

**City of Lewisburg
Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes ~ July 9, 2020
942 Washington Street West, Lewisburg , WV**

PRESENT: Commission Chair Mark Etten; Commission members Tia Bouman, Ghee Gossard, Helen Harless, John Little, Dan Stevenson, Interim City Manager Misty Hill; Planning & Zoning Officer Marsha Cunningham, Recording Officer Peggy Mackenzie

ABSENT: Commission members Roger Vannoy, Jeff Vickers

VISITORS: Christy de Muth

CALL TO ORDER: The online Zoom meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Commission Chair Mark Etten, with no public comments offered.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of *June 4, 2020* were approved as presented in a motion by Commission member Ghee Gossard and seconded by Commission member Dan Stevenson. With six (6) in favor, no opposition and three (3) absent (John Little arrived later in the meeting), the motion carried.

Discuss Planned Unit Development and review revised Planned Unit Development

Christy de Muth referenced two city guidelines (Danville and Barberville), previously presented, and revised, since the last meeting. In looking for language guidelines, she said Danville had useful PUDs that applied to Lewisburg's Rte. 219 North commercial corridor. Although, she said, the section south of the interstate is already developed, by applying a floating PUD to roadside properties both north and south of the interstate, the city could retain flexibility and protections for how the area will continue to grow and develop.

Etten stated the discussion is timely because "we might see a site plan in the future" of a development north of the interstate requesting to rezone from C to RO. There was also speculation about two other locations on Rte. 219, but which have no firm applicants as yet.

de Muth clarified how the Danville example might apply to Lewisburg, stating, "A floating PUD is basically about rezoning." When someone applies to rezone for a development project, the PUD's design standards spell out the minimums and maximums, allowing a developer flexibility in laying out the commercial/residential density with appropriate open space.

Etten inquired about the vagueness of the language, asking, "How do the courts look at this?" de Muth said she would check with Jesse, the WVU Law lawyer on staff.

de Muth asked the Commission to review Section 30X of the PUD Planned Unit Development and to email their opinions to her for revisions. Etten affirmed that any final decision by the Commission would be made at a public meeting.

Review and discuss the possibility of a Scenic Corridor Overlay

“Do we want to consider the whole corridor with some area already developed?” de Muth asked. The consensus was to agree to use the “Guidelines for Lewisburg’s Route 219 North Entrance Corridor,” as provided by the Lewisburg Foundation, with the inclusion of some additional, specific guidelines. Commission member Helen Harless said she served on the Lewisburg Foundation board when the City lost a suit with GoMart, because at the time, the language in City’s comp plan was very general. Commissioner Ghee Gossard described the need for new guidelines in terms of 10, 50 and 100 year future time frames and that an overlay might be useful for all of Lewisburg’s entrance corridors, particularly the

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entry at Rte. 60 West. Commissioners Tia Bouman and John Little agreed, citing how effective similar plans are that other towns have set in place. de Muth said the Foundation’s guide would be the base with other guidelines added from other sources, and that WVU students would help “put those guidelines into ‘language’.”

Concerns were raised by Little about possible challenges made by the public when presenting the changes at the City Council level. Etten said the changes the Commission is proposing will not affect anything in the immediate time frame, and so would not present a threat or immediate cost to business property owners. But that later on, as development continues, changes will be applied. In this way a balance is achieved of visual appeal and effective advertising signage.

Review and discuss Sign Regulations

de Muth declined to present a discussion on sign regulations, stating it would be on the next meeting agenda and will include all definitions of the signs, including when permits are and are not required; where prohibited; setbacks, height limits, wall and murals signs, nonconforming signs; maintenance and removal; illegal signs; and temporary signage. de Muth said her co-worker, Whitney, has added language to the chart that indicates what signage is OK in which zones, which the Commissioners need to review and complete. She said she was available by phone to hear any questions they may have.

Review Urban Agriculture

Beekeeping, community gardens, composting and the keeping of fowl within city limits were reviewed, with Etten reporting that the keeping of fowl had already been introduced to City Council by Council member Sarah Elkins three months ago, receiving some push-back from council members and no motion yet to approve. New regulations by the Planning Commission might help with the consideration to keep fowl in City limits, but as Etten said, “If I wanted chickens, I’d live rurally.” He also posed the question, “How does the City enforce the requirements?”

Stevenson said composting garden wastes encourages the reduced use of herbicides and that he would support community gardens/composting as well. Little said he was in favor of both urban composting and keeping of fowl, with conditions. Food scraps could complicate composting, Etten said. Bouman said the guidelines need to be revisited.

The next Planning Commission meeting will be held on *August 6, 2020, at 5:30 p.m.* with a deadline of July 17, 2020. No comments were heard from the Commission members or the Planning & Zoning Officer Marsha Cunningham.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 p.m. in a motion by Commission member Bouman and seconded by Commission member Little.

Respectfully submitted, Peggy Mackenzie, Recording Officer