

LITITZ BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of Meeting Held March 7, 2023

The March 7, 2023 meeting of the Lititz Borough Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Smith with members Meyer, Stauffer, Weibel, and Yearick (Alternate) present. Piazza and Stoudt were excused. Attending in person were Gene Miller, Jason Burkholder, Devin Learn, Mark Lovette, Brian Gallagher, Zach Miller, Chris Strayer, Tom Eppinger, Duane Ober of WESC, and Stephen Lee of Lititz Borough Council. Attending via Zoom were Jennifer Rosenberg, Mary Gattis, Tannia Carpenter, Tom, Christine Sensenich and David Brubaker of Lititz Borough Council.

Reorganization

With the March meeting being the first that the Commission has met in 2023, Smith called for a reorganization of the Commission. Weibel nominated Stauffer to Chair the Commission with Smith as the Vice-Chair. Stauffer and Smith accepted the nominations. No other nominations were offered, and the slate was passed unanimously. Weibel then discussed the position of a Chairman pro tem, and nominated Meyer for the position. Meyer accepted the nomination, no other nominations were offered, and Meyer was elected as Chairman pro tem unanimously.

Minutes

The minutes of the December 6, 2022 Planning Commission meeting were approved on a motion by Smith, seconded by Meyer.

Conditional Use Request
4-6 Maple Alley Demolition

Smith recused himself as Vice-Chairman and took the floor to represent the Lititz Fire Company as their Chief. Smith introduced the request to the Commission which consisted of a conditional use request to demolish the existing duplex at 4-6 Maple Alley to construct outdoor recreation space for the Fire Company. Smith provided an overview of the property and the Fire Company's desire to create outdoor recreational space for the Fire Hall immediately behind the current station. He informed the Commission that the Fire Company has been evaluating rent and upkeep costs and has found it infeasible to continue renting out the property. He also informed the Commission that leading up to the demolition the Fire Company went through the legal process to dissolve the unopened alley between the station and the subject property. In continuing his presentation, he asked the Commission to consider that the Lititz Fire Company is an all-volunteer fire company and the outdoor space would be a draw on recruitment and volunteer retention. He also spoke to community concerns for housing and discussed the ways the Fire Company supports qualified volunteers with purchasing a home and allows them to rent from the Company's three other properties at a discount to the market rate for the property. He mentioned that out of the five other units the Company owns on the block, one is currently rented by a member while another will be rented by college-aged members in the fall.

Smith asked the Commission if they had any questions. Yearick was asked on his impression and stated that any demolition should be closely scrutinized, especially when a demolition of housing units is being

proposed for recreational space. However, he conceded that the elimination of the ROW would make it difficult for the property to continue as a residence without access or frontage. Weibel acknowledged the difficulty of the structure's siting and commended the Fire Company on renting out the surrounding properties they had acquired at an affordable rate to its members and the community. Meyer asked when the Company had last looked at the economics of upgrade costs and how it compared to the expected return on rent noting that rent prices have skyrocketed in recent years. Smith responded that the most recent look at been at the beginning of 2023. Meyer then asked if the Fire Company currently had any plans to expand the building. Smith responded that they did not, citing the cost. Stauffer then asked to the historical significance of the property. Smith responded that while the building was over 100 years old, it had no significant features or architecture and that it was considered a Class II resource on the Boroughs Historic Resource Survey. Gattis expressed her concern about the demolition of housing in the Borough and stated that she hoped the demolition would not move forward. Meyer moved to recommend the request demolition, it was seconded by Weibel and passed unanimously.

Ordinances Electric Vehicle Charging Regulations

Yearick provided an overview of the Electric Vehicle Charging Ordinance amendment noting that at the public hearing many members of the public had provided comments or asked questions and that many were in attendance. He invited them to share their thoughts with the Commission.

Eppinger asked for clarification on the ordinance's intent, the current regulations, screening requirements, repair requirements, the allowance to allow non-residential lots to convert up to 20% of spaces, and commented on issues at his previous home in the New York Metro area. Eppinger said that he does not see the need to install them in public parking lots. Smith clarified that the ordinance would not require chargers to be installed and that currently the Borough has no restrictions on where or when chargers could be installed if the installation meets the building code requirements. Weibel stated that part of the need for this ordinance was to protect the public.

