

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
PLANNING COMMISSION**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2016

The West Reading Planning Commission met for their regular meeting on Wednesday, March 2, 2016 at Borough Hall with the following persons present: Chair Philip Wert, Christopher Lincoln, Jennifer Bressler, Terry Siggins, Christin Kelley and Oswald Herbert.

Visitors:

Nicholas F. Imbesi	Resident
Kevin Hughes	Property Owner
Pat Motley	Motley Associates
Val Lacis	Reading Eagle

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Public Comment

Nicholas Imbesi introduced himself as a new property owner and resident of the Borough and stated that he had submitted a letter of interest for the vacant seat on the Planning Commission. He said that being employed as the 2nd Deputy for the Berks County Recorder of Deed Office makes him a ‘good fit’ for the Planning Commission vacancy. He also has a degree from Kutztown University in Public Administration. Mr. Herbert suggested that a recommendation be made to Council for his appointment to the Committee. **Moved** by Mr. Herbert and seconded by Christin Kelley to recommend to Council the appointment of Nicholas Imbesi to the Planning Commission. **Motion carried 6-0.**

‘Lofts at Narrow’ Sketch Plan Review – Kevin Hughes

Mr. Hughes was in attendance along with architect/engineer Pat Motley of Motley Associates to provide the Commission with the preliminary plans for the project at 701 Reading Avenue:

- 1st floor – restaurant, café, gym and warehousing space
- 2nd, 3rd, and 4th – 90 high end loft apartments
- Basement – continuation of existing manufacturing facility
- Parking – 189 outside spaces; 44 spaces located in an adjacent building totaling 233.
- 135 spaces are necessary for the 90 residential units

Several exemptions are necessary:

- The zone provides that 30% may be used for residential purposes therefore a special exception will be required
- The rear property line abuts the railroad tracks therefore a variance will be requested to eliminate the 20’ setback required in the zone
- Parking requirements will currently allow a 250 seat restaurant however to permit the 300 seats that are being requested, a variance will be necessary

Discussion ensued regarding:

- The possibility of keyed access to the residential parking area
- Utilizing adjacent parking areas as additional parking for the restaurant
- The land development process may need to be modified due to the existing infrastructure

- The boiler building will be removed
- The existing storm water system for the property will need to be reviewed to ensure that it is sufficient
- Landscaping will be enhanced throughout the property
- Engineer Tom Unger will take a more in depth look at the plans to ensure that all requirements have been identified

Old Business

- Continuation of General Codes legal analysis** – This was tabled to the March 10th meeting.
- SALDO draft appendices** – Mr. Unger stated that the appendices are comprised of forms (which require no updates) and diagrams that are simply a duplication of the language found in the document itself. He recommended that the diagrams be eliminated from the SALDO. Mr. Wert asked that Mr. Unger email him with this proposed change. Mr. Unger also noted that one change needs to be made to one of the charts and then the revised appendices will be distributed.
- Separation/architectural zoning changes** – This was tabled.

New Business

- UCC ordinance changes draft** – Mr. Unger stated that this document has not been completed as yet.
- 502/504 Cherry Street/503 Franklin** – The property comprises six units, one of which has been condemned. As it is currently for sale but without any interest, it has been suggested that the property be subdivided. This was discussed at length, however without any recommendations being made.
- Skateboard area tentative plan** – JD Turner is proposing the installation of a mini ramp in the park, adjacent to the tennis/basketball courts and has met with the Recreation Commission as the first step in the process. As the next step, he has asked to meet with the Planning Commission therefore he was asked to attend the March 10th meeting. It was recommended that a plan of the area to be developed as well as pictures or drawings of a 'mini ramp' would be helpful.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman
Borough Secretary