



Borough of Pottstown

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POTTSTOWN BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION
Pottstown Borough Hall Council Chambers Room
100 E High Street
December 18, 2008
7:30 PM

MINUTES

Present: Dan Weand, Chairperson, Stephen Toroney, Vice Chairperson,
Terry Fetterman, Thomas Hylton & Karen Weil
Also Present: Charles D. Garner, Borough Solicitor
Doug Dilliplane, P.E., Bursich Associates
Joseph Fay, architectural consultant
& Michelle Borzick, Zoning Work Leader
Absent: Jim Ennis, Montgomery County Planning Commission

Meeting called to order by Mr. Weand at 7:30 PM

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Fetterman motions to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2008 Planning Commission meeting, seconded by Ms. Weil.

Motion carried.

548 Manatawny St, demolition

No one present to represent the demolition request. Mr. Garner recites the demolition portion of the zoning ordinance to the commission. He states it would be appropriate for the commission to make a recommendation to council based on the information provided. Mr. Fetterman questions if this would be considered a blighted property. Mr. Garner explains it is not a blighted property. They have applied for a demolition permit in his belief because they would like to pursue the age assisted living facility or similar. Under the ordinance it is demolition of existing building of historic value. First determination is does it have historic value? If you make that determination, then the commission must review the other items listed in the ordinance. Based on whether any of the items listed in the ordinance are satisfied, make a recommendation to Borough Council to that effect and then Borough Council will take it from there. Mr. Weand states that based on the November 2008 Planning Commission meeting it is his opinion this commission is opposed to the demolition of that building.

Mr. Toroney motions to recommend to Borough Council that they do not satisfy the criteria of section 306 to allow demolition of the building, seconded by Ms. Weil.

Motion carried.

Mr. Hylton advises the commission that he had an architect come up to look at the property. It is a very historic building and some of it has been altered but a lot of it is original. It is an extremely unusual building for Pottstown.

Public Comments

W Eighth & Johnson Sts, sketch plan

David Shaner, engineer, & Tina Mueller, owners daughter, in attendance to present a sketch plan of lot line changes and a possible building lot. Copies of the sketch plan are distributed to the commission. Mr. Shaner explains the existing conditions of the parcels and proposed changes. The commission sees these changes as improving all three lots. There were lengthy discussions regarding parking, and Mr. Shaner was advised those discussions should be directed to the Zoning Officer. Mr. Shaner questions Mr. Garner regarding non-conforming lots. Mr. Garner stated although it is still non-conforming it is an improvement to the current conditions and should be discussed with the zoning officer.

PMMC 1600 E High St, parking facility improvements

Matt Davenport, McCarthy Engineering and John Kirby, PMMC in attendance to present a conceptual parking plan, approximately 11,000 square feet of additional impervious, net increase of 30 parking spaces. Copies of the plan are distributed to the commission members. Mr. Hylton questions the original expansion discussions of a parking deck. Mr. Kirby validates the concept was in discussion but it was too expensive for them to consider. Discussions continued regarding previous emergency room expansion, lack of spaces, viewing the previous plans, preservation to the green area that is the now proposed parking area. Mr. Hylton would like for the previous engineers plans to be reviewed.

538 & 540 High St, architectural

M & M Development, LLC is in attendance to present an architectural concept to the commission on behalf of the owners, Doug & Deb Campbell. It is shared with the commission what was at the site and what is proposed. Their intention is to build identical to what was on site, on the same footprint, same square footage and the same number of units. They have preliminary through HARB. Mr. Fay acknowledges that they did meet with two members who were in attendance at the last HARB meeting. Some of the suggestions made at the last HARB meeting have been implemented on the distributed plan. There are discussions regarding the architectural concept of the buildings. The commission is advised by the owner that there were a total of 39 units and the intent is to reinstate those units after discussions with the zoning officer. There were other discussions regarding parking concerns. The owner acknowledges that the buildings were inspected annually and were up to code. The new buildings, although not required, will have sprinkler systems. There is expressed concern regarding the style on the front and back of the building not comparing. Mr. Garner advises the commission that the zoning officer should be consulted and the ordinance will speak to the issues.

Mr. Rhoads questioned the owner if the building was at capacity prior to the fire and if the residents intend to move back to the property. Mr. Campbell advises that there is a waiting list for the building after it is rebuilt. He further advises the commission that most of the residents do not own vehicles.

Old Business

Blighted Property Committee – Mr. Weand reads information to the commission regarding acquisition of certain blighted properties by Genesis Housing.

Mr. Toroney motions to enact a resolution declaring the property at 502 Chestnut St aka 68 N Washington St as blighted and authorize the appropriate Borough Officials to proceed to cause the removal of the blighted conditions as provided for in the Borough Ordinance, seconded by Mr. Fetterman.

Motion carried.

Pottstown Regional Planning – Mr. Toroney advised there was a meeting but nothing new to report.

Electronic Signs & Solar Energy Equipment, Zoning Ordinance – Mr. Garner indicated that there was contact with representatives from the state as part of the Solar Energy Panel Committee who wanted to review our Ordinance and who will provide comments. Accordingly, Borough Council tabled the matter at the December meeting. Discussions continue regarding signage. Mr. Hylton motions to request the solicitor rewrite the proposed LED ordinance to allow exceptions for: signs of the Pottstown Police Department, theatre marquees for a designated theatre and for athletic score boards for the Parks & Recreation Department and schools, seconded by Ms. Weil.

Motion carried.

New Business

- a. **Consideration of proposed 2009 Planning Commission meeting dates** will be advertised as were shared with the commission via email from Maria Gerber.
- b. **TriPAC façade** – Mr. Toroney questions the discussions regarding façade changes at the property on High Street. Mr. Fay indicated that HARB did approve what was presented. HARB minutes will be reviewed and copies provided to Mr. Toroney.
- c. **Wal-Mart expansion** – Mr. Hylton motions to recommend denial of the Wal-Mart land development subject to Wal-Mart sending an extension request for additional time prior to December 31, 2009, seconded by Mr. Toroney.

Motion carried.

Mr. Toroney mentions a conversation he had where it was mentioned that Wal-Mart was considering moving to Upland Square. Mr. Dilliplane will attempt to research that issue.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.