

City of Lewisburg
Planning Commission Regular Session
Meeting Minutes — November 2, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
942 Washington Street West, Lewisburg, WV
Paul L. Cooley Council Chambers

PRESENT: Chairperson John Little, Commissioners (City Manager) Misty Hill (via ZOOM), Helen Harless, Dan Stevenson, Matt Campbell and Davis Lewis; Planning and Zoning Officer Marsha Cunningham; Recording Officer Tina Alvey.

ABSENT: Commissioners Margaret Gossard, Tia Bouman and Valerie Pritt.

VISITORS: Mayor Beverly White, Tag Galyean, Paula Janiga, Kristen McClung, Lance Syner, Mike Tremann.

CALL TO ORDER: The session was called to order by Chairperson John Little at 7:00 p.m.

Public hearing: The Lewisburg Foundation
Site plan review for West Parking Lot at Church and Foster streets

Speaking on behalf of the applicant, Terradon’s Kristen McClung explained the proposal for The Lewisburg Foundation to redevelop approximately six-tenths of an acre, in conjunction with Kahysne, LLC, as a parking lot on the site previously occupied by the True Value store in downtown Lewisburg. The former hardware store building will remain on the site, leaving roughly half-an-acre as the “project area” for the parking lot.

McClung noted that two of 14 on-street parking spaces bordering the new West Parking Lot will be lost in the redevelopment process, but that 29 parking spaces will be created on the former True Value property where only 13 formerly existed. Of those 29 spaces, 13 will be available for the general public, with the balance reserved. The Foundation will also create new green spaces, and situate benches and street lights on the property.

Another .22 of an acre — dubbed as the Seneca Mental Health property in supporting documents — will be redeveloped in the future as a separate project, McClung said. Architect Tag Galyean, president of The Foundation, said a brick retaining wall will be constructed on the line between the Seneca Mental Health Project and the West Parking Lot. Landscaping will be installed next to the wall.

Speaking via ZOOM, City Manager and Planning Commissioner Misty Hill said developers will remove an existing light pole from the sidewalk and will place other lights in the lot on light posts that match existing light posts in the downtown area. All will comply with federal and state ADA regulations, she said, adding that the city’s Historic Landmarks Commission will have to approve the developers’ plan for demolition and rebuilding of a staircase on the True Value building in order for that portion of the project to proceed.

Following a public hearing which Little gavelled into being and closed less than a minute later in

the absence of any public comment, Commissioner Matt Campbell made a motion to forward the site plan for the West Parking Lot on to City Council with a positive recommendation for adoption. Commissioner Davis Lewis seconded the motion, which was passed on a 6-0 vote, with Commissioners Margaret Gossard, Tia Bouman and Valerie Pritt absent.

Planning and Zoning Officer Marsha Cunningham said City Council is expected to take up the site plan at its November 14 regular meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes from the July 6, 2023, regular session were approved on a 5-0 vote, with Hill not voting and Gossard, Bouman and Pritt absent, upon motion by Campbell, seconded by Commissioner Helen Harless. Minutes from the August 3, 2023, working session were approved on a 6-0 vote, with Gossard, Bouman and Pritt absent, upon motion by Commissioner Dan Stevenson, seconded by Davis. Minutes from the September 13, 2023, working session were approved on a 6-0 vote, with Gossard, Bouman and Pritt absent, upon a motion by Harless, seconded by Stevenson. Minutes from the October 5, 2023, working session were approved on a 5-0 vote, with Hill not voting and Gossard, Bouman and Pritt absent, upon motion by Stevenson, seconded by Campbell.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS: Harless asked if notification of neighboring property owners was required for site plan approval and received a response in the negative. She further questioned the potential impact of the lights expected to be installed in the parking lot on nearby apartments that are now in the planning stage. Hill said it will be the responsibility of the renters to cover their windows with draperies and/or shades if the parking lot lights are bothersome.

Hill also noted that the city will not have any responsibility for maintaining the privately-owned parking lot, nor will it have control over access to the lot. The Lewisburg Foundation will be responsible for the electricity bill for the lot's lights and for watering the plants in the lot. She said developers hope to create 16 to 18 additional parking spaces in the future redevelopment of the Seneca Mental Health property, but some of those spaces will likely be reserved for the use of owners of the townhomes that are expected to be built on that same property. She emphasized that the citizens — not the city — will gain parking from these projects; these are private parking lots, not public property.

In addition, Hill said she plans to meet with City Attorney Tom White to discuss setting up training sessions for those who serve on the city's boards and commissions. The sessions will be designed to inform the members of the "proper etiquette" of conducting public meetings. She said she wants every commissioner and board member to attend one of the training sessions.

Referring back to minutes from a previous Planning Commission meeting in which organizers threw the future of the annual Taste of Our Towns (TOOT) festival into doubt, Stevenson asked if this year's festival was hampered by a dearth of vendors, as those organizers had feared. Campbell reported that there were eight more vendors this year than expected.

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ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m., upon motion by Stevenson, seconded by Lewis, on a 6-0 vote, with Gossard, Bouman and Pritt absent.

Respectfully submitted,
Tina Alvey
Recording Officer