



JENKINTOWN BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday, July 21st, 2020

6:30pm-8:30pm

700 Summit Avenue, Jenkintown Pennsylvania

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Attendance

Members Present: Gabriel Lerman – Chairperson, Phil Zimmerman – Secretary, Jon McCandlish, Alison Danilak, Glen Morris

Members Absent: Lucinda Bartley, Joe Hentz

Others Present: George Locke – Borough Manager, Marley Bice – Montgomery County Planner, Deborra Sines-Pancoe – Borough Council President

Reports

Planning Commission meeting minutes from July were approved.

New Business

435 Johnson Street: Mural

The Planning Commission (PC) reviewed a conditional use application for mural proposed to be located at 435 Johnson Street. The property owners approached a local artist after being inspired by work first presented at the community's George Floyd memorial. Ms. Sines-Pancoe summarized the request and stated that it was the design and visible verbiage that required the proposal to be considered for conditional use review.

Ms. Danilak asked that the wording be clarified as well as the the extents of the language to be include. She stated that all verbiage listed on the application, including the word and apparent mural title "Solidarity", be included in the final mural.

Ms. Danilak suggested that along with the mural, a way be considered to give some history of the memorial and what the mural is about. Mr. Morris inquired about the inclusion of a descriptive plaque to accompany the mural. Ms. Sines-Pancoe agreed with the suggestion and further stated that any plaque should list the artist's name and title of work.

Ms. Sines-Pancoe confirmed that the proposal will likely require a variance, due to mural's use of vibrant colors and its inclusion of visible text, which are not permitted by current zoning code. Mr. Morris stated that because of this, the project should go through the typical Borough review process with adjacent residents having the opportunity to weigh in as well.

Ms. Danilk motioned for PC recommendation of the project to Borough Council (BC), with the condition that some descriptive plaque or accompanying project description be considered as part of the final mural. The motioned was

seconded and approved with all PC members in favor. Mr. Lerman is to draft a PC recommendation/support letter to be forwarded to BC.

Zoning Ordinance Language Revisions: Fences

Mr. Lerman shared with the PC Ms. Bartley's recommendations and draft revised ordinance language as she was not in attendance. As discussed in previous PC meetings, the language revisions were revised to clarify the use of certain types of "metal mesh" fencing as a secondary fencing material for the purpose of preventing animals from passing under a fence.

Mr. Morris recommended additional language revisions that clarified the exclusion of chain link fencing "expressly manufactured for the use of fencing". Subsequent to this recommendation, the PC discussed whether or not to include this language after Mr. McCandlish raised objection.

Ms. Danilak raised concern about the clarity of descriptive language within the proposed text, specifically the use of terms "primary structure", "primary material" and "substantial structure". After some PC discussion, she recommended that the wording "primary material" be used in the code language in lieu of the phrase "substantial structure".

The PC discussed the specific restriction of chain link fencing and discussed wire mesh vs welded wire mesh.

Mr. Zimmerman suggested that the language be specific and tailored to Borough requests for these types of fences made in the past. He further recommended that Mr. Locke review the language in light of requests to the Borough that he has reviewed.

Ms. Bice summarized examples of similar zoning ordinance language currently being utilized by neighboring communities:

Norristown – fences shall be erected with finished face facing property neighbors.

Lower Marion – combines restrictions of both fences and perimeter walls and includes a list of acceptable materials, "the following fencing materials are permitted but not limited to..."

After further PC discussion of additional language that might be beneficial to include within the revised section, Mr. Locke stated that much of language being discussed likely already exists within other sections of the Borough zoning code. He suggested keeping the proposed language specific to the inclusion of metal wire mesh for the purposes stated in Ms. Bartley's proposed revisions.

Mr. Morris asked that permitted metal fencing be required to be galvanized and painted, vinyl-clad or powder coated – with a finish that blends into adjacent landscaping. Mr. McCandlish asked that architectural plastic be omitted from the list of sample fencing materials and recommended the inclusion of wood/plastic composites instead. He pointed out the sustainable advantages that composite materials have over plastics and reiterated alignment with the Boroughs overall goals for sustainability.

With minor adjustments to Ms. Bartley's original draft language, Mr. Lerman motioned for PC recommendation of revised zoning language to be shared with BC.

SALDO Review Update

Ms. Danilak and Ms. Bice summarized the background to the discussion, reviewing the some of the following items:

- History of SALDO in Borough
- Review of SALDO purposes: enable coordinated growth, protect health and safety, promote fair and expedition of development review process, etc.

- Review of differences between SALDO and Borough Zoning Ordinance
 - SALDO is big picture standards for development
 - Design standards, engineering/construction standards
 - Sustainability requirements
- Sustainability Audit – review of preliminary recommendations
- Review of Phased Approach: break out of proposed amendments into two phases with a focus on addressing key amendments in Phase 1 and addressing general SALDO cleanup and long-term goals in Phase 2.
- Reviewed Phase 1 and Phase 2 amendment recommendations

Ms. Danilak reiterated that this effort must consider multiple points of view:

- Should include multiple sources for revisions: alignment 2035 comp plan recommendations
- Should include multiple voices of input: Mr. Locke, Borough solicitors, etc.

