

JENKINTOWN BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION

Tuesday August 20, 2024 - 6:30 p.m.

Virtual ZOOM Meeting

APPROVED Minutes

Location: Virtual via Zoom and streamed on Facebook

Commissioners Attending: Jon McCandlish, Peter Van Do, Shari Neidich, Phil Zimmerman, Lucinda Bartley

Not Present: Eric Horowitz

Also present: George Locke (Jenkintown Borough Manager and Zoning Officer), Marley Bice (MCPC)

Others in attendance: Steve Spindler, Joanne Bruno, Alex Khalil, J. Lustig and others, also streamed on Facebook.

The following minutes may use individuals' initials as abbreviations throughout.

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. Jon McCandlish chairing JM (PZ)

Public Comment

The chair encouraged public comments, while also providing options for commenting via Zoom or Facebook. None were made.

Reports/Actions

- P.C. Meeting Minutes Approval – P.C. Secretary, Eric Horowitz

Next, the commission moved to approve minutes from the previous two months, which were reviewed and approved unanimously. It was noted that Eric could not attend and that notes would be sent to him.

New Business/ Business for Discussion

- 400 York Road - Conditional Use, Apartment Building (6 Apartments)

The main item was a conditional use application for 400 York Road, presented by representatives for Midgard Properties LP broadcasting live from Borough Hall. REFER TO APPENDIX "A". The proposal involved converting the third floor into six apartments, with a mix of one- and two-bedroom units, while the existing first floor would remain a commercial space with a dance studio in the basement and the occupied second floor

would remain as five apartment units. The applicant highlighted parking arrangements, mentioning ten spots available on West Avenue and potential additional parking options.

During the discussion, questions arose regarding the building's layout, the need for conditional use approval, and whether any variances were required. The applicant confirmed that the project complies with local regulations and does not require zoning variances. Clarifications were sought about the interior design and historic preservation considerations, including window replacements and aesthetic continuity with the building's character. The applicant assured the commission that the renovations would maintain the building's historical integrity while providing modern amenities.

During the discussion, it was noted that some windows in the building have been replaced recently while others seem original. There was a consensus on the importance of maintaining the historic character of the windows during renovations. The applicant confirmed that operable windows will be installed, aiming to replicate the original style. Questions were raised about modifications to the building's egress, with assurances that residents will access their apartments through a designated lobby, and new egress stairs will be added.

The applicant clarified that the ground floor will feature a daycare that will include a private playground, designed for use by the daycare initially, with potential future public access. The playground will be situated at the building's front corner, surrounded by a black metal fence and landscaping to enhance safety and visual appeal.

There were also discussions about landscaping improvements, particularly around the parking lot and the area between the sidewalk and road, to create a softer, more inviting transition between residential and commercial spaces. The idea of adding greenery and possibly a pocket park to serve the community was revisited, reflecting ongoing efforts to integrate the building more harmoniously into its environment.

The discussion focused on the second-floor apartments and their compliance with fire safety codes and accessibility for individuals with disabilities, both of which have been addressed. There was an emphasis on ensuring that any mechanical equipment placed on the roof remains hidden, as the building holds significant historical value. The group expressed strong support for preserving the building's grandeur through thoughtful renovations.

Questions arose regarding the clock's restoration, with updates on past proposals and potential grants for funding its repair. The original mechanics are still intact, and the community's interest in its restoration was noted, with offers of support for grant applications.

Additionally, the conversation touched on the building's facade, which had previously undergone cleaning and repairs, with future plans to enhance its appearance further. Suggestions were made for the lighting design, advocating for more understated white lights rather than in colors.

The conversation concluded with participants voicing their support for these enhancements to the landscape and overall design.

The PC voted unanimously in favor of adding six new residential units to the building, and in support of its conditional use application.

Other Business for Discussion

Other community concerns were addressed, such as flooding around the parking lot of 93-99 Old York Road and 501 Washington Lane. When there are heavy rains the temporary flood barriers fail and clog stormwater grates. The borough has had to get involved in cleaning up. Construction in the area should be done soon. There was also discussion on potential tree trimming to improve visibility at the proposed nearby crosswalk between Cedar and Walnut and enhancements to pedestrian safety in the area, with positive feedback on the progress being made. Walnut will have a bump out at Washington Lane with a raised crosswalk there and handicapped ramps on both sides of Walnut at that corner.

