

BELLEFONTE BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
February 22, 2016

Present: B. Dannaker, K. Clark, C. Dickman, J. Mills,
Excused: D. Gallo
Staff: Vana Dainty
Guests: Bob Jacobs, Centre County; Alan Jones, Centre Crest;

Call to Order

- Mr. Dannaker called the Bellefonte Borough Planning Commission meeting to order on Monday, February 22, 2016 at 5:00 PM.

Approval of the Minutes

- Mr. Clark made a motion to approve the Planning Commission meeting minutes of January 25, 2016. Ms. Dickman seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous to accept the minutes as presented.

Land Development Activities

- None

Planning and Zoning Issues

Al Jones, Centre Crest – Mr. Jones is on the board of Centre Care Inc. It is the 501c3 that leases the Centre Crest facility from Centre County. This is the third year that Centre Care Inc. has been operating the Centre Crest facility. As the sole vestee of the entire facility they are in control of its operations, but they are not the fee simple title holder. The land is owned by Centre County and Bob Jacobs is at the meeting on behalf of Centre County.

They badly need more parking at the facility. They are up to full capacity and with the combination of residents families and a fully staffed facility parking is an issue. To the rear of Centre Crest there used to be a rundown house that sat there for a long time. It was owned by the County and became a fire trap and was torn down so there is nothing on that site and there hasn't been for several years. Last year the County consolidated the residential tract with the main Centre Crest facility so there is one large parcel, but the main facility is zoned R4 and the house site is an R2 zone and you cannot park on an R2 zoned property. They would like to have R4 zoning for the entire consolidated parcel. In looking at this Bob noted that Centre Crest is actually a non-conforming use. They are requesting that the facility become a conforming use rather than a non-conforming use. Ms. Dainty stated that was at the last meeting and they chose not to move that forward.

Mr. Jones would like to be able to fully use the entire tract for the operations of the facility. He would like Planning Commission to recommend to Borough Council that the entire consolidated tract be zoned as an R4 tract then they would be able to move forward and utilize the extra land. Parking is permitted in R4.

Ms. Dainty asked if that area would always be parking. Mr. Jones stated that is all they plan for. Mr. Jones has met with each of the residents along Wilson Street and explained what they plan. The residents are cautiously optimistic that previous storm water issues have impacted them will be improved by what they do. Mr. Jones has a hand shake agreement to have an easement where the heavy line is shown on the map. Mr. Jones will be bringing a land development plan. Mr. Jacobs pointed out on the map where the R4 zoning line is. The piece of property we want to rezone is not safe, it is not lit and it is not proper. It could be a lot safer and provide a lot more parking if that were permitted. Mr. Clark feels

they will have trouble with DEP getting the storm water approved. He feels there is significant structure and a significant amount of impervious area. He said they will not approve a large water retention basin. He cautioned that they will want to see water quality control and some other items and he is not sure they will be able to get it on the property. Mr. Jones has said the Penn Terra folks have spent a fair amount of time there with their hydrologist. He relies on people that are more knowledgeable than him. Mr. Clark said DEP is no longer just signing off on water retention basins. Mr. Jones said Bob Franson, the Borough Engineer, has seen this and did not say anything negative. Mr. Jones stated they have not considered enlarging the facility onto the residential property. He stated the facility is old and expensive and the future of it will not be in the current location. The property does not go over to Monroe Street.

If the zoning is changed the NVJPC would need to be notified. When you go through a rezoning there is a requirement to contact all the property owners.

Mr. Jones said before they did anything they met with the property owners and explored what they wanted to do. Ms. Dainty said a few have been in the Borough Office and have said they are okay with it as long as the storm water run-off has been taken care of. They are concerned about that and they have a very particular plan in their head about how they want that to happen. Mr. Jones said the residents also know if nothing is done they will have continued problems. He hopes what they want to do will have a positive impact.

Mr. Clark has concerns if it is rezoned then the parcel is opened up in the future to any kind of development permissible in the R4 zoning, but if a variance is recommended this could be done under the variance process and future use is set to a certain item. The Planning Commission has to be concerned about future development because there are R2 properties surrounding it. Ms. Dickman stated the landowners are apprehensive but okay with a parking lot. There have been statements made that nobody wants to see any kind of high structures in that area and if it is zoned R4 it could happen.

The Zoning Hearing Board gives variances. Mr. Jones feels he would need to go there and say there is a hardship and make a totally different legal case to get the property redone and they could deny it. Mr. Jacob stated whatever the future is it has to be done with a new land development plan and all the things people have concerns about would then be aired with respect to that specific land development plan and whatever would be proposed. After the meeting with the residents Barry said can you get us an opinion as to whether this will affect our property. Mr. Jones went to a friend of his that does a lot of appraisals and in that man's opinion with Centre Crest being there whatever happens will not adversely affect anybody's property values on Wilson Street. Mr. Jacobs feels that it would be unlikely that a structure would be built on this site. If in the future Centre Crest moved to a different location and the existing Centre Crest facility would be turned into a multi-family they would need required parking for that facility so if they would want to put a structure on that back part they would be very limited because of parking requirements.

Ms. Dickman made a motion to recommend to Borough Council that R4 is considered for the whole tract. Mr. Clark seconded the motion grudgingly. The motion passed with Mr. Mills voting no.

Reapprove the Jim Boscaino Cherry Lane Lot Addition Plan (was approved September 30, 2013 but they never recorded.) The Planning Commission has the original and the copy with a newer date to record – It is the exact same plan with an updated date. Across the alley he has a dumpster and parking spaces. It was all previously approved. The one change is the name was incorrect and the County required them to correct it. They forgot to have it recorded before. They want it recorded now because the person in the front part wants to sell so this needs to be recorded to clean things up. The County has looked at the plan and agreed that everything is the same except for an incorrect name.

The Planning Commission acknowledged that the plan is being submitted with date revisions due to issues getting the plan recorded with a required name change.

Old Business

- None.

New Business

- Sign Ordinances – Page 575.92 under D it says bulletin boards for public, charitable, or religious institutions when located on the premises hereto can only have a 25 square foot sign/50 if double sided. If you are not religious you can have a bigger sign.

Under K on the next page signs identifying places of worship when located on the premises thereof the maximum area shall be 25 square feet single faced or 50 square feet double faced. The way signs are normally done is by footage and the biggest sign you can have is 200 square feet.

Basically religious institutions are not being given the same courtesy as other places. This is something the Planning Commission needs to think about and decide what to do.

Ms. Dainty will send the PC the entire sign ordinance via email. She requested that they look at it over the next month and send any comments to her via email. The church that meets in the middle school puts out a sign before service and removes it right after the service.

- Future Land Uses – That is looking at the Innovation Zone for the Central Business District. Planning Commission members are asked to continue to look at this for discussion at a later meeting. Bellefonte is an aging community and young blood needs brought in to get people excited.

When Ms. Dickman was looking through all the articles her biggest concern is deciding where to focus the overlay and putting a scope to the intentions of what our Innovation District would be versus other ones. Ms. Dainty said it may involve taking some side streets and making them more walkable. For instance the alley behind the YMCA could be cleaned up with a walking path painted along it. Ms. Dickman would like the Keystone designated area map brought to the next meeting. Ms. Dainty stated the Keystone Program is working on an Entrepreneur Center for Bellefonte. They are not thinking about displacing anybody.

The Waterfront District does not have a developer online. It will be marketed for purchase or lease. It could be a single tenant or multiple tenants. The process could take some time. When something happens it would come through the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission did not see the design of the wall before it was done, but it seems that nobody really saw the design.

If people have an interest of going into a building that may be built on the Waterfront District they would need to go to the IDA and Don Holderman.

- Consider having alternates – In the past the Planning Commission has not been permitted to have alternates, but now they can. It would provide someone that was interested and if somebody stepped away from the commission it would be nice to have somebody step in that knew the ropes.

The Planning Commission would take resumes; interview the people; and make recommendations to Council. They couldn't vote at the meeting unless they were filling an empty seat, but they could talk.

Information Items

- None.

Adjournment

- Having no further business Mr. Clark made a motion to adjourn the February 22, 2016 meeting of the Bellefonte Borough Planning Commission at 6:15 PM. Ms. Dickman seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous.