

# BOROUGH OF CARLISLE PLANNING COMMISSION

## Meeting Minutes – March 25, 2021

**Members in Attendance:** C. Muniz, J. Werner, D. Maher, M. Dux, J. Vastine, R. Pinnell, and J. Kreiger

**Borough Officials in Attendance:** M. Skelly, L. Hefflefinger

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Muniz.

### **Items Reviewed by the Planning Commission:**

1. The Commission unanimously approved the Minutes of the November 23, 2020, with the correction that J. Vastine attended.
2. There were no public comments / questions.
3. **Land Development / Subdivision Applications**

- A. Borough Council is scheduled to hold a public hearing on May 13, 2021 for a SALDO amendment. (Draft ordinance and public notice is attached for PC's review.)

Skelly provided members with an overview of the draft ordinance of proposed changes to the SALDO. Most changes are process or procedural changes. (Refer to attached draft ordinance). A big change in the procedural requirements is that the applicant must hold a public outreach meeting. Skelly is not aware of any other municipalities that formally require this.

J. Vastine asked what prompted such requirement? Skelly said that recent plans submitted for consideration brought concerns from neighbors and management felt this is a good way to be transparent and keep the residents informed.

M. Dux asked if a member of the Planning Commission should attend these outreach meetings. This is something to consider. She also wondered if this would be a possible deterrent to developers.

D. Maher asked if there are any current requirements of notification to the surrounding neighbors of any subdivision/land development plans. Skelly answered no, currently, only the Zoning Hearing Board has such requirement.

J. Vastine is in favor of the outreach requirements, but expressed concern on how to get the information discussed at the public outreach meetings to Borough staff and residents. Possibly an impartial note taker.

J. Kreiger asked if the outreach requirement would be required for all plans. He felt that maybe it should only be required for the larger subdivision/land development

plans. He felt that it might be a large burden on a small plan, for instance a property owner who just wants to subdivide a lot.

The Planning Commission will review the draft SALDO ordinance, email comments to M. Skelly and the Commission and will discuss this at the April 22, 2021 regularly scheduled meeting.

#### 4. Comprehensive Plan or Zoning Items

A. Special projects – Chair Muniz, M. Skelly and S. Armstrong had earlier discussed opportunities for the Commission to assist in possible land-use /policy projects; these could include:

1. Update the C1 Zoning District – expanding/modernizing range of permitted/by-right uses (microbreweries, special events centers, signage, etc.,
2. Repurposing of C4/Industrial area along E. High Street;
3. Food truck/special events criteria – process.

Activities may include both regular Planning Commission updates and attendance at other community meetings. Members to discuss interest, priorities and timing. Chair Muniz asked the Commission for volunteers for this project.

B. FYI – ***On 4/1, the Zoning Hearing Board will consider application #2021-02.***

Dickinson College requests both a Special Exception and Variance from Section 255-62.E of the Zoning Ordinance in order to permit an apartment use on the street level floor of 155 W. High Street, which is located within the C1-CBD Zone. The Ordinance only permits apartments by Special Exception, and requires that they not be located on the street level floor adjacent to Hanover or High Streets. The applicant requests a new dwelling unit on the first/street level. There are currently two existing student dwelling units on the second floor, and one on the third floor.

R. Pinnell expressed concern with:

- Setting a precedent with the approval of this request.
- How do the lawyers for the applicant classify “street level”? Some determine that if a property is three-steps up from the sidewalk, it is not considered “street level”
- Having front steps and no ramp, does this meet ADA requirements?
- Due to this property, being located in the Historic District, would it be given a waiver to the ADA requirements?
- Parking concerns.
- Drawing lines as to where the university can expand.

Rebecca Yearick, Downtown Manager of Community & Economic Development at Cumberland County (CEDC), expressed concerns with:

- The loss of prime street level properties for businesses looking to come into Carlisle. She knows of many businesses looking to come to Carlisle, but real estate is very limited.
- The CEDC and Downtown Carlisle Association have worked very hard over the last several years to bring businesses into the downtown.
- Suggests turning first floor office spaces into retail, not residential.
- Once a first floor office/retail goes residential, it never goes back.
- First floor office/retail space is very valuable space.

D. Maher expressed concern with the University “gobbling up” valuable space in the downtown and asked if the Borough had a good relationship with the university. Skelly said yes, the Borough has a good relationship with the College.

C. Muniz said he was aware of Dickinson making payment in lieu of property taxes, but was not certain. He also asked about how many properties the college owns and which properties they pay taxes on. Skelly said he would confirm with S. Armstrong / R. Juday whether College provides payment in lieu for exempt properties. The subject property is not exempt. R. Pinnell was also interested to know how much property Dickinson owns in the Borough, and if he could see a map of Carlisle that indicates properties owned by Dickinson College. M. Skelly said he could provide that information.

**5. Other PC or Related Business/Climate Action Plan:**

- A. Council approved re-appointment of Julie Vastine and Robert Pinnell on March 11, 2021. Both terms expire on February 28, 2025. The Commission also welcomed new member Jacob Kreiger.

**6. Adjournment: 7:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Skelly  
Planning/Zoning/Codes Manager