Ongoing Business

- Greenwood Avenue (Former Cedar Street/Glanzmann) Properties – Borough Parking Lot Rentals, Future Land Use Discussion

During the meeting, updates were discussed on several ongoing business items. There was no new information about the Greenwood Avenue garage meeting, which has yet to be scheduled.

- Short term rentals

Regarding short-term rentals, Joanne mentioned that the drafts have been sent to the solicitor for review, and they expect to finalize a vote by September.

- Bike and Pedestrian Safety (Sub-Committee update)

There were no significant updates on bike and pedestrian safety, and discussions about the zoning review highlighted the need for a review of outdated zoning regulations.

- Approved Plant List, Sign Ordinance

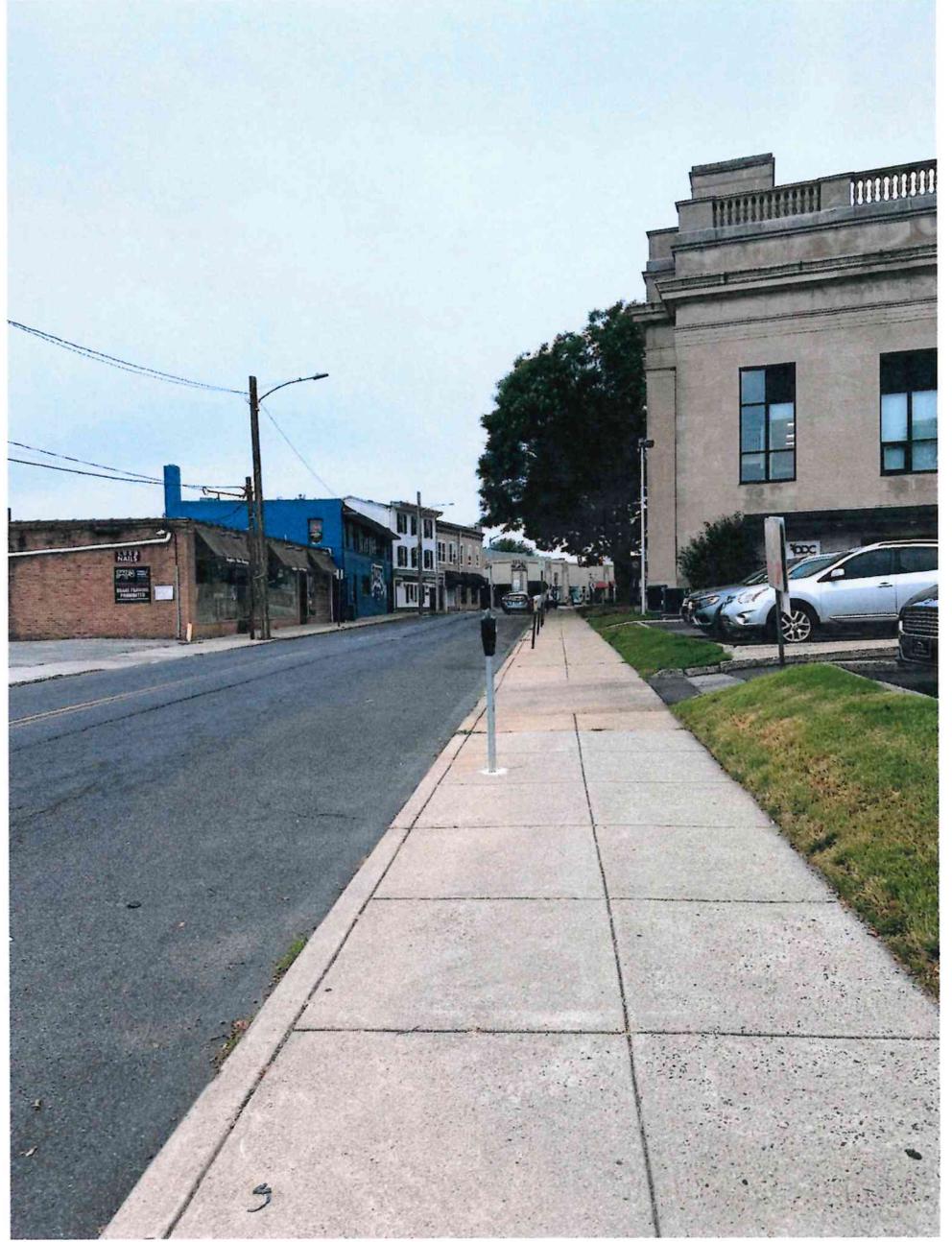
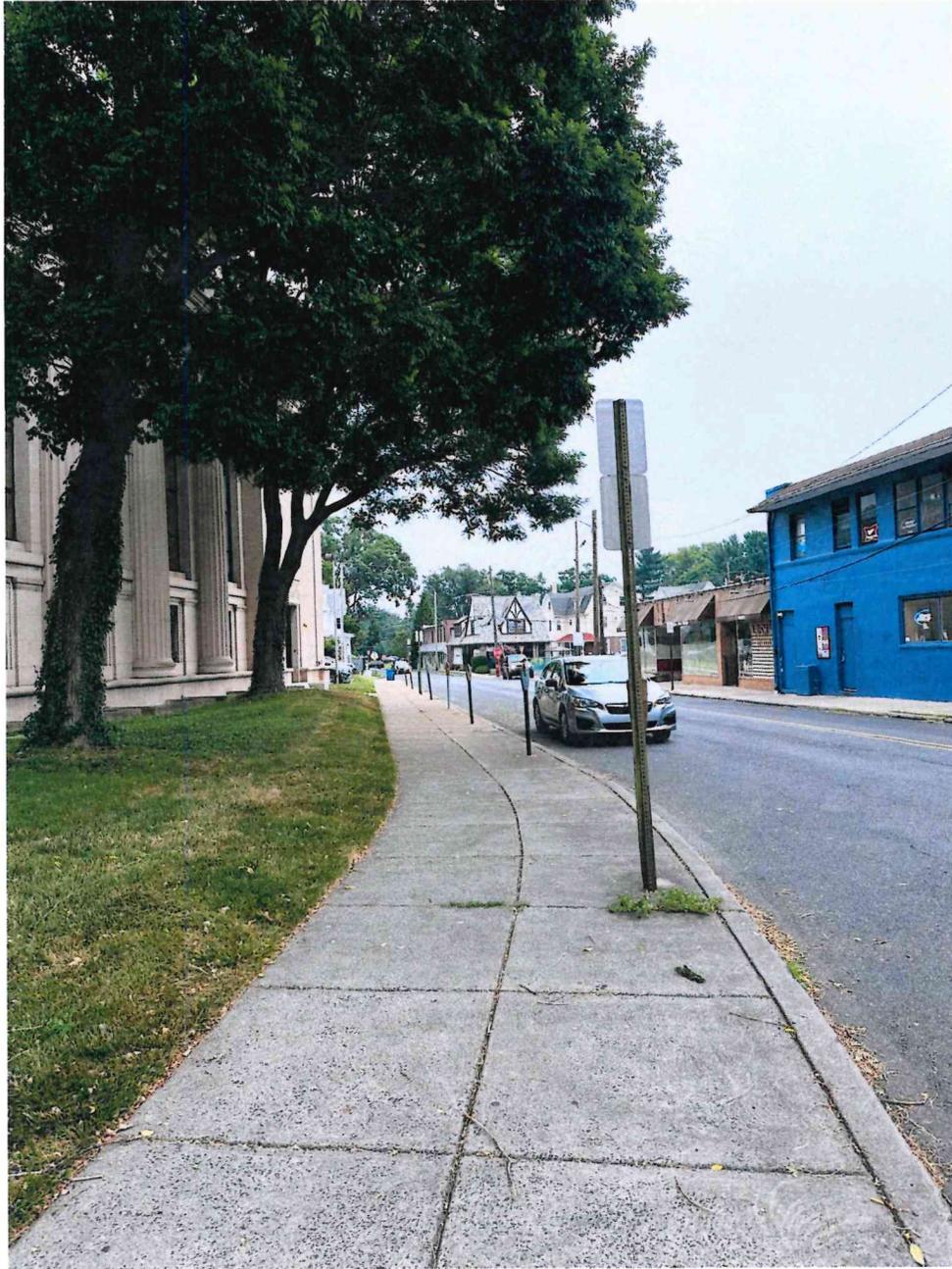
Marley inquired about the status of the approved plant list, which is still with the Shade Tree Commission for feedback. Shari raised concerns about tree planting and its impact on sewer lines, suggesting that guidelines should be provided to homeowners. The discussion also touched on the inclusion of vines in the plant list, with notes on their invasive nature.

