancy Ordinance Amendment:

Mr. Wert referred to a memorandum from the solicitor's office, dated August 16, 2021 that raises six constitutional or legal concerns of the proposed rental ordinance amendment. Based on the length of time since this board reviewed the proposed ordinance amendment it was agreed to request the solicitor to adapt these six concerns into the draft amendment prior the board's continued review.

Motion to amend the agenda to include a discussion on potential Tax Increment Financing (TIF) redevelopment of the shopping center. **Moved** by Mr. Horman and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried.**

c. Shopping Center Redevelopment:

Mr. Wert shared preliminary plans to redevelop the West Reading Shopping Center parcel into a three or four level apartment building, relocating the businesses such as Rite-Aid closer to Penn Avenue with a

swimming pool in the center of the lot. It was Mr. Wert's understanding that a parking garage is proposed to be built on the corner of the lot near the traffic circle to support parking demands of the apartments and businesses with roughly fifty spaces for public parking. A TIF subsidy for the parking garage may be requested and the garage then given to the Borough to manage. Members of the school district would like to meet with the Planning Commission next month to discuss the benefits and determine the level of support by the Borough. Additional information will be requested for discussion next month.

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 p.m. was made by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mrs. Bressler.

**Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira  
Borough Secretary