

**BELLEFONTE BOROUGH
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

**March 9, 2021 – 5 p.m.
236 West Lamb Street, Bellefonte, PA 16823
www.bellefonte.net**

CALL TO ORDER:

The March 9, 2021 meeting of the Bellefonte Borough Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Robert Dannaker at 5:00 p.m. **This meeting was held virtually.**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Dannaker, Chair
James Mills, Secretary
Mark Edwards
Dallas Gallo
David Lomison

STAFF MEMBERS: Ralph Stewart, Borough Manager
Gina Thompson, Zoning Administrator

Guests: Matt Crater
Joanne Tosti-Vasey

Gina Thompson was introduced to PC members. Members welcomed Ms. Thompson to the Planning Commission meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Gallo moved to approve the February 9, 2021 Planning Commission meeting minutes. Mr. Lomison seconded the motion. Motion carried.

PLANNING and ZONING ISSUES:

Mr. Stewart spoke about the Bellefonte Mart's proposal for apartments above the store. The unit size is smaller than he required minimum size apartment. The project is still alive and perhaps by the next meeting, something may be on the table for review.

Waterfront owners are still planning on moving ahead with the project. There are local new owners of the Sutton property which they plan to repurpose. The armory property price has been lowered to attract a buyer. The diamond area pedestrian/vehicle improvements were discussed.

OLD BUSINESS:

Short Term Rental Regulations

Mr. Stewart recapped prior discussion on the proposed ordinance. He formatted a draft ordinance based on comments from PC. He asked PC to make a recommendation on where the ordinance should go. Discussion was held on the amount of time the homeowner actually had to reside in the short-term rental. Different zoning districts were discussed. Highway Commercial zone contained limited amounts of homes, so it was not included in the consideration of the zoning districts. Accessory rentals, i.e. pools, hot tubs, would not be permitted in the proposed draft ordinance either. The definition of nuisance property and enforcement of the point system to declare a nuisance property was discussed. Airbnb guidelines and rating system was discussed briefly.

Mr. Dannaker proposed raising the point system from 5 to 6 to give the homeowner an additional chance to rectify the situation. Mr. Edwards discussed the ordinance and opined that with the ordinance the rentals would go away.

Short term rentals are not set up to be mini hotels, per Mr. Stewart. Council will receive the ordinance and decide how to tweak the ordinance. The point system was again discussed. Adjoining properties to Bed and Breakfasts was discussed.

Football rentals were discussed. Most other municipalities knew that the football rentals were a problem hence the creation of the local ordinances for short term rentals. Mr. Stewart stated that the situation has gotten out of hand and thus, has caused the consideration of disallowing any type of short-term rentals at all.

Mr. Stewart clarified that the short-term rentals would be banned from the residential districts of the Borough unless the home was owner-occupied, with no other option. The use is permitted in other districts, just not residential. The definition of short-term rentals was discussed briefly. Grandfathering of existing rentals was discussed. Once something is started, it becomes difficult to take that right of use away.

The ordinance shall be amended as follows: Highway Commercial zoning district shall be added to the ordinance.

Mr. Gallo moved submit the draft ordinance to the solicitor as amended, to get the process started.
Mr. Lomison seconded the motion.
Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS: Nothing presented.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS: Nothing presented.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Gallo moved to adjourn.
Mr. Mills seconded the motion.
Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:13 p.m.