

1. CALL TO ORDER

PLANNING COMMISSION PRESENT:

Carroll Sinquett, Chair
Zoe Warner, Ph.D., Vice-Chair
David Knies, Ph.D., Commissioner
Mark Niemiec, Commissioner
Geoff Rubino, Commissioner
Chris Mongeau, Commissioner

ABSENT:

Christopher Bashore, Borough Manager

Staff & Professionals Present:

Tiffany M. Loomis, Assistant Borough Manager & Zoning Officer
Kenneth Kynett, Esq., MPC Solicitor

Chair Carroll Sinquett announced the following rules for conducting this meeting:

1. The agenda will be starting from the public comment section and working backward from there to conduct member interviews last.
2. Questions will be given by the members of the Planning Commission.

The members of the Planning Commission agreed with the rules as specified. Chair Carroll Sinquett asked if anyone was recording the meeting besides Ms. Tiffany Loomis for the purpose of preparing minutes. No additional recordings were taken.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Carroll Sinquett asked for public comments at this time.

Mr. Danny Fruchter said he holds issue with public comment being held at the beginning of the meeting rather than keeping with past practices allowing the public to participate in all the agenda items. The second matter he addressed is that if the Chairman and/or Chairwomen does not allow public comment on one agenda item, this could occur for any matter that is placed on an agenda.

Mr. Fruchter emphasized that this is a dangerous practice of governmental authority. He referenced Resolution No.: 787 and recommended the MPC overrule the Chairman allowing the public to question the interviewee(s). The second recommendation is to elect to specifically limit public participation on nominee interviews only and allow public participation on all other agenda items as has been allowed previously.

Mr. Fruchter said he forwarded his specific questions on the application to an MPC member to be asked this evening. He holds issue with not being able to rejoin the conversation and interview process after the question is officially answered.

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Mr. Fruchter addressed the question regarding waivers that was asked of all interviewee(s) at the last meeting held. He said waivers are a request for relief from the Borough Ordinances and it is the MPC's duty to decide whether or not the relief is granted.

Mr. Fruchter addressed the Comprehensive Plan Committee regarding his studies to prepare for such. He expressed that if a Commissioner has a personal objection to a proposed project because it will negatively affect the public welfare of the community, the objection should not be considered invalid if can be tied to the Borough's Comprehensive Plan intentions.

Chairman Sinquett thanked Mr. Fruchter for his comments and asked if there was any comments from the rest of the public. There were none.

3. MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Mark Niemiec, seconded by Dr. Dave Knies, Ph.D. and carried by a vote 6-0, to approve the minutes from the September 17, 2020 meeting of the Planning Commission as presented.

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There were no items of Unfinished Business for discussion.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- Interview Conducted for Potential Planning Commission Members to Fill Two (2) Vacancies

Chairman Carroll Sinquett called on the Applicant Brian Hamilton and introduced him to the Planning Commission and Public.

Mr. Brian Hamilton introduced himself and gave an explanation as to why he should be selected to be part of the Malvern Borough Planning Commission. He has lived in the Borough for four (4) years and currently lives on Woodland Avenue with his family.

Mr. Brian Hamilton has served on the Randolph Woods Committee which was responsible for making recommendations as to the future development of Randolph Woods to Borough Council. He enjoyed the experience and produced a valuable report with a collaborative body to present to the Borough.

Mr. Brian Hamilton wants to play a deeper role in the Malvern Borough Community and sees this as an opportunity to do so. He believes he would be an asset due to his commitment to the Community.

Mr. Chris Mongeau asked if the Applicant will be able to attend all meetings scheduled which includes two (2) meetings a month. Mr. Brian Hamilton responded that he will be in attendance at all meetings and is in walking distance to the Borough Building.

Mr. Chris Mongeau asked the Applicant how familiar he is with reading architectural and engineering plans. Mr. Brian Hamilton responded that he does not have much experience with reading land plans or codes of the Borough. He is committed to learning how to do so and willing to take whatever training is necessary.

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Mr. Chris Mongeau asked the Applicant if he has traveled abroad in America and/or out of the States. More specifically, he asked about the Applicant's experience with small towns. Mr. Brian Hamilton responded that what attracts him to small towns is walkability. This is why Malvern resonates with him and his family. He further expressed that walkability is a key component for his day-to-day living, including small business, parks and playgrounds, open spaces, and being a part of the community.

Mr. Chris Mongeau asked the Applicant what has impressed him most in the countries and places he has visited. Mr. Brian Hamilton responded that he was impressed with London due to the walkability, consistent architecture and building style, street scape views, and amenities offered. He compared this experience of what resonates with himself and his family to the Malvern Borough Community.

Mr. Chris Mongeau asked the Applicant what part of the buildings of Malvern are good and what parts are not so good. Mr. Brian Hamilton responded he admires King Street due to the street scape. He always directs his family and friends to drive down King St. to take in the sites and get a sense of community. There is a wonderful variety of shops, restaurants, businesses, and culture.

When asked if there is anything he would change about the Borough, Mr. Brian Hamilton said he does not care for the vacant lot located at Bridge and King St. He referred to this area as an eye sore that needs to be addressed and an overall missed opportunity for something to be developed there.

Dr. Dave Knies, Ph.D. asked where the Applicant grew up and about his education and job experience. Mr. Brian Hamilton responded that he grew up in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, attended college at West Virginia University with a bachelor's degree in Science in Forest Research Management. He took a forest inventory job then began working for the Environmental Protection Agency in 2010 out of Philadelphia office. Mr. Hamilton has had a wide range of responsibilities at the EPA including NPDES, facilitation responsibilities, as well as being the Tribal Representative for various US States.

Mr. Mark Niemiec asked with the work experiences the Applicant has had how would these skills be brought to the Commission position. Mr. Brian Hamilton responded that he is a great coordinator and collaborator among a body of individuals. This has taught him a lot, and he has learned to rely on his colleagues to formulate an educated informed decision and recommendation.

Mr. Mark Niemiec asked if the Applicant would be able to objectively respond to an application before the Commission that meets the criteria of the ordinances, but doesn't fit one's personal desires for the Community. Mr. Hamilton responded that he will be able to respond objectively, which is a responsibility as a civil servant in his current job with the EPA. He further expressed that he will follow the law.

Mr. Mark Niemiec expressed that the Borough Engineer, Legal support, and Borough Management supports the MPC. The Applicant will have access to these individuals and information to be able to execute the position diligently.

Dr. Dave Knies, Ph.D. asked how Malvern compares to the Applicant's best vision of what he would like it to be. Mr. Brian Hamilton responded that it's pretty close to perfect in terms of his family's needs, including the walkability factor, parks, open space, the Community's energy, and its location. His son goes to the Malvern School for Daycare. His wife works at Vanguard, and he can walk to the train station to commute to Philadelphia for his job.

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Dr. Dave Knies, Ph.D. asked if there is anything the Applicant would like to change or add on King Street. Mr. Brian Hamilton responded that the sidewalks need to be expanded/improved and street lighting added. He referenced the Woodland Avenue sidewalk project expansion and suggested relieving congestion on narrower streets.

Dr. Dave Knies, Ph.D. informed the Applicant that the MPC completed two (2) walkability studies to address where sidewalks need to be added and improved through the Borough's Sidewalk Fund.

Mr. Mark Niemiec asked if the Applicant is willing to take a three (3) part course, through the County/State, to achieve a master planning accreditation taking approximately about a year to accomplish. Mr. Brian Hamilton responded that he would be excited to take part in the classes and complete them to serve effectively on the MPC.

Chairman Siquett asked if any other members of the Commission had questions.

Dr. Zoe Warner, Ph.D. asked if the Applicant is comfortable with asking questions of Applicants/Developers that come before the Commission to get a better understanding of the full picture. Mr. Brian Hamilton responded that he would be asking questions of this nature. He referenced the questions he asked during the Randolph Woods Committee process as an example to better understand the matter at hand in its entirety versus what is represented on paper.

Mr. Geoff Rubino asked if the Applicant finds it necessary to change any of the ordinances that he may be aware of. Mr. Brian Hamilton responded that parking may need to be addressed and referenced Anthony's Restaurant outdoor dining as an example. He suggested that this matter be looked into to provide more outdoor dining opportunities, as well as get a better understanding of what is required to accomplish something of this nature.

Chairman Siquett asked if any other members of the Commission had questions.

The MPC has decided to wait until their next scheduled meeting, November 5, 2020, to recommend to Borough Council for the two (2) vacancies that are open. Discussion and questions ensued among the members of the MPC regarding this matter. Appointments for the MPC vacancies are expected to occur by Borough Council in December 2020.

Mr. Danny Fruchter asked for the MPC to confirm that it is two (2) terms that are needed to be filled by December 2020. Chairman Siquett confirmed such and that he has been on the Commission for ten (10) years.

6. ADJOURNMENT

All business having been discussed, a motion was made by Mr. Chris Mongeau, seconded by Dr. Zoe Warner, Ph.D., and carried by a vote of 6-0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:30PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Tiffany M. Loomis
Assistant Borough Manager & Zoning Officer