

LITITZ BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of Meeting Held March 5, 2024

The March 5, 2024 meeting of the Lititz Borough Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Stauffer with members Smith, Weibel, Meyer, and Dickinson (Alternate). Members Piazza and Stoudt were excused. Chairman Stauffer requested Dickinson to serve as a full members, and there were no objections from those in attendance. Others in attendance included Elijah Yearick, Bill & Missy McMahon of the Savory Gourmet, Hamzah Dawood of Greco's, Councilwoman Christine Sensenich, Mayor Tim Snyder, and Maria Elliott of Venture Lititz. The minutes of the February 6, 2024 Planning Commission meeting were unanimously approved on a motion by Weibel, seconded by Smith.

ORDINANCES

A-Frame Signage Update

Stauffer requested that Yearick read the draft amendment aloud along with Elliott's comments which included phrasing suggestions, the HAAC's future standard, and a discussion on minimum Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) clearance. Weibel then offered several comments:

- §311.F.11 of the Zoning Ordinance would prevent A-frames due to the prohibition on Manual Changeable Copy Signs
- The phrase "Existing Commercial Businesses" could be interpreted to include only businesses existing at the time of enactment. Weibel cautioned that the ordinance should avoid creating winners and losers if possible.
- §311.I.4.c & d - That A-Frame signs should be addressed in discussions of maximum sign size.
- That she does not support the proposal to include them for Commercial Businesses outside of the Downtown Overlay District.
- That a minimum amount should be cited in the section speaking to insurance requirements. Upon discussion it was suggested that the amount be \$1 Million with language allowing it to scale higher in the future at the Borough's discretion.
- That sign allowances in the window be revised higher as an alternative to A-Frame signs.

Elliott and Dickinson stated that they would have no objection limiting A-Frame signs to the Downtown Overlay District, but felt that increased window signage would not be as effective as A-Frame signs to attract customers and would be more unsightly. Dickinson reported that he sees a 20% - 30% increase in customers when he uses his A-Frame sign.

Bill McMahon of the Savory Gourmet testified that he saw business drop by 15% - 30% when he was forced to stop using his sign and he often had customers comment positively on his sign when it was out. He asked the Commission whether any lawsuits had been filed against the Borough for the A-frame signs during COVID, to which Yearick responded that there had been none.

Dickinson offered that while A-frame signage might be inappropriate with the current uses in the General Business District, the recent updates to the Ordinance to promote it as the Borough's Southern Gateway might result in it being needed in the future.

Hamzah Dawood of Greco's asked how the proposed draft would impact his business. Yearick responded that as written, a single sign on Broad Street promoting all businesses on E. Kleine would be permitted with the permission of the property owner on Broad St. Stauffer suggested that directional signage might be more appropriate to promote the businesses.

Stauffer spoke to Elliott's suggestion to reduce the unobstructed sidewalk clearance to 36 inches and stated that it would not be his recommendation since there would be no room for error under the ADA regulations. Smith agreed. The Commission then discussed proposed size minimums and the citation of a design standard by the Historic Area Advisory Committee for the A-Frames, both of which were suggested to be dropped from the draft.

Discussion concluded by focusing on areas where A-Frame signs could be deployed under the current draft. Stauffer committed to working with staff to come up with a listing of properties that would not be able to deploy the signs for future discussion. Yearick committed to sharing an updated draft at a future meeting.

COMMISSIONERS' FORUM ADA Ramp Replacement

Stauffer shared concerns about ADA ramps in the Borough not meeting current standards. Yearick responded that curb ramps are updated to current standards when road paving occurs, and to do it prior to that would result in patching around each replacement. Sensenich suggested an inventory of such locations could be considered when developing the paving plan for future years.

Blighted Properties

Stauffer expressed concerns with several underutilized properties in the Borough noting the former Lutheran Church on Spruce St. and the Parkview Hotel as two examples. Yearick cited the County's definition of blight, noting that vacancy, condemnation, and animal infestation were all contributing factors. The Commission discussed other properties of concern, the property maintenance code, and historic examples of blight in the Borough.

Borough Drinking Water Quality

Stauffer brought up concerns about pollutants in the Borough's drinking water, with Yearick responding that the pollutants cited were well below legal limits. Weibel offered that this is a fiscal decision to be addressed by Council, with Smith offering that the Borough's water system has once again won an award for exceeding federal drinking water standards.

Runabout Line/Rail Trail

Yearick presented on the Runabout Line project that the Borough is undertaking in order to acquire the Norfolk Southern right-of-way (ROW) east of Broad Street. The ultimate goal for the ROW is to extend the rail trail to Broad Street. The project itself consists of a parallel rail line to the existing track that would allow trains to switch near the RecCenter, which would allow for the abandonment of the train crossing on Broad Street. Yearick then discussed costs and recent efforts to swapping undeveloped land from the RecCenter site for the necessary project ROW from the Moravian Church/Lititz Springs Park.

ADJOURNEMENT

There being no further business Smith made the motion, seconded Dickinson to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elijah Yearick
Secretary