

**PLANNING COMMISSION
BELLEFONTE BOROUGH
MEETING MINUTES**

**June 26, 2017 – 5 p.m.
236 West Lamb Street, Bellefonte, PA 16823
www.bellefonte.net**

CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Bellefonte Borough Planning Commission was called to order by Robert Dannaker, Chair, at the Bellefonte Borough Municipal Building at 5 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Dannaker, Chair
James Mills, Secretary
Mark Edwards
Dallas Gallo
Nathaniel Day

STAFF MEMBERS Ralph Stewart, Manager
Shannon Wright, Planning/Zoning administrator

OTHER: Joanne Tosti-Vasey, Council
Doug Johnson, Council

Mr. Stewart introduced Shannon Wright to PC members. PC Members introduced themselves as well giving a brief introduction of their backgrounds. A brief summary of the Planning Commission's role in plan review was discussed.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

March 27, 2017 meeting minutes were presented for approval.

Mr. Gallo moved to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2017 Planning Commission meeting;
Mr. Edwards seconded the motion;
Motion carried.

LAND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES:

PROJECT DISCUSSIONS

The Willowbank Plaza project was discussed briefly (Phoenix Road). The project is moving along with no issues, per Mr. Stewart. There is only a slim possibility of a traffic light at that intersection. Mr. Stewart discussed the PennDOT Connects program. Other traffic mitigation solutions were also discussed.

The new Mt. Nittany Medical Office up by the former Weis Markets building was discussed relative to the parking issue. There have not been any issues reported. Mr. Stewart indicated that a Traffic Impact Study (TIS) was done with PennDOT prior to the project being issued an occupancy permit. Only one entrance was permitted previously, so PennDOT required a TIS. The study proved that the parking and access was feasible. Another TIS may be done in September when school is in session.

The Armory property was also discussed in brief. The property is currently for sale. Discussion was held in trying to incorporate this property into realigning Airport Road. PennDOT would not budge. Airport Road is a PennDOT road. The third lane was installed and the sidewalk was brought down to tie into the bike path but they said they have no funding to re-align Airport Road with Parkview Boulevard.

Cell towers in right-of-ways were also discussed. This was litigated and municipalities can control the towers via the zoning process. No contact has been made relative to a project like this for many months.

The proposed athletic facilities were also discussed but funds need to be raised before construction (school).

Mr. Stewart indicated that over near West Beaver and North Sprig there is a parcel (Plosner Estate). Zach Gay, surveyor discussed with the Borough staff about putting the parcel into residential lots. Expenses are an issue. Planning Commission may see this sometime in the future.

The Gamble Mill possible expansion was discussed which would also need to come through the Planning Commission as a land development plan.

Nothing to report on Ingrams. There is no mechanism that says something needs to be done by a certain time. What may happen is requiring an update coming through as a land development plan. The plan may be near expiration. The County's regulation of permitting fees was discussed relative to plans that sit without any development. Costs can accrue quickly. Sun setting permits were discussed as well. Mr. Stewart will research when this plan has expired.

The West Lamb Street Unimart is being reopened as the Bellefonte Mart under new ownership. The fuel service is not a normal permitted use for the waterfront commercial. However, this property is grandfathered as a gas station and convenience store as the fuel tanks and pumps were never taken out or abandoned.

The Springboard incubator building occupancy was discussed. Mr. Stewart indicated that people were interested but basically the cart was put before the horse. The Commissioner was interested in having the ribbon cutting, and that was accommodated, but paperwork on getting members in and signing a lease was not ready. The non-profit organization Belle Key will oversee this.

PLANS:

MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT RENOVATION

The parking lot behind First National Bank was discussed. There were some studies being done. The building and property committee was studying this area. At the two lots at the bank off of West Howard Street, the pavement is in bad shape. Instead of replacement of the macadam, the lot would be redesigned and updated. That was the original concept. About a year or so ago, relative to budgeting, it was discussed that it may have been a good idea to do the CVS lot near the train tracks. Consolidating these two projects was thought to have been a better idea regarding budgeting.

Earlier this year an RFP was done for engineering services for this project. ELA Group was chosen. They did many projects in Bellefonte, including the high school parking lot project. Obstacles in the lot near the drive thru were discussed. Incorporation of green space was talked about. The spaces are being widened a little but it will be a better fit. Mr. Stewart indicated that they would like to do away with the meters as the posts make it complicated for snow removal efforts. Most modern systems have a kiosk for the parking spaces.

Traffic flow through the drive thru at the bank was talked about. There are two accesses in. The islands will be better defined. Customer parking for Edward Jones was also mentioned. There are exceptions for private parking with signage. Ms. Tosti-Vasey reminded Mr. Stewart that the one island would be an electric car charging station. She explained more about the charging systems. PC members commented on the safety of the parking lot, especially at the YMCA. The recycling area will remain in the parking lot. Lighting improvements were also discussed, i.e. LED, higher wattage lighting. The poles will remain, with the exception of one which may be moved back into the green space.

Phasing plan was to get this done this year, but this is not going to happen. Summer is not a good time to open bidding on a project. This will be bid out end of 2017 with construction beginning early 2018 when the weather breaks. The lot will be closed for about 2 months. The CVS lot will follow later so the CVS lot can be utilized. Costs were

not available at this time. The base will need to be rebuilt on this parking lot. The foundation is not suitable. CVS lot foundation is in good condition.

CVS PARKING LOT

The CVS lot will be similar to what is there now. Meek Lane and the parking lot cross over each other so there is no definition of the lane. This plan includes to have more green space/islands to create definition of where the lot is and is not and the entrance. The railroad ties will be taken out and replaced with something more appropriate. There will be a pedestrian path as well, possible using the same kind of brick that was used along Dunlap Street as part of the waterfront project. This will be the designated walkway. Crossing on the track is not really permitted and intersection crossing should be encouraged. More fencing is planned to be installed to prevent the track crossings. This will be installed by SEDA-COG. Part of the guardrail is planned to remain. A planter and railroad tie will come out. Overgrown trees were discussed and a neighbor has asked that the Borough take out one particular large tree. Greenspace is being added and trees can also be added. This lot is planned to be kiosk parking as well. There will also be a charging station at this lot. One space in the lot will be utilized. A bike rack was discussed as well. The pullout onto Potter Street was discussed, i.e. safety. It was questioned whether the site distance issue could be corrected. The pullout onto Potter Street was discussed, i.e. safety. It was questioned whether the site distance issue could be corrected.

Council received an overview of the parking lot project at their last meeting. If there are any major changes, Mr. Stewart will notify Planning Commission.

OLD BUSINESS:

Innovation District –

Mr. Stewart did some research relative to this. He was not sure what PC knew about this district. They understood it as an overlay district to allow some different things near the waterfront. Mr. Stewart indicated that this district is something that the bigger cities are doing. This would be downscaled to fit Bellefonte.

Traditional model would be an industrial park outside of town, i.e. Science Park Road in State College, i.e. on the edge of town. The more modern thinking is collaboration. Mr. Stewart went on to explain that places like Pittsburgh and Philadelphia are partnering with institutions of higher education, local government and business community to create an atmosphere for millennial types, i.e. bikeable, walkable, coffee shops, small apartments. Many do not have vehicles by choice. Bellefonte can fit that mold. It is walkable, bikeable with rec spaces, etc.

Comments are welcome as to whether Bellefonte would want to investigate this idea for the Borough. Would this be a valuable district? Waterfront business district and central business district could be defined, in essence, as the Borough's innovation district.

Some cities take it even further, by clustering a type of industry. Innovation areas are geared to medical research, life sciences. Some are geared to food, beverage and the like. A community in upstate New York is looking a food and beverage innovation districts. They are going through the planning process and brainstorming on ways to get this off the grounds. This has real possibilities for Bellefonte.

Traditional corporate parks are not being built any more. These are being incorporated into towns and cities so that people that live there can utilize what the town has to offer.

A question of whether the zoning ordinance of the Borough permits an Innovation District. There is a movement for small living space, i.e. tiny houses.

PC members would be asked to brainstorm and come up with some ideas and boundaries, reuses, and other branding ideas. Downtown is the core area. The downtown buildings were discussed and having them be used to their fullest potential, i.e. modernizing the interiors. There was some talk regarding investors buying into the buildings and turning them around.

Potential and interest of this type of district is in Bellefonte. The streetscape is filled in. People are buying up the historical properties, in particular, downtown.

This topic will be kept moving forward for future brainstorming and discussions.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

**Mr. Day moved to adjourn the June 26, 2017 Planning Commission Meeting;
Mr. Mills seconded the motion;
Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.