

BOROUGH OF WEST READING PLANNING COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2015

The West Reading Planning Commission met for their regular meeting on Wednesday, August 5, 2015 at Borough Hall with the following persons present: Chair Philip Wert, Christopher Lincoln, Jennifer Bressler, Terry Siggins and Christin Kelley. Maxine Goodwin and Kim Collins were unable to attend. Borough Engineer Tom Unger and Borough Manager Richard Sichler were also in attendance.

VISITORS: Val Lacis from the Reading Eagle.

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

General Code Codification Project

Mr. Sichler and Mr. Wert explained the ongoing project to update the Borough Code Book, allow the Borough Code to be available and searchable online and to have a legal analysis performed. Mr. Sichler explained that the project has recently reached a milestone with the completion of a manuscript of all our current ordinances that have been organized per the Borough's direction. Mr. Sichler also described the legal analysis that has been completed and how its primary intent is to identify outdated references, inconsistencies among ordinances and older code that may not be consistent with recent court rulings. Mr. Wert read an email from Dan Becker, the Borough Solicitor, describing how suggested changes to numerous ordinances could be done with a single revision. The Commission agreed that the codification project will be a big improvement and will help the Commission complete its current task of reviewing various codes and suggesting revisions.

UCC Permit Regulations vs Borough Requirements

The Commission discussed its preliminary list of proposed changes and asked Mr. Unger how his task of matching state and Uniform Construction Code guidelines with West Reading requirements was progressing. Mr. Unger responded that he plans to provide draft language for proposed changes by the October 2015 meeting.

SALDO Update

Review of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance continued beginning with Part 5, Section 513 C., Street Trees. The following items were discussed in particular:

- 513 D. should be revised so that the Shade Tree Commission will have final approval of species and location. The Ordinance should match the Shade Tree ordinance including the existing duties of the Shade Tree Commission. There was no desire to expand the control of plantings beyond trees to include plantings other than trees with the exception of allowing plantings in the planting strips of acceptable vegetation other than grass.
- 513 E. should be revised to remove all references to "tree paint" as its use is not currently recognized as beneficial by professional arborists.
- Proposed changes to section 513 A., Community facilities, provided by SDE were approved with the addition of Community Gardens being recommended.

- In Section 514 B. (2), SDE was charged with looking into the possibility of adding language to allow “fee in lieu of” for open space requirements.
- Proposed changes to Section 515 A. language was approved.
- In Section 515 D. it was approved to revise how the distance to a pipeline right-of-way be changed from measuring from the actual pipeline to the nearest dwelling to measuring from the edge of the proposed right-of-way to the nearest dwelling.
- The newly proposed section 516, Outdoor Lighting was discussed. SDE was charged with researching the illumination projection requirement of 0.5 foot-candles contained in 516 A. (5) (d) to determine if this is too lenient.
- In Section 516 A. (9) Plan submission, “should” was changed to “shall”.
- Section 517 Utilities was identified as possibly being redundant with other sections of the revised SALDO. SDE will look into this.
- In Section 520 A. (3) for Traffic Impact Studies, one-half mile is specified for the scope of investigation of adjacent road conditions. This thought to be too large of an area given the size of the Borough. It was also discussed that the scope of a TIS should be consistent with PADOT requirements. SDE will look into the issue and make a recommendation.
- In Section 521 C. Environmental Impact Statement the number of copies to be submitted requirement was identified as being redundant with previous requirements for submission and can be removed. It was suggested that a flow chart approach with specific information on how many copies and to whom they are submitted be incorporated into the ordinance.
- In Section 521 C. (2) the requirement for the submittal of black and white photographs is to be changed to color photographs.
- Throughout Section 521 the phrase “The Report” is to be revised for clarity and consistency by referencing the EIS.
- How to add the requirement that the reconstruction of streets in poor condition or the upgrading of streets to meet increased use was discussed. It was suggested that this could be done in the bonding phase. SDE will investigate this further.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Sichler
Borough Manager