

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
PLANNING COMMISSION**

WEDNESDAY, JULY 2, 2014

The West Reading Planning Commission met for their regular meeting on Wednesday, July 2, 2014 at Borough Hall with the following persons present: Chair Philip Wert, Vice Chair Christopher Lincoln, Maxine Goodwin, Christin Kelley, Terry Siggins, and Kim Collins. Deborah Hutcheson was unable to attend. Borough Manager Rich Sichler and Code Enforcement Officer Tracey Levering were also in attendance.

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

ZONING ORDINANCE REVISION

Mr. Wert briefly reviewed the most recent proposed changes that had been recommended since the last meeting of the Planning Commission:

- Removal of the noise regulations from the Zoning Ordinance (also includes the noise references in Chapter 5 concerning 'Conduct')
- Increase the artificial fence height from 5' to 6'
- Addition of new language regarding temporary signage for contractors

It was noted that these most recent changes have been forwarded to the Berks County Planning Commission for review.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Siggins to recommend to Council that the Zoning Ordinance be amended as noted above, subject to the review by the Berks County Planning Commission. **Motion carried.**

PROPOSED PARKING LOT

Mr. Sichler was on hand to provide an overview of a project which has been proposed by the Reading Museum and the Reading Hospital, to construct a parking area at the intersection of Parkside Road South and Museum Road. The land, which is across the Wyomissing Creek from the West Reading Pool, is owned by the Borough of West Reading but located in the City of Reading. He noted that this tract of land was given to the Borough in 1923 by the Thun and Janssen families.

The construction of the parking area would benefit the Museum, Hospital and West Reading's recreation facilities, however the funding would be provided through grants which would be at no cost to the Borough. The first plan which was drawn was comprised of 114 parking spaces however after review by the Recreation Commission and Council it was redrawn at 73 spaces. It is important that the area be well landscaped to conceal as much of the asphalt as possible. As part of the project, it has been proposed that the intersections at Parkside S. and Museum as well as Parkside N. and Museum be upgraded to better facilitate traffic.

There was some question regarding the proposed entrance to the parking area, which appeared to be too close to the intersection and may have to be repositioned. Everyone was reminded that the sketch was very preliminary and a final plan will have to take proper design practices into consideration. Kim Collins suggested that the reconstruction of the intersection include better pedestrian access as well. It was also suggested that if the parking area could be downsized to accommodate only 50 spaces, it would be better.

Mr. Wert noted that the Environmental Advisory Council was also reviewed the plan and has submitted comments which will be distributed to the Planning Commission. It was noted that the Reading Planning Commission has the authority to approve the plan without making a recommendation to City Council for their approval.

Also discussed was the possibility of finishing a walking trail as part of the project, the lighting of the parking area and the possibility of art pieces being placed at that location. It was the consensus of the Commission that more information is necessary, however the concept is fine.

OFFICIAL MAP

Mr. Wert explained a bit about the background and why the official map had been discussed preliminarily a few years ago. He also noted the types of information that the map can contain and what should be considered. Areas of the Borough that may be redeveloped in the near future were discussed briefly and it was also noted that the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance also needs to be up to date in order to be ready for any future redevelopment. The Commission will give some thought to the Official Map for future discussion.

ANIMAL REGULATIONS REVIEW

Mr. Wert said that he would like to see the regulations that govern animals in the Borough reviewed and updated. There was some discussion about types of animals that should not be permitted to be kept as domesticated animals in the Borough at all, as well as some animals that should be allowed in an urban environment under certain parameters.

Mr. Wert had emailed information from several municipalities to Commission members to review in preparation for their next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman
Administrative Assistant