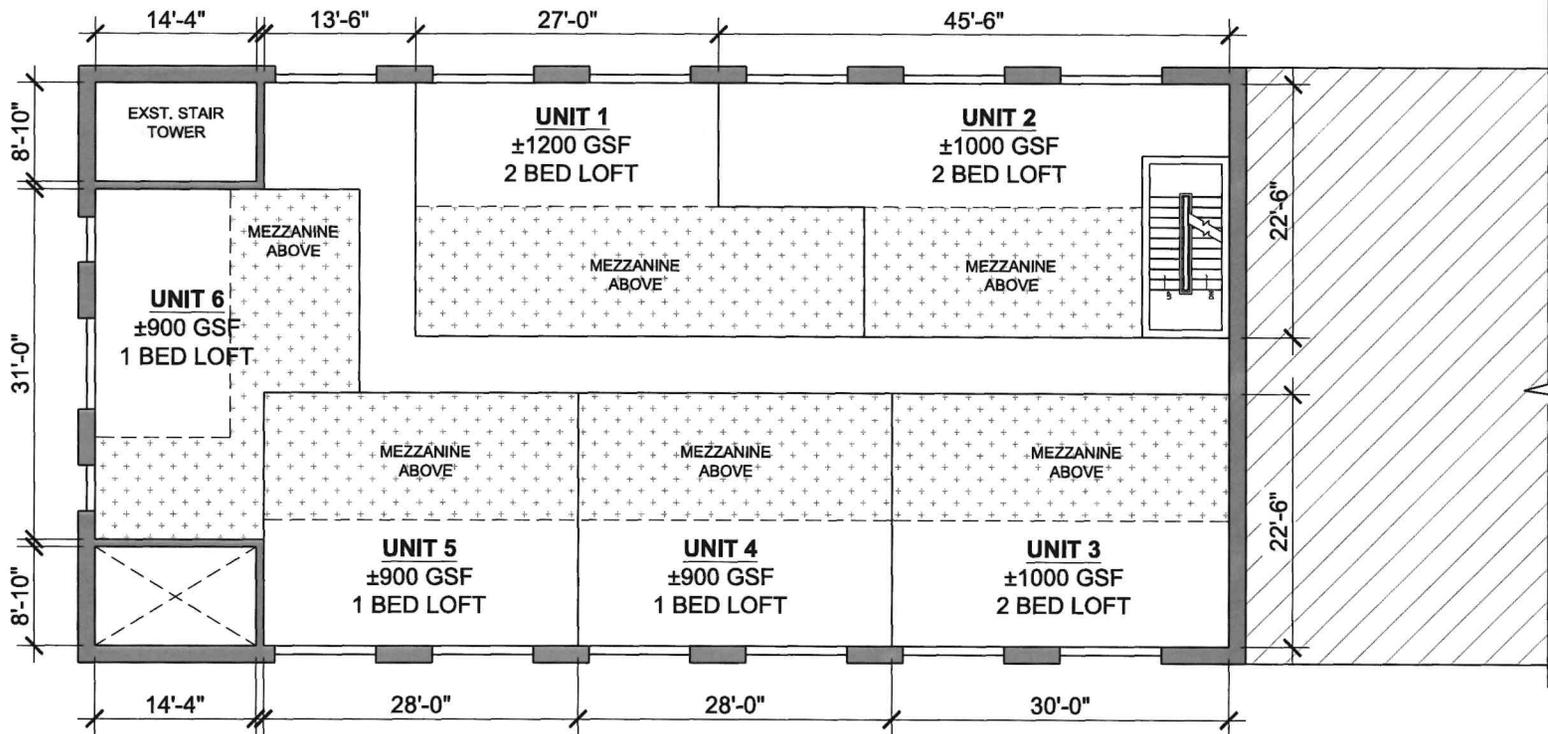
- Zoning Review Update (Various House Keeping / Language Corrections) Tabled
- 181-141 Off-Premises Signs Ordinance (Tabled – ongoing discussion)

Before adjourning, Jon said he would draft a letter regarding 400 York, which will be circulated to the PC for review. The meeting concluded with no further business. JM (PZ)

APPENDIX "A"

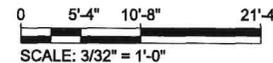






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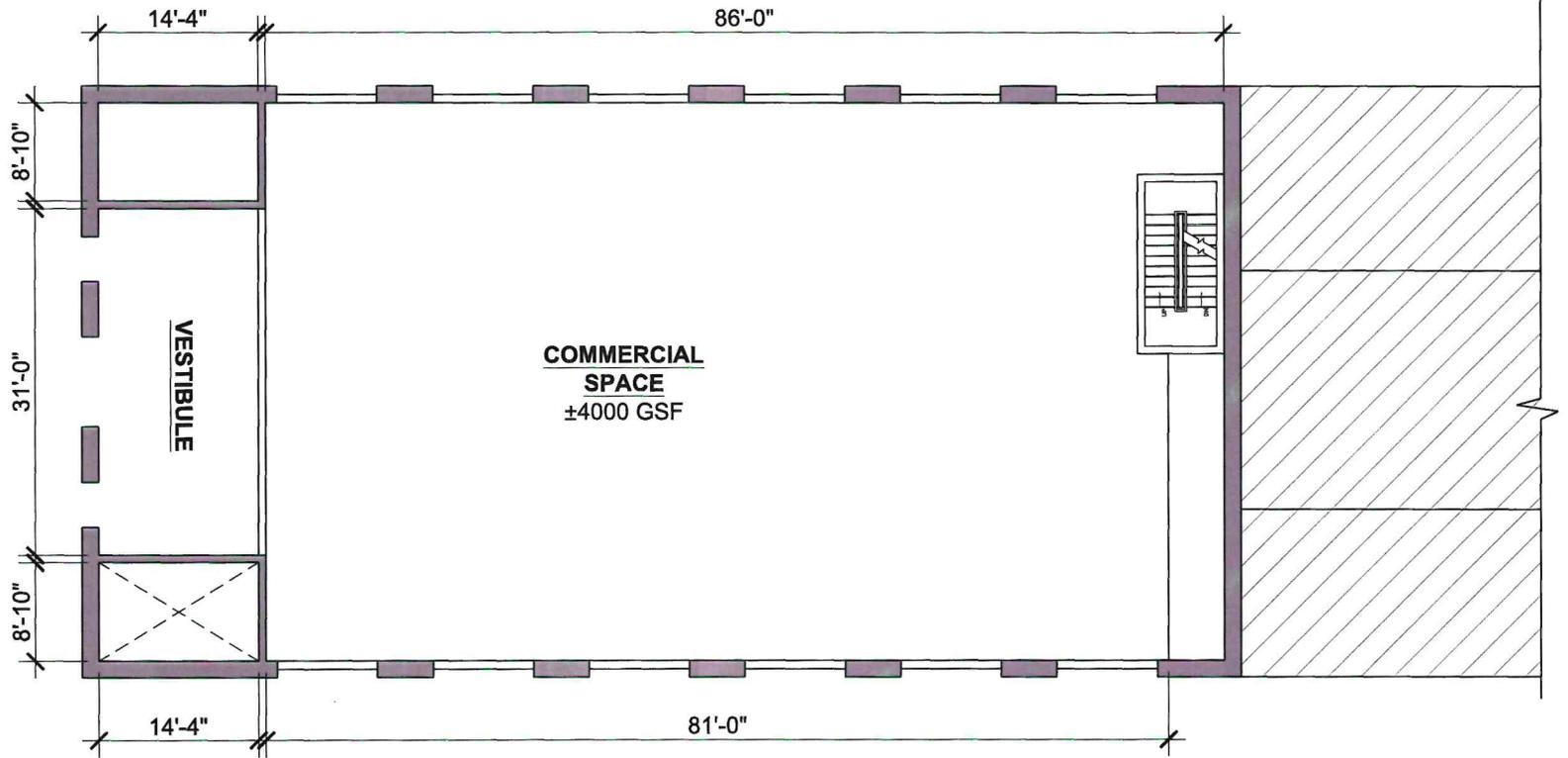
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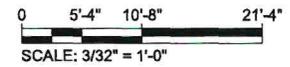
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