Rosenberg stated that she had been recently made aware of the ordinance and wanted to confirm that this ordinance would not result in her current chargers would be removed. Yearick confirmed that if the ordinance was enacted, Rosenberg's chargers would be grandfathered in. She also stated that the proposed 25 foot setback from another citizen in writing would not work in many parts of the Borough. She spoke to the implementation of the chargers noting that they would not take over parking lots, but that electrical vehicles are becoming more commonplace and their installation would be a draw for visitors to the Borough. She also expressed concerns for the screening requirements. Smith asked Rosenberg to describe her charger, noting that he felt part of the confusion was in the definition of the charging station which would not apply to something that could be unplugged from an outdoor outlet. A discussion about the different type of chargers, their sizes, and removability ensued. In conclusion, Smith thanked Rosenberg for her comments, noting that an approach focused on the size of the charger might be appropriate for residences.

Weibel proposed modifying the single-family provisions in the draft ordinance as follows:

B. Single-Family Residential

1. An Electric Vehicle Charging Station shall be considered an accessory use by right for single-family dwellings.
2. Only Level 1 or Level 2 chargers may be installed at Single-Family Residential properties.
3. No more than two such chargers may be installed on an individual residential property.
4. The property owner is required to obtain all relevant permits for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations prior to installation.
5. Abandonment or disrepair. If the Electric Vehicle Charging Station is ever abandoned or enters into a state of disrepair, it shall be the responsibility of the property owner to remove or properly maintain the Electric Vehicle Charging Station within three months from the date the station enters such a state.

Weibel said that she felt that those provisions would strike a balance to allow the chargers where desired while protecting the community.

Strayer identified himself and described that he saw himself was a minimalist when it came to ordinances. He then proceeded to show the Commission his personal charger and discussed how it could be converted between a level 1 and level 2 charger by swapping components, noting the charge time for each. He said that most people will not have level 3 chargers at a residence since the electrical demand is so great. He also commented that as currently defined by the draft, removable plug style chargers would not be regulated by the ordinance. He then showed the Commission a plug-in hybrid charger which was very similar to the EV charger, commenting that most of the chargers currently in the Borough would be for plug-in hybrid vehicles. He commended the Borough on thinking about the issue, but said that the need for chargers is not for residents but for visitors that do not live in the Borough. Strayer and the Commission discussed the current and future need for chargers with Strayer noting that a prohibition on total number of chargers at a property would likely need to be eliminated in the future as adoption continues, and that at some point chargers for residential properties without off-street parking would need to be addressed. He conceded that was not something that needed to be addressed in this draft. Cords across the sidewalk and ADA implications were also discussed.

Burkholder clarified that the 25 foot setback was a suggestion made by another resident and was not part of the current draft. He also asked whether there were public parking lots in the Borough, and if not then all chargers would be installed in private lots. Yearick agreed. [Editors Note: *The parking lot in front of Hendrick's greenhouse was left behind once the split intersection at Spruce/W.Second was consolidated. It is the only public parking lot currently owned by the Borough.*] Burkholder expressed his support for the limitations on non-residential properties and expressed his support for allowing residential installations to continue and be easily accessible for homeowners.

Smith asked Strayer for his opinion on whether the ordinance should focus on Level 3 EV chargers. Strayer stated that there are stand-alone Level 2 commercial chargers. Strayer shared a story of traveling with an EV on the east coast and the difficulties he encountered in finding chargers. He encouraged the Commission to focus the ordinance on differentiating between commercial and

residential. He also stated his support for adopting some form of ordinance since currently there are no regulations.

Sensenich asked whether the heads of the chargers are universal. It was discussed that there are currently three different types of heads, with Tesla having a proprietary system. Charging for use of the stations was also discussed.

Upon the conclusion of discussion, it was decided to table the draft ordinance and incorporate comments to consider at the next Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioners Forum
Request to release draft minutes

Gattis requested the Planning Commission to allow release of draft minutes in the instance where the Commission does not meet the following month. Discussion touched upon Commission procedures and ensuring that deliberation and official action take place in a public meeting. The members of the Commission expressed a willingness to meet each month, even if the only topic of business was to approve the minutes from the preceding month.

Regional Comprehensive Plan Update

Yearick shared information about the forthcoming update to the joint regional comprehensive plan, with this update entitled Strengthening Community 2030 and shared the updates website (www.strengtheningcommunity2030.com.)

Open Discussion

Smith asked whether it would be beneficial to issue support letters to PennDOT to support recent public comments in favor of signaling the crosswalk at Lititz Springs Park's entrance on Broad Street. Yearick replied that staff had begun to look into this, but the most recent round of PennDOT grants would not support such upgrades. He stated that he would request a letter if needed in the future.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M., on a motion by Weibel with a second by Smith.

Respectfully submitted,

Elijah Yearick
Managing Director of Planning & Development