Ms. Bice suggested that the Borough review the Montgomery county outline or sample SALDO as a framework for possible revisions. Ms. Danilak inquired if it would be possible to tailor the MontCo outline to the needs of the Borough.

Mr. Lerman expressed his agreement with the proposed phased approach to SALDO revisions. Ms. Danilak inquired whether revisions would be addressed individually or packaged into bulk revisions for each phase. Ms. Bice recommended the packaged approach but also suggested utilizing interim steps to break revisions into more manageable portions to be addressed by the PC.

Ms. Danilak inquired about a timeline for completion of Phase 1 items. Ms. Bice stated that it would depend on level of detail dedicated to each item but surmised that it would likely take at least a year. Ms. Danilak suggesting imposing internal PC milestones or deadlines to facilitate this process.

Mr. Zimmerman suggested a process of reviewing existing language, sample language from precedent sources and proposed language for each of the primary Phase 1 topics, sequentially throughout multiple PC meetings. Ms. Danilak agreed that this would be an ideal process but expressed concern that it would take too long.

Mr. Zimmerman inquired about who would be writing proposed language revisions typically? Ms. Bice confirmed that county planners would propose revised language based on conversations had in PC meetings.

Mr. Lerman inquired about how Borough experience or practical experience by various Borough members (solicitor, manager, BC, etc.) could be applied to the SALDO rewrite. Ms. Bice recommended an audit of recent developments within the Borough to see what worked, what didn't and how these lessons could inform SALDO revisions. Mr. Morris and Mr. Locke agreed that it would be extremely valuable to invite the continued input and review of Ms. Bice, Borough solicitor, Borough engineer, etc., to help identify areas where current SALDO restrictions fall short.

The PC briefly discussed how they should begin this effort and agreed that it made sense to first address revisions to the SALDO purpose statement, to formalize a general framework for the larger process.

Ongoing Business

Northern Gateway and TOD Project Coordination

Ms. Bice shared a memo that her team created to summarize the county/Borough's history and progress regarding the Jenkintown Northern Gateway project.

- Outlined previous design work and summarized all work done previously; plan recommendations, walk MontCo, 2035 comp plan, etc.
- Reviewed options for gateway and TOD concept options

- Improve scale of street, sidewalks and walkability
- Redevelopment of parking and lot – ground level retail, rentals above
- Improved sidewalk and streetscape
- Existing Strawbridges building – re-developed as office space
 - Windowless space could be fitness, conference space
- Parking is accommodated to rear of all streetfront development
- Building height options – lower building heights with building stepping down – preserves viewshed to existing building
 - Buildings that get taller as they move down the hill
- Looking at how zoning could be adjusted to achieve this TOD at this location

Mr. McCandlish suggested creating a larger overlay plan that would more clearly demonstrate existing and surrounding conditions as well as possible pathways and connectivity to the borough. He reiterated that this would help to make the Borough's intentions/priorities for TOD projects for this location clear to interested parties. Mr. McCandlish further stated that this approach would create a framework – or sandbox of tools - within which interested parties could better understand the intentions/desires for transit-oriented development of the Borough.

Pertaining to the county's presentation or TOD overlay specifically, Mr. McCandlish suggested that simplifying the visual representation of proposed buildings, making them more general massings or simple floorplates. The PC also discussed ways to better graphically demonstrate the context of existing structures on or adjacent to the site.

Mr. McCandlish inquired as to how and when the PC should we begin to discuss the creation of incentives for TOD development within the Borough.

Ms. Sines-Pancoe asked that the PC consider the concerns of adjacent residential properties when addressing revisions to the TOD overlay or any potential proposals for the site. Ms. Bice stated that her team has been looking at this site together with community planners from Abington to take neighboring buffers into account. Ms. Sines-Pancoe also brought up past Borough concerns with additional children in the school district and stormwater requirements and asked that they also be considered.

The PC agreed that next steps should include updates to the overlay plan based on comments from the July meeting.

Historic / Significant Building Project Update

Ms. Bice mentioned a delay in County efforts to make the electronic survey data accessible through the web, but stated that the information should be live on the CRJS platform before the August meeting.

Cedar Street Moretti Park Update

Mr. Locke updated the PC stating that the project will be coming before BC in the next meeting for approval to advertise for construction bidding. He also confirmed the possibility that all funding will be by the state with very little or no funding coming from the Borough (due to newly found funding options).

Mr. Morris inquired about the timeline and duration of the project. Mr. Locke reiterated that construction was still on track to be completed throughout the Fall, with planting likely to take place in spring. He confirmed that the project is on schedule for completion by next summer.

Mr. Locke also briefly discussed a second phase for the project which includes a restroom, although this portion is pending additional funding.