

Select Committee Meeting Minutes

October 27, 2014

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The SELECT COMMITTEE held their meeting this evening at the Township Administration Building, 8230 Old York Rd, Elkins PA. The following Select Committee members were present: David Cohen, Eric Leighton, Ameer Farrell, Bryan Havir and Henry Sekawungu. The Select Committee convened at 5:40 p.m., and continued with reviewing additional comments and considerations on the proposed Zoning Ordinance.

The discussion started off with Hope Lodge located at 100-110 West Laurel Avenue and the adaptive reuse of the large 3-story mansion on the property, since the entire property was up for sale. A new Zoning classification other than residential would be a plus.

The property is currently proposed to be Zoned R1 residential. Mr. Havir provided a brief background on the property approvals by the ZHB 8 yrs ago for 38 units. The main building was also approved for Medical offices and 142 parking spaces.

The building would be a landmark if the local landmark ordinance was adopted. The Mansion has been retrofitted on all three floors for non-residential uses. However if mixed use zoning is considered for the area, it would offer more adaptive reuse opportunities for the new owners or potential buyers. The proposed Landmark Ordinance precludes the total demolition of a property but otherwise property owners can add to their property and make improvements to them by securing building permits. Total demolition of the property would require additional review and a Certificate of Appropriateness issued by the Board of Commissioners. It was agreed that the MU2 Mixed Use District would be best suited for this property.

The discussion shifted to Salus University and the request received from them to relook at the proposed Zoning which appeared to be classified as residential as opposed to Commercial. Salus University used to be the Philadelphia School of Optometry but also comes up on Google as being in Philadelphia, which they need to change. A number of the tenants on the property are for-profit tenants and as such, there may be a need to approach them about contributing to the tax base of the Township. For-profit properties or uses on the site should be taxable. Mr. Havir will verify that the tenants are paying taxes. After additional discussion, it was recommended that MU1 Mixed Use District was proposed for Salus University.

It was also agreed that the Mr. Nixon will need to revisit the proposed zoning in Cheltenham Township along the boundary with Abington Township, to ensure that the two ordinances mirror each other in this area, