

NEWTOWN BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

March 7, 2011

In attendance were members Warren Woldorf, Paul Snyder, William Heinemann, Paul Salvatore, Debbie Donofry, David Young and Borough Council Liaison, Mike Sellers. Not present was member Jayne Spector.

Call to Order

Chairman Woldorf called the meeting to order at 7 P.M.

Approval of Meeting Minutes - February 7, 2011

Minutes of the regular February 7, 2011 meeting were discussed. One correction was requested by Mr. Heinemann. Mr. Salvatore moved to approve the minutes as corrected and the motion was seconded by Mr. Snyder. The corrected minutes were approved unanimously (one member absent).

Applicant Plan Review

None.

Old Business

Parking Structure – continued discussion of draft Use Description for Zoning Ordinance.

Commission members discussed the February 15, 2011 revised draft proposed use description for a parking structure. Mr. Salvatore asked if any of the Borough's professional consultants would be reviewing the draft. Chairman Woldorf stated the Zoning Officer should have an opportunity to see the text and offer comment, as it constitutes a change to a Borough ordinance. Mr. Sellers noted that the MPC does not require any municipality's paid consultant to review an ordinance change, and will forward Commission members some information regarding mandated regulations for ordinance review and adoption.

Mr. Heinemann moved to approve the February 15, 2011 revised draft proposed use description for a parking structure and the motion was seconded by Mr. Salvatore. The motion was approved unanimously (one member absent) to send the revised draft to Borough Council for review and action, including a recommendation that the Zoning Officer be provided an opportunity for review.

Commission members were in agreement that the Zoning Officer should be offered the opportunity for a courtesy review when related to ordinance changes proposed or reviewed by the Planning Commission, and that such review not create an additional step in the review process.

Commission members discussed the draft proposed Zoning Ordinance update dated March 2, 2011 that includes text to coordinate the existing ordinance text with that proposed for a parking structure, and new parking regulations related to apartment-style multi-family dwellings. Following discussion, members agreed to accept the ordinance changes and modify the proposed parking regulations to reflect the following:

- Studio/efficiency dwelling units would require 1.5 off-street parking spaces per unit;
- One bedroom & two bedroom dwelling units would require 1.75 off-street parking spaces per unit;
- Three bedroom dwelling units would require 2 off-street parking spaces per unit;
- Four bedroom dwelling units would require 2.25 off-street parking spaces per unit.

Mr. Heinemann moved to approve the March 2, 2011 draft proposed Zoning Ordinance update with the revisions discussed and the motion was seconded by Mr. Young. The motion was approved unanimously (one member absent) to send the proposed draft to Borough Council for review and action.

Continued discussion of 2011 goals for NBPC.

Commission members discussed topics including sustainability, zoning revisions, and ordinance review and updating as goals for 2011 based on the Comprehensive Plan's Implementation Plan. Chairman Woldorf asked Mr. Salvatore if he'd be interested in investigating non-residential parking standards in the Borough to determine their adequacy based on regional comparisons and other sources, and Mr. Salvatore was willing to undertake this work.

New Business

Chairman Woldorf offered a brief history of the evolution of the proposed ordinance for sidewalks and bollards, which was followed by a discussion of the proposed document and the Commission's review comments dated February 26, 2011. Mr. Salvatore expressed some concern regarding the limited choice of sidewalk materials and finishes proposed in the ordinance. After discussing this and other topics in the ordinance and the Commission's comments, the members agreed to accept the review comments and added "spacing" and "curb setback" to recommended properties for bollard installation.

Mr. Young moved to approve the February 26, 2011 memorandum listing the Commission's review comments including the revisions discussed. The motion was seconded by Mr. Snyder, and approved unanimously (one member absent) to send the memorandum to Borough Council for review and action.

Commission members discussed the proposed stormwater management ordinance. Ms. Donofry, Mr. Salvatore and Chairman Woldorf remarked on the presentation by the Bucks

County Planning Commission at Borough Council's March 2, 2011 work session. Ms. Donofry provided some further comments regarding the Borough's intent to develop "resident-friendly" guidelines for homeowners applying various recommended stormwater management techniques to their properties. Mr. Salvatore moved to approve the February 27, 2011 memorandum listing the Commission's review comments. The motion was seconded by Mr. Heinemann and approved unanimously (one member absent) to send the memorandum to Borough Council for review and action.

Chairman Woldorf requested and received support from Commission members for a letter to be sent to Borough Council proposing that Borough ordinances be converted into an electronic format for ease in revision, reproduction and distribution, and for posting on the Borough web site.

Mr. Salvatore asked if a "reply all" method for member comments to requested document reviews between meetings could be considered. Chairman Woldorf replied that responses among members in this manner could be perceived as conducting Commission business outside of a scheduled meeting and, therefore, a possible violation of "sunshine laws." A couple potentially compliant options were discussed, but were considered to be impractical.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Snyder and was seconded by Mr. Heinemann. The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Woldorf at 9 P.M.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 4, 2011 at 7 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Donofry
Acting Recording Secretary