

Town of South Bethany
Planning Commission Hearing and Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2017

Planning Commission Members Present:

Dick Oliver, Jack Whitney, Joe Conway, Dave Wilson, George Reese, Sharon Polansky, Linda Lewis

Absent: Tim Shaw, Council Liaison

Other Attendees: Dee Burbage; Mayor Pat Voveris; Doug Frechtling 300-302 W 7th Street (hearing); Mike Matera, 303 W 9th Street; Greg Hook (hearing)

Hearing was called to order: 10:00 a.m. by Chairman Dick Oliver

The Hearing for the request to partition lots 128 & 129 at 301 W 7th Street was conducted. Secretary Burbage pointed out there were a number of letters related to this request, which are on file. Some were for and some were against the partition request. Mr. Frechtling spoke against the partition and stated it would cause congestion and parking problems at the property and along the street.

Comments from the Planning Commission were solicited. Chairman Oliver stated that although he understood the concerns, there was no justification for denial of the request since it meets all Town codes and regulations. He noted that nearly all lots in that area or town are 50 by 100 feet and the requested partition lots would be that size.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the partition request. The vote was unanimous for approval. The Chairman thanked all for being present. The Hearing was adjourned.

Chairman Oliver called the regular Planning Commission meeting to order at 10:15 am.

Old business:

1. Comprehensive Plan - Chairman Oliver noted that the Planning Commission has responded to all State comments and turned these over to the Mayor for action. Mayor Voveris noted that the State has commented and asked the responses be inserted back into the full Comprehensive Plan and be resubmitted. She said Pam would do this next week and would send a copy to the Planning Commission with the colored inserts. We await final State action.

New business:

1. **Street lighting was discussed.** The Mayor agreed that the program underway was not well organized. The Planning commission agreed to send some suggestions to Council since this was one of the elements in the Comprehensive Plan. It was noted that some of the residents on Canal Drive are not happy with the new lights and efforts are underway to place new lights on Ocean highway. Questions were asked about who selects the light styles and it was noted that public input on a professionally prepared comprehensive street lighting plan (including locations and optional or recommended lighting types) would be advantageous to the Town. It was noted that the recent IPA study identified some of the various streetlights available and noted some of the problems associated with some of them. The study also identifies two of the major

Delaware towns north of us that are changing all their streetlights to the use of LEDs. A Planning Commission review indicated that Town purchased LED lights could result in significant saving for the town if lights were changed over a period of time. Further the Comprehensive Plan has recommended that Town prepare a comprehensive lighting plan for the Town rather than to decide and implement lighting changes on an ad hoc basis.

- 2. Budget and Comprehensive Plan issues were discussed.** The discussions changed to an expression of disappointments among Commission members about how the Council has handled PC recommendations. Most have been ignored to date. It was stated that you need to either give up or find another way to do things. Capital funding is a point at issue. The PC has recommended that capital funding be undertaken on the basis of studies that identify 10-year funding requirements and this be updated annually prior to the beginning of the budget cycle. Joe Conway offered to take the current budget and mark up expenditures to indicate the applicable goal or related strategy and to help us look at the use and requirements for capital reserves. This is the first year that the use of annual reserves has been identified. This needs to be expanded to a 5 to 10 year basis and the proposed budget needs to be compared with CP goals.

It was agreed that the next steps would be to try to convince the Council to make use of the CP and for the Council to buy-into this for annual budget preparation. It was suggested that the PC could meet with the B&F committee and discuss ways to do this and to advise the B&F committee of the elements of the PC that should be considered in preparation of subsequent budgets.

The Mayor stated that historically, the PC has not been a document that has been used by the Council. It was noted that the development of the new Police station is a good example. It was not on the radar for the CP preparation, but it is being undertaken now. Joe Conway noted it was, however, recommended for the survey but taken off the draft survey by the Council. Lighting is also a good example, not to mention SLR and flooding issues that have been neglected by the Council. It was also noted that the Town does not have a written maintenance plan and budget prep is not based on a rational or systematic determination of the annual maintenance requirements and costs.

It was noted by the Mayor that the best chance of success would be to take baby steps with the Council to make changes in the way the CP is utilized for the Town.

Joe Conway stated that he could manually add an indication of the applicable goals to individual expenses in the draft budget. This could be added as a separate column in the Town's financial program and the Council could see which goals are using most expenses. It was agreed that a presentation should be prepared for the new Council and presented after the new Council was established. It was noted that Council committees should be given individual responsibilities and these should be defined in writing.

It was noted that an annual progress report on Comprehensive Plan objectives ~~of Council activities~~ was a PC responsibility, but Town committee reports are not always available to the PC. The Mayor noted these are on the Town website.

It was agreed that the PC would undertake an end of FY evaluation of CP goals and strategies and that a meeting would be scheduled with the Council during the summer to review this.

Next Steps – The PC will ask to meet with the Council in the summer to discuss CP issues.

Prior to the May 19th meeting, Joe Conway will send a copy of his previous presentation made related to budget preparation conforming to CP goals and strategies. It was suggested that action issues needed to be identified as part of that presentation.

It was agreed to set up a meeting with the B&F committee to discuss CP issues.

Public comment:

The Mayor commented that a cultural change was necessary to better align Council activities and initiatives with the CP and to make better use of PC input. She asked – do we (the Council) listen? She stated - probably not. The question remains, can there be change? The Mayor stated that she thought that adoption of an improved process that tied the Town’s Goals to Council actions and Budgets would serve to provide a Plan that would transcend Council membership and be less reliant on personalities.

Meeting adjourned: 11:35 a.m.

Submitted by: Jack Whitney, 105 Boone Road

Not discussed from last meeting: -

Mayor Voveris spoke to the appreciation for the Planning Commission’s work developing the Phase 2 proposal. She noted, however, that with the establishment of ACT (Association of Coastal Towns) consortium that we will have to look to the Governor, with hopefully “a louder voice” as a group than as a single voice. She has participated in one meeting already and another is scheduled. She also said that under discussion was the possible inclusion of a Planning Commission member to participate in the next meeting.