

Borough of Malvern
Planning Commission Work Session Meeting Minutes
May 1, 2014

I. Call to Order/Attendance

A work session of the Planning Commission was held on Thursday, May 1, 2014 at the Malvern Municipal Building. Members present included: Tom Burns, Dana Carosella, Amy Finkbiner, Dave Knies, Chris Mongeau, Cecelia Oswald, and Carroll Siquett.

Also present: Dave Bramwell, Council President; Woody Van Sciver, Council Member; Dave Burton, Mayor; and Neil Lovekin, Assistant Borough Manager

Chairman Knies called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm.

II. Review/Approve Minutes of April 3rd and April 16th

A motion was made by Commission Member Burns and seconded by Vice-Chair Finkbiner to approve the minutes of April 16, 2014, as submitted. All Ayes.

A motion was made by Commission Member Siquett and seconded by Commission Member Oswald to approve the minutes of April 3, 2014, as submitted. All Ayes.

III. Discuss Ordinance Changes – Yield Plans and Lot Shapes

Chairman Knies postponed discussion to a later date to accommodate the TOD Discussion with Councilman Woody Van Sciver.

IV. Cell Tower – Sugartown Rd. / Willistown

Chairman Knies asked if all Planning Commission Members received, via email, the letter from BL Companies regarding the American Tower Corporation submission of a proposed tower along Sugartown Road. The letter was sent in error, and should have been sent to Willistown Township. There is no action for the Borough to take.

V. TOD Discussion / Q & A – Councilman Woody Van Sciver

Chairman Knies introduced Councilman Woody Van Sciver and laid out the format to the public as an informal discussion of the TOD as a whole for discussing next steps.

Councilman Van Sciver began by outlining the key values of a Transit-Oriented Development Study (TOD).

Potential Benefits:

- Reinforce the Borough's vitality
- Allow the Borough to proactively shape redevelopment, or limit redevelopment
- Provide incremental tax income to support infrastructure improvements
- Take trucks off the streets, if a new access is built as a result
- Improve pedestrian access to the north side of the tracks
- Add parking, if a garage is built as a result
- Increase land and home values
- Better utilize the valuable transportation asset of the train station

Councilman Van Sciver stated that he was surprised at the size of the market (800 units) found by the market study. He noted that Vantage Point Development Advisors is a top-rate firm for conducting such market studies.

Parking

Commission Member Mongeau stated he recalled that SEPTA does not want to engage with Amtrak and the Borough in providing more parking for the train station.

Councilman Van Sciver stated the Borough could build a parking lot without making any changes to the Zoning Ordinance.

Chairman Knies stated the Borough would have to enter into a municipal agreement with Amtrak and/or SEPTA in a parking lot were built.

Councilman Van Sciver stated that the SEPTA representative on the TOD commission was willing to discuss a municipal agreement, but there are no current SEPTA/municipal models to base an agreement on.

Chairman Knies stated the Borough has limited off-street parking and the Eastside Flats development may further reduce the availability of on-street parking since the developer is charging residents a monthly fee for a 2nd parking space within the garage. In addition, the Kimberton Whole Foods reduced its amount of parking spaces by 8.

Commission Member Oswald stated the Planning Commission's recommendation of the Eastside Flats' Conditional Use approval called for a parking study to be conducted once the development is 80% complete. This recommendation was not in the final Conditional Use approval

Traffic

Councilman Van Sciver stated train station commuters are not adding to the volume of rush-hour traffic, they are generally arriving to and departing from the train station 1 hour prior to rush-hour traffic.

Commission Member Mongeau expressed his concern of the truck traffic within the Borough and that the roadways are not conducive to accommodating the turn radii necessary.

Council President Bramwell questioned if traffic conditions should be made more restrictive (e.g. timing and weight restrictions) as a possible way to address the concerns of residents and businesses in the Borough.

Businesses Involvement

Councilman Van Sciver stated the Great Valley Corporate Center is projected to be built-out in 10 years, continuing to increase the amount of thru-traffic in the Borough.

Councilman Van Sciver stated the businesses in the Borough, in general, do not see the train station ridership as an asset to increasing their revenues, per a survey conducted as part of the TOD Study. He stated most businesses in the surrounding area reside on a minimum of $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre to over 50 acres. Malvern Borough's smaller lots means the Borough should focus its business growth through redevelopment.

Commission Member Mongeau shared his concerns of further growth of large industrial/commercial businesses. He stated the Borough has a hard time attracting retail businesses due to the lack of available parking to accommodate customers. In addition, with Business Route 30, Lancaster Avenue not being within Borough limits, there is limited exposure for the businesses in the Borough.

Council President Bramwell stated he is witnessing that the strip malls along Route 29 are being vacated as larger developments are built (i.e. Wegmans). Commuters, including Malvern residents, are causing an increase in thru-traffic when they visit the larger commercial developments (i.e. Wegmans).

Councilman Van Sciver stated the current businesses in the Borough are more commuter-friendly than encouraging foot traffic.

Danny Fruchter, 234 Channing Avenue, stated the Borough should encourage potential entrepreneurs to infill the existing 2-story buildings along King Street, rather than focus on large-scale commercial developments. Malvern should market itself as a walk-able town with a downtown. Examples of potential businesses to occupy the existing buildings could be comedy clubs, parlors, and bakeries.

Chairman Knies added that an Arts Center may be a viable business/community option.

Council President Bramwell stated an offsite campus of a college or university may be a practical alternative to a retail/commercial center to bring in more foot traffic for the existing local businesses.

Lynne Hockenbury, 7 Raffaella Drive, added to Bramwell's comment by suggesting the Borough work with Immaculata University's Arts Science Department in redeveloping the downtown area.

Sid Baglini, 203 Channing Avenue, commented that the Borough has to determine what makes it different from other municipalities to set itself apart. Sid suggested the Borough focus on its vibrant food/gardening initiative. For example, Alba restaurant buys its food products from farmers that practice sustainable farming methods.

Chairman Knies stated the Planning Commission and Borough Council should meet in June to brainstorm on developing a common vision for the Borough, including the downtown, King Street area.

VI. Old Business / New Business

No discussion occurred.

VII. Public Comment

Sid Baglini, 203 Channing Avenue, expressed her concern of the stormwater runoff occurring on Warren Avenue. She stated insurance companies have begun to sue municipalities that are not being responsible about stormwater management. Therefore, she is encouraging the Borough to levee stricter standards for stormwater management, to be proactive as oppose to reactive.

VIII. Adjournment

All business having been discussed, a motion was made by Commission Member Sinquett, seconded by Commission Member Mongeau, and unanimously carried by a vote of 7-0 to adjourn the meeting at 9:57 p.m.

Recorded by Neil Lovekin