

BELLEFONTE BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
May 23, 2016

Present: B. Dannaker, K. Clark, C. Dickman, J. Mills, D. Gallo,

Excused:

Staff: Vana Dainty

Guests: Doug Johnson; Joanne Tosti-Vasey

Call to Order

- Mr. Dannaker called the Bellefonte Borough Planning Commission meeting to order on Monday, May 23, 2016 at 5:00 PM.

Approval of the Minutes

- Mr. Gallo made a motion to approve the Planning Commission meeting minutes of April 25, 2016. Mr. Mills seconded the motion. Three areas were identified on the first page under land development activities that should be ENS Plans. A voice vote was unanimous to accept the minutes as corrected.

Land Development Activities

- None.

Planning and Zoning Issues

- Kevin Clark's Resignation from the Planning Commission - Mr. Dannaker thanked Kevin for his services on the Planning Commission. His input has really been appreciated

- Centre County Planning Letter from Robert Jacobs: Regarding Centre Crest – Ms. Dainty provided everyone a zoning map with all the R4's marked. All of the R4 zoning areas are being used for multifamily housing and have very little ground left. There is one parcel of R4 left and that belongs to Sieg family. There are currently two houses located there. It is in the area between Holmes and Valentine. If the county bought and built a nursing home there would be very little vacant land left in the borough. The High School owns property by Airport Road, but it is R2 and they are going to be doing something with that. It will go off the tax rolls.

Mr. Dannaker felt Mr. Jacobs had some points in his letter. The Borough does not have any zoning district for permitted use as nursing and convalescent home. Ms. Dainty said Benner Township does and since the Borough is part of the Nittany Valley Joint Planning it counts for Bellefonte. Mr. Dannaker said the next question is does Bellefonte Borough want Centre Crest to leave Bellefonte and take the taxes away that the employees pay and take jobs away. Then have the building become apartments. He feels part of it requires good serious thought and discussion. Mr. Gallo said Centre Crest has outgrown its location. He feels if he were the County he would be interested in moving it out of the Borough to a larger location so it can expand. He also agrees if they did move it they would turn into some type of housing. Mr. Dannaker said it could turn into County offices. All the County Offices are supposed to be in the County seat. If Centre Crest moved out they could move those people back in. Mr. Gallo would be very shocked if they would try to do anything with the Sieg property. He can't see the family giving the property up. There is a lot of water on that location. Along the road frontage it is all swampy wetlands area. Ms. Dainty said Centre Crest would have to go somewhere so why change the zoning. Mr. Dannaker said it would take a major input of money to put Centre Crest anywhere else. Mr.

Gallo feels that generationally you look at the senior citizens and ask if Centre Crest would have more of a demand. Ms. Dainty said the Baby Boomers are decreasing in population and the Millennials are taking over. They are the biggest population group right now. Mr. Dannaker said another option is to make it a conditional use so the Planning Commission and Borough Council would have a say and maybe set more stringent conditions than would be applied by just zoning for that type of use. Mr. Dannaker feels you should let the Sieg property where it is. He is thinking about where Centre Crest currently is. Mr. Gallo is surprised that the Sieg property was ever made R4. Ms. Dainty believes it was because of the Burnham Farms.

Ms. Dainty said if you look at the lot they want to make R4 if you keep it R2 and they go to the Zoning Hearing Board they can put conditions on it that make it a little more stringent and protect the property owners in that area. If the Planning Commission makes it R4 it just becomes R4.

Mr. Gallo feels the motion that was made for them to file for a variance is what should be done. Mr. Mills agrees with that. The land owners do not want to have that change. They are very concerned. Ms. Dainty said nobody was at the last Council meeting from Centre Crest. The Planning Commission needs to decide if they want to wait and see if they come back or if they want to send it back to Council requesting them to go to the Zoning Hearing Board and have Council approve that. Mr. Gallo feels if the Planning Commission have to re-recommend that it be taken care of via a variance because then if it does go to the Zoning Hearing Board then you do have a larger opportunity for public input and also as far as what they may want to do with it and so forth. It all has to come to light at that point in time. Mr. Dannaker's impression is that the Zoning Hearing Board isn't attended much by public. Mr. Gallo and Ms. Dainty said it depends on the issue they are discussing. A couple uses in R2 are churches and public and private schools. That isn't a whole lot of difference than a nursing home because you got the big building, the parking lot, and people in and out. Mr. Gallo said a lot with Centre Crest is it is a preexisting entity. What he remembers is they kept that empty lot as a potential residential type of use rather than putting it in with R4 because at that time there was a house that was rented by the County and that was probably the biggest influence at that time.

Mr. Dannaker said in R2 you have to have 30,000 square foot minimum lot size and in R4 you have to have one acre minimum lot size. Mr. Gallo feels the best use for the land is parking. He still feels they need to file for a variance. He thinks the Planning Commission needs to be careful of the other thing they could use it for other than what they are talking about. He feels the biggest need for Centre Crest would be a parking lot. Mr. Dannaker feels it is interesting that offices would be another use there. Mr. Gallo feels if Centre Crest vacated the County could use it in different ways. It could be a combination of offices and some apartments. He still feels you shouldn't change what the zoning allows just for their purposes. He feels they are asking for spot zoning.

Ms. Tosti-Vasey received a Facebook posting from two lawyers in Pittsburgh and they were talking about land use from a zoning perspective. If she can figure out how to send it to Ms. Dainty she will. Ms. Dainty suggested she copy and paste it. Mr. Gallo said for the Planning Commission you could even present this to the state for their point of view because it is all part of Pennsylvania State Zoning. Mr. Gallo suggested the better way to do it would be to go through the Borough Solicitor, Stover & McGlaughlin.

Mr. Mills asked if there is any disadvantage or negativities to having a nursing home or convalescent home in R4 such as safety. Mr. Gallo said the issue is what exactly does the county want to do with that lot. They come up with different possible future uses. Mr. Dannaker told Mr. Jacobs that the letter makes the Planning Commission wonder what their ultimate plans are. You wonder if the County has a twelve-year plan. Ms. Dickman asked if in the interim it could be changed to R4. Her concern is parking is a major issue. Mr. Gallo said it is how they present it. It is up to them not the Planning Commission. They can go to the Zoning Hearing Board and get the variance, which is the same thing. If the Hearing Board says no the Planning Commission can't overturn the decision.

Mr. Gallo said before you approve anything you have to know what they really want to do with it or else they go ahead and say thank you, this is what we want to use it for. We thought we could. He has heard that before. Mr. Dannaker said they did come with a request before and it was acted on. That request was strictly a zoning change. The Planning Commission did approve it and send it to Borough Council who then had discussions about it and when Centre Crest didn't show up they sent it back and asked the Planning Commission to discuss it further and send another recommendation. Mr. Gallo said there is no request in front of the Planning Commission so nothing has to be done. Until there is an

actual request on what they would like to use it for it can be beat around for a long time. Mr. Gallo said there really wasn't a formal request made.

Old Business

- None.

New Business

- Ms. Dickman made a motion to recommend to Council that the Planning Commission join the American Planning Association for both training and professional resources and planning issues in the Borough. Mr. Mills seconded the motion. The fee to join is \$100.00. They do have a lot of forums and discussions where you can get feedback very quickly from planning professionals that do this on a daily basis. There are also training resources. A voice vote was unanimous.

Information Items

- None.

Adjournment

- Having no further business Mr. Mills made a motion to adjourn the April 25, 2016 meeting of the Bellefonte Borough Planning Commission at 6:15 PM. Mr. Gallo seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous.