

Borough of Malvern

Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

January 29, 2015

Approved Minutes

A regular session of the Planning Commission was held on Thursday, January 15, 2015 at the Malvern Municipal Building. Members present included: Tom Burns, Dana Carosella, Amy Finkbiner, Dave Knies and Chris Mongeau.

Also present: Dave Burton, Mayor; and Neil Lovekin, Assistant Borough Manager,

Chairperson Knies called the meeting to order at 7:37 pm.

Minutes of January 15, 2015 approved as corrected.

130 Woodland Avenue

Dave Knies explained that the Planning Commission had three possible courses of action to recommend to Borough Council:

- Don't do anything. Hold onto the vacant lot in anticipation of its increasing in value.
- Sell the lot. It is zoned for a single family home.
- Use the lot for proposed community project.

Eric Beaugard, 153 Woodland Avenue

Mr. Beaugard explained that a questionnaire had been distributed to about 60 residents of Woodland Avenue, 1st Avenue,, 2nd Avenue, Church Street and Channing Avenue. Thirty three questionnaires were returned. Respondents could choose multiple uses for the property. Six respondents selected "single family home" as one of their choices. There were 84 responses for one of two plans. These plans might include: shade trees, a path, handicap accessibility, gardens, benches, tot lot, volley ball, sand lot or open field, solar powered charging station, Pennsylvania Certified plantings and trees. Some respondents offered to assist with funding for the project.

Dave Knies stated that Borough Council would probably want to hear the following explanations when the plan is presented to them by the community: cost avoidance, construction and management of the park, funding sources such as state grants, and income generating possibilities.

Eric Beaugard explained that some possibilities for income included renting garden plots and selling memorial paving stones.

Amy Finkbiner asked if the community group would support doing the same for existing park facilities. Chris Mongeau noted that the other parks need work. He questioned whether another park was needed. Mr. Mongeau explained the revenue stream that would be lost by not developing the property into a single home. This included taxes and a contribution to the sewer fund.

Mr. Beaugard explained that the community is concerned that the new construction would compromise the historic appearance of the neighborhood.

Public Comment

Danny Fruchter, 234 Channing Avenue

Mr. Fruchter stated that the proposed plan is “terrific.” He recommended that the committee ask the 33 respondents if they would be willing to pay dues to fund both the capital and ongoing expenses. He stressed the intergenerational use of the proposed park the community “seeing each other and mixing.” He stated that inflation is low and Borough income has increased “6 to 7 to 9% per year.” He continued, “We don’t see each other much.” He noted that Malvern does not need to increase its tax base. “If the town is run responsibly, we have enough money.” He wants the Planning Commission to recommend to Borough Council that they develop both the Woodland and Herzak properties – not “either/or.” The property should be sold only if the money is needed by the borough.

Dave Knies discussed the possible purchase of the Herzak property and the Council desire to offset that purchase with the income from 130 Woodland.

Ms. Stacey McShane, 139 Church Street, expressed concern over the additional parking that would be needed for the proposed park. She asked about insurance coverage, how money to pay for park expenses would be collected over time, and the opposition to the construction of a single family home on the lot. She noted that the questionnaire did not address purchase of the Herzak property. She questioned how not selling 130 Woodland would affect the borough as a whole.

Cassandra Doughty, Woodland Avenue

Ms. Doughty addressed the “due diligence” done by the committee and the results of the questionnaire. Responding to Mr. Knies’ question she noted that they had discussed the plan with Father Redcay, Pastor of St. Patrick Church. He was supportive and thought the children would enjoy using the proposed park. She described the use of native Pennsylvania flowers, the desire for “unscheduled open space,” and an urban garden. Ms. Dowdy does not subscribe to “fear based” decision making. She proposed either an HOA for the park or making it part of Malvern’s park system.

Tom Burns recommended that the needs, wants and desires of the borough as a whole be considered.

Mayor Burton

Mr. Burton stated that it would not be an HOA because this is public property. He discussed the need for “startup money.” Eric Beauregard suggested a “kick starter campaign.” Amy Finkbiner noted that when people make a contribution they demonstrate their commitment to the park.

Dave Knies described a possible voting process for the Planning Committee to make its decision about what to recommend to Borough Council, “three beans.” He again noted that there were three choices: do nothing, sale of 130 Woodland, and consideration of alternative community centered use.

Walkability Study

Tom Burns reported on its progress to date. He is still waiting for some survey data.

Reappointment Process

Dave Knies a misunderstanding that had occurred.

February 5, 2015 Meeting Agenda

The agenda will include 361 Old Lincoln. If possible 347 Old Lincoln will be reviewed at the same time. The February 19th meeting will include review of proposed changes to the ordinances and the official map.

Tom Burns

Mr. Burns submitted his resignation effective immediately. His resignation will avoid any possible conflict of interest in the future.

The meeting was adjourned at 920pm.

Recorded by
Marty Laney