

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
PLANNING COMMISSION**

WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, 2016

The West Reading Planning Commission met for their regular meeting on Wednesday, May 4, 2016 at Borough Hall with the following persons present: Chair Philip Wert, Jennifer Bressler, Terry Siggins, Christopher Lincoln and Nicholas Imbesi. Christin Kelley and Oswald Herbert were unable to attend.

Visitors: Tom Unger, SDE
Kevin Hughes, Lofts at Narrow
Pat Motley, Motley Associates

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.
There was no public comment.

OLD BUSINESS

The Lofts at Narrow

Engineer Pat Motley provided a copy of the plan that was presented to the Zoning Hearing Board and asked that the land development plan be waived. He reviewed the plan and indicated that they would be submitting a landscaping plan, lighting plan as well as a parking plan throughout the course of the project. He said that they are not changing any of the existing asphalt areas and don't feel that a land development plan is necessary due to the property being existing. It was noted that the waivers that were requested from the Zoning Hearing Board have been approved. It was also noted that a tenant has been identified for the gym section of the building and that they would like to have that portion of the building ready by the end of the summer.

Mr. Unger said that he provided everyone with the criteria that identifies the necessity of a land development plan and that this plan certainly fits that criteria because of the size and magnitude of the project. With only the fitness center use going into the building at this point, the land development plan is not as crucial however the other uses will certainly require it. There may be potential problems that the Borough will want to investigate such as stormwater and parking. Mr. Hughes did not agree with Mr. Unger's assessment of the situation and argued that the land development plan was unnecessary. After much discussion, the Commission moved forward with a motion.

Moved by Mr. Siggins and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to recommend to Council that the land development plan for the Lofts at Narrow be waived for the entire project. **Motion carried 5-0.**

Mr. Hughes and Mr. Motley left the meeting at this point. Discussion ensued concerning the streets in that area and it was noted that Walnut Street from Chiffon Way to N. 7th may not be a public street. This will have to be discussed further.

NEW BUSINESS

UCC Ordinance Changes Draft

Mr. Unger has not yet completed the draft therefore this was tabled.

Potential Zoning Changes

Mr. Wert reviewed some items that may require a zoning change and should be discussed further:

1. Institutional/general business overlay near the traffic circle – the existing institutional uses in that area should be zoned appropriately and might benefit from an overlay district.
2. Medical marijuana definition and placement – the definitions of dispensary, medical marijuana, medical marijuana organization and grower/processor should be added to the ordinance. Also the use needs to be added to a zone or zones but it was suggested that the use would be disallowed within 1000' from any school or day care center. The bill recently passed by the state stipulates only that the use must conform with local zoning.
3. Minimum distance zoning for certain uses – this was briefly discussed previously and should be discussed further.
4. Hybrid form-based codes – this is a method of zoning for both 'uses' as well as 'design elements'. This can't be imposed on an existing buildings but is meant for redevelopment or new development.
5. DAS antenna definition and right-of-way concern – Distributed Antenna Systems (amplifiers) are being installed on light poles because they have been given utility status by the PUC however they don't have to abide by PUC regulations. Mr. Wert provided a sample ordinance from PSAB that the Borough may wish to enact.
6. Signage concerns (backlit signs) – Ms. Kelley asked for this to be on the agenda but because of her absence it will have to be tabled until the next meeting.

Comprehensive Plan Update

The plan is now thirteen years old and needs to be updated. It is joint plan with Wyomissing, Spring Township and Sinking Spring and contains a lot of boiler plate language which doesn't address the current state of these boroughs. Matt McGough from the Berks County Planning Commission has been reviewing various plans in the County and offered to try to identify possible grant funding to update the plan. Mr. Wert has made preliminary contact the other municipalities to determine if they are interested in doing so.

Codes Review Status Update

Now that the Editorial Analysis has been completed, the review of the ordinances needs to continue. After some discussion it was decided that each chapter of the code of ordinances would be thoroughly reviewed and revised before moving on to the next.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman
Borough Secretary