

Planning Commission

Apr 18, 2017

The meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, April 18, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the council room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda PA.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Christini at 7:10 p.m.

Members Present: Larry Kacyon, Jimmy Lacek, Jim Lacek, Mark Christini

Members Absent: Erin Groves, Keith Long, Evelyn Sherburne, Karen Johnson

Others: Jim Haight, Public Works Code Enforcement Supervisor

Visitors: Tom Neilson representing the First Presbyterian Church, Dave Guffey

Minutes:

A motion was made by Mr. Jimmy Lacek, and seconded by Mr. Larry Kacyon to approve the meeting minutes of November 15, 2016 as written. Motion passed.

Re-Organization

Mr. Christini mentioned that since we do not have a full Board at this meeting that reorganization be postponed for another meeting.

New Business

Mr. Neilson had two requests for the Planning Commission; having an illuminated sign and having an additional sign facing Merrill Parkway. The First Presbyterian Church currently has an illuminated sign that was grandfathered in that faces Court Street; with the parking situation and traffic on Court Street not many people can see the sign that is why they request an additional sign be erected on Merrill Parkway that would be able to contain a message board that would highlight upcoming events for the Church. The current residential zoning ordinance [325-47 A (c) (1)] states that “signs identifying schools, colleges, churches, hospitals or other institutions of a similar public or semipublic nature may be erected and maintained however: (1) only one sign may be erected upon the premises unless the premises front upon more than one street, in which case up to two signs may be erected along each frontage. The wording is not contained in the commercial zoning ordinance.

Mr. Haight addressed the residential ordinance and requested the Board reconsider the verbiage of [325-47 A (c) (1)] to state: Only one sign may be erected upon the premises unless the premises front upon more than one street, in which case up to two signs may be erected: one facing each frontage. Mr. Kacyon made a motion that this verbiage be used per Mr. Haight’s request, Mr. Jim Lacek seconded, approved.

Mr. Haight also addressed the verbiage on 325-47 B (1) (c) “Regarding corner lots all setback requirements set out in 325-21D of the Code of the Borough of Towanda, Pennsylvania, shall be met”. Mr. Haight requested this be modified to: “Regarding corner lots, a maximum of two signs with one sign facing each frontage are permitted and all setback requirements set out in 325-21D of the Code of the Borough of Towanda, Pennsylvania, shall be met”. Mr. Kacyon made a motion that we change the ordinance 325-47 B (1) (c) per Mr. Haight’s recommendation, Mr. Jim Lacek seconded, approved.

Planning Commission

Apr 18, 2017

Mr. Neilson also requested the reasoning on prohibiting internally illuminated signs; Mr. Nielson stated that it is easier to update signs via computer then going out and changing lettering. Mr. Haight stated that the reasoning originally was to keep the commercial district from not having the neon or internally illuminated signs that some cities are inundated with.

Mr. Neilson requested that Council consider allowing the First Presbyterian Church to erect an additional sign on the Merrill Parkway and to also reconsider the view on internally illuminated signs.

Mr. Kacyon mentioned that Council may want to consider internally illuminated message boards at some point in the future as Towanda Borough needs to come into the modern age of advertising and communication.

Old Business

None

Adjournment

As there was nothing further to discuss Mr. Jim Lacek made a motion to adjourn at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
April Maynard
Recording Secretary

Planning Commission

Jun 20, 2017

The meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, June 20, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the council room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda PA.

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Groves at 7:05 p.m.

Members Present: Larry Kacyon, Jimmy Lacek, Jim Lacek, Mark Christini, Erin Groves, Evelyn Sherburne, Karen Johnson

Members Absent: Keith Long,

Others: Jim Haight, Public Works Code Enforcement Supervisor

Visitors: None

Minutes:

A motion was made by Mr. Kacyon, and seconded by Ms. Johnson to approve the meeting minutes of April 18, 2017 (No Quorum) as written. Motion passed.

Re-Organization

Mr. Lacek made the nomination for Mr. Kacyon to be Chair of the Planning Commission, Ms Groves seconded, approved.

Ms. Groves made the nomination for Ms. Johnson to be Vice – Chair of the Planning Commission Ms. Sherburne seconded, approved.

Board Vacancy

Mr. Christini informed the Board that Council has received interest from four individuals to fill the vacancy left by Mr. Ulatowski; they will be making a decision soon.

New Business

None

Quorum

Ms. Sherburne discussed the lack of a quorum in recent meetings of the Planning Commission; she mentioned the lack of regular meetings and the notification process. Mr. Christini mentioned that the role of the Planning Commission is to maintain and suggest zoning requirements as needed to Council and to work on the Borough's comprehensive plan; the current plan is more than fifteen years old and should be looked at; the maintenance of zoning is an as needed basis meeting and the comprehensive plan should be updated for future projects.

Planning Commission meeting dates are set in the beginning of the year and are the third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Johnson mentioned if there is funding for any of the comprehensive plan projects; Mr. Haight stated that funding is and may be available from Harrisburg. Ms. Groves stated that maybe the

Planning Commission

Jun 20, 2017

plans can be projects that do not need funding. Having plans in writing are essential in case funding is available the plan would be in place to apply for the funding.

Old Business

Mr. Haight mentioned that Mr. Neilson representing the First Presbyterian Church has asked council for an additional detached sign and also requested that sign be internally illuminated.

Mr. Haight discussed the request made by Mr. Neilson and what needs to be corrected in the ordinance in order to have the additional sign erected; the internally illumination would go against our ordinance that is already in place; they can illuminate the sign that is currently have erected on Court Street as that is a grandfathered illuminated sign but the new sign cannot be illuminated; the Court Street sign could not be altered in any way the illumination would have to fit in the current configuration.

The current residential zoning ordinance [325-47 A (c) (1)] states that “signs identifying schools, colleges, churches, hospitals or other institutions of a similar public or semipublic nature may be erected and maintained however: (1) only one sign may be erected upon the premises unless the premises front upon more than one street, in which case up to two signs may be erected along each frontage. The wording is not contained in the commercial zoning ordinance.

Mr. Haight addressed the residential ordinance and requested the Board reconsider the verbiage of [325-47 A (c) (1)] to state: Only one sign may be erected upon the premises unless the premises front upon more than one street, in which case up to two signs may be erected: one facing each frontage. Mr. Christini made a motion that this verbiage be used per Mr. Haight’s request, Ms. Sherburne seconded, approved.

Mr. Haight also addressed the verbiage on 325-47 B (1) (c) “Regarding corner lots all setback requirements set out in 325-21D of the Code of the Borough of Towanda, Pennsylvania, shall be met”. Mr. Haight requested this be modified to: “Regarding corner lots, a maximum of two signs with one sign facing each frontage are permitted and all setback requirements set out in 325-21D of the Code of the Borough of Towanda, Pennsylvania, shall be met”. Mr. Christini made a motion that we change the ordinance 325-47 B (1) (c) per Mr. Haight’s recommendation, Ms. Groves seconded, approved.

Ms. Groves made a motion to keep 325-47 B (2) Illuminated signs. Illuminated signs may be erected and maintained; however, flashing signs, revolving illuminated signs and stationary internally illuminated signs are prohibited; as written, seconded by Jimmy Lacek, approved.

Adjournment

As there was nothing further to discuss Mr. Jim Lacek made a motion to adjourn at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
April Maynard
Recording Secretary

Planning Commission

Oct 17, 2017

APPROVED AT DECEMBER 19TH MEETING. DMK

The meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, October 17, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the council room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda PA.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Kacyon at 7:05 p.m.

Members Present: Larry Kacyon, Erin Groves, Karen Johnson, Diane Siegmund

Members Absent: Keith Long, Jimmy Lacek, Jim Lacek, Mark Christini, Kevin Doupe

Others: Jim Haight, Public Works Code Enforcement Supervisor; Kyle Lane, Borough Manager

Visitors: None

Minutes:

No quorum was available so the minutes of the June 20, 2017 meeting were not approved.

Board Vacancy

Ms. Siegmund and Mr. Doupe will be replacing Ms. Sherburne and the vacancy left by Mr. Ulatowski.

New Business

The meeting was called to review the Borough's definition of "family". The Board discussed the definition and how to better define the interpretation.

Ms. Groves stated she had contacted business associates and explained the definition; several of her contacts explained that in the definition it states "living together as a single housekeeping unit in a dwelling unit" and that should be the focus "the single housekeeping unit"; the definition of a single housekeeping unit is defined by just searching as "people living as a single household unit, with common access to and common use of all facilities comprising the dwelling unit where decisions of the household are made as a unit".

Mr. Lane stated that he would have our attorney review that definition.

Adjournment

As there was nothing further to discuss Mr. Kacyon made a motion to adjourn at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
April Maynard
Recording Secretary

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
DECEMBER 19, 2017**

The meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, December 19, 2017 at 7:00 PM, in the council room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda PA.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Kacyon at 7:00 PM.

Members Present: Larry Kacyon, Karen Johnson, Mark Christini, Kevin Doupe, Erin Groves, Keith Long

Members Absent: Jim Lacek, Jimmy Lacek, & Diane Siegmund

Others:

Solicitor Smith, Jim Haight, Public Works Code Enforcement Supervisor and Kyle Lane, Borough Manager

Citizens to be Heard:

Mr. Tom Neilson, an Elder of the First Presbyterian Church in Towanda Borough was present to request on behalf of the church, they be allowed to internally illuminate (LED) their recently approved sign along the Merrill Parkway, where it would be more likely to be seen. He stated the sign would not be flashing or have moving letters. (Note: The Church's Court Street sign is a "grandfathered" sign, and it can be the only illuminated sign.) After discussion and comments, Mr. Neilson asked the Planning Commission to at least discuss further the church's request to internally illuminate the sign. Chairman Kacyon stated that this had been discussed previously at the June 20, 2017, Planning Commission Meeting. At that meeting, a motion was made and passed to keep 325-47 B (2) Illuminated Signs as is written which prohibits internal illumination.

Note: Council approved having Solicitor Smith amend Chapter 325-47 Signs ordinance, restating regulations pertaining to signs permitted in residential, commercial and manufacturing zoning districts on lots "fronting on more than one street". This was done at the regular Borough Council meeting on August 7, 2017, therefore this issue is considered complete.

Minutes:

A motion was made by Mrs. Groves, and seconded by Ms. Johnson to approve the meeting minutes of October 19, 2017, as written. Motion passed.

New Business

Re: Definition of Single Housekeeping Unit - Zoning Ordinance 325-81- definitions of "dwelling structure" and "single housekeeping unit".

Solicitor Smith was present to offer legal assistance regarding these definitions. The current definitions are wide open to interpretation, and that is what we are dealing with now.

Solicitor Smith stated that the borough has been told that it has been proposed by the county commissioners to use a home in the R-4 district located at 104 York Avenue as step housing for county probationers.

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
DECEMBER 19, 2017**

He said it is stated in our borough code Section 325-9. A., the R-4 district is the most restrictive. The principal use in this district is “single family residence”, and the county’s plan may not comport with this definition or whether that use is included within another type of use or uses permitted in other districts.

The 104 York Avenue address may not meet the probability of “living together as a single housekeeping unit.” These individuals are “together” not voluntarily, with one another in a changing number of other individuals whose admissions or expulsions from the “group” is not determined by their own choice but by the probation department. These people just share a space and are not bound together by choice to form a “single housekeeping unit”. This type of use is more like a “rooming house”, “hotel” or “other housing accommodations”. Those uses are provided for in less restrictive districts, under Section 325-9. C., such uses are not permitted in the most restrictive R-4 district.

After going over several definitions that included dwellings, family, hotel, rooming house, Solicitor Smith proposed to include additional text in the definition of “Dwelling Structure” (underlined as follows):

Dwelling Structure: Any structure which shall contain one or more dwelling units, not including a hotel, hospital, nursing home, dormitory, fraternity or sorority house, rooming house, boarding house or other group housing accommodations. Such other group housing accommodations include but are not limited to these where each adult occupant is charged, directly or indirectly, a specific single or recurrent separate rental, occupancy fee or monetary assessment predetermined in amount by the owner, or tenant leasing from the owner, the nonpayment of which permits such owner or tenant to evict the occupant.

Also, it was suggested that a new definition for “Single Housekeeping Unit” be added to section 325-81 Definitions. This term is used in the definition of “Family” but is currently not defined:

Single Housekeeping Unit: Any household whose members are an interactive group of persons jointly occupying a dwelling unit, including joint access to and use of all common areas including living, kitchen, and eating areas within the dwelling unit, and sharing household activities and responsibilities such as meals, chores, expenses and maintenance, and whose makeup is determined by the members of the unit rather than by the landlord, property manager, or other third party. This does not include a Boarding or Rooming House.

At this time, Mr. Long made the motion to present Solicitor Smith’s recommendations for adding/amending the borough code section 325-81 definitions “dwelling structure” and “single housekeeping unit” at the next Borough Council meeting on January 2nd, 2018. The motion was seconded by Mr. Christini. Motion passed.

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
DECEMBER 19, 2017**

Other Business:

Also, Manager Lane was present and stated that he would like to see “campers & trailers parking versus storage on the streets”, addressed by the Planning Commission. This was discussed and the Planning Commission will revisit this topic also in the upcoming meeting(s).

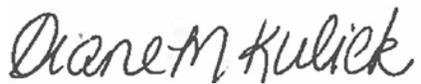
Old Business:

LED usage (internally illuminated) for the Presbyterian Church – Zoning Ordinance 325-47 – Signs.

This issue was addressed at the beginning of this meeting. Plus, Mr. Haight reminded the board that the internal illumination of a new sign on Merrill Parkway would go against the ordinance that is already in place. The church can only illuminate the Court Street sign that is “grandfathered”, and it would have to fit the current configuration of the borough code.

Adjournment:

Mr. Christini made a motion to adjourn, Mrs. Groves seconded it at 8:45 PM.



Diane M. Kulick
Recording Secretary
Planning Commission