

# **BOROUGH OF WEST READING PLANNING COMMISSION**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2015**

The West Reading Planning Commission met for their regular meeting on Wednesday, May 6, 2015 at Borough Hall with the following persons present: Chair Philip Wert, Christopher Lincoln, Jennifer Bressler and Christin Kelley. Terry Siggins arrived at 8:15 p.m. Kim Collins and Maxine Goodwin were unable to attend.

**VISITORS:** Megan Gardo, Parking Analyst, Walker Parking Consultants  
Michael Hacke P.E., Project Manager, Walker Parking Consultants  
Bruce Heilman, Director of Land Planning for SDE, Inc.  
Nathalie Kulesa, Council Member  
Carl Garman, Council Vice President  
Steve Powell, Police Chief  
Rich Sichler, Borough Manager

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m.

## **Code of Ordinances Review**

Chapter IV – Buildings and Structures

Mr. Wert said that he and Mr. Lincoln had met with Mr. Unger to discuss Chapter IV. Mr. Unger is working on his comments for Chapter IV and will present them to the Commission at the June meeting.

## **Parking Study – Walker Parking Consultants**

Megan Gardo of Walker Parking Consultants answered questions from Commission members concerning the study that was recently completed. Some of the discussion included:

- The information was gathered on one weekday and one Saturday in January. It was done during this time of year in order to meet the grant requirements. In order to compensate for the time of year and given that there was snow on the ground, Ms. Gardo used seasonal adjustments as well as outdoor seating for restaurants as factors in extrapolating the information.
- Block 7A refers to the south side of Cherry Street, and although it was outside of the study area, was included because it is the only parking area on that side of Cherry.
- The license plate survey was conducted on a snow day – it snowed until noon that day however only 2” of snow fell.
- The shared parking concepts did not include private parking spaces in the overall numbers.
- The overall supply is adequate but the overall view didn’t include private parking spaces.
- Ms. Gardo could not recommend a ticketing system for West Reading because she doesn’t work with the citation side however she would contact those who do and ask them to contact Chief Powell.
- Raising the handicapped parking fines was recommended from the current \$50.
- Parking violations were studied during business hours (8am – 5 pm) on a single day. 37 violations were issued that day and as part of her calculations, that number was divided in half, and multiplied by 260 (number of business days in a year) to obtain the estimated 4000 violations that are being missed each year.

- A handheld or mobile LPR (License Plate Recognition) system would help parking enforcement in more effective and efficient ticketing. It would also provide historic data regarding times/locations/frequency, etc. Using this type of device would speed up the ticketing process, and it can be set to ping for scofflaw violations and Amber Alerts. Fines could be increased for second and third offences using a handheld to track tickets.
- It has been proven that meters in business area generally increase the turnover of parking spaces and improves business.
- On street parking is preferred by residents in West Reading even though off street parking is available.
- With regard to Penn Avenue, visibility is an issue where motorists want to park in front of their destination and not have to walk a block to get there. A central parking garage would allow customers to visit more businesses and would be utilized if the garage rate is cheaper than a meter rate.
- Shared parking with private lots can work in municipalities.
- Meters vs parking garage structures were briefly discussed with regard to cost and upkeep etc.
- Parking on private lots such as the Rite-Aid lot was discussed.
- Parking space size was also discussed – 8'6" is the normal width used across the country; this size accommodates 85% of vehicles including SUVs up to the size of a Ford Explorer.
- Parallel parking is also an issue – parking meters help define where the stall begins and ends.
- Parking enforcement needs to be considered for the non-business hours – after 5:00 p.m. and on weekends.

It was recommended that the Traffic Committee review the recommendations made in the study and Mr. Sichler said he would send it to the Committee members.

The visitors left the meeting at this point.

## **SALDO Update**

The initial draft of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance was reviewed by Mr. Heilman. He also provided a list of general observations, a charts indicating the levels of plan submissions as well as the plan review process. He then spoke about the plan submissions and the review process and noted the following:

- A change in the recording process over the last few years now has the approved and stamped plan being submitted to the County where it is scanned before it is filed.
- The SALDO draft stipulates that electronic copies must be submitted in PDF format as well as paper plans for approval.
- Nothing in design standards was changed because West Reading is built out and any new submissions would be based on existing infrastructure.
- Changes have been made to the draft concerning submission dates as they were not compliant with current regulations.
- The Act 167 plan needs to be updated because of newer regulations that have better standards. A statement has been added indicating the Borough's preference for the incorporation of green stormwater infrastructure as part of overall stormwater management.
- Previous standards for Sedimentation and Erosion Control have been eliminated and a reference is made to the applicant's responsibility to secure E & SC and NPDES approvals.

- Landscaping and Buffering has been weak or non-existent before therefore this section has been expanded to make the submission of a landscape plan a requirement for anything other than a minor subdivision.
- The Recreation Comprehensive Plan hasn't been updated in many years and may need to be done. A recreation fee "in lieu of land" dedication for new developments should be established. Current rates are generally \$2000/\$2500 per dwelling unit, however it can be levied for commercial and industrial development as well. These funds can be used to improve existing facilities rather than create new facilities. A section will be included that sets a fee schedule for this purpose that can be amended annually in a fee schedule resolution, rather than amending the ordinance.
- The existing 10' easements in the Borough are inadequate for OSHA standards and should be changed to 20'.
- Outdoor lighting standards have been included in the draft per POLC's standards (Pennsylvania Outside Lighting Council) however only as related to lighting for subdivisions and land development. He recommended a stand-alone lighting ordinance to deal with all lighting for existing and future uses. He noted that in the Borough's Zoning Ordinance there is a reference regarding glare and stipulates no more than 0.5 foot candles at the property line however he recommends 0.1 foot candles as the maximum.
- A section pertaining to Traffic Impact Studies has been included for large developments, with recommendations regarding thresholds.
- Thresholds for environmental impact statements was also suggested.
- Minor updates have also been made for Improvements, General Provisions, and Administration.
- Although not required by the MPC, 304.A.6 has been added to require sign posting at the site of any property undergoing a subdivision or land development process.
- Because the Borough has a Shade Tree Commission and Recreation Commission, changes will be made to the draft to reflect their part in reviewing any future plan submissions and providing recommendations. As a result of this change, Recreation Commission regulations may have to be changed to reflect this new responsibility. As well, the Shade Tree Commission may have to meet more frequently to accommodate plan reviews in a timely manner.
- The draft includes a list of trees that would be permitted in a new development.
- Where a proposed plan's sole purpose is to annex a portion of land to an adjacent property, the person receiving the property must also sign the plan to formally document that they agree to all terms of the annexation.
- There was a question as to why the required psi for sidewalk concrete slabs was 4500 when the standard is 3000 – 3500 psi. As well the required width for sidewalks was discussed.

The Commission was asked to review the document again, with particular regard to the highlighted sections. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman  
Administrative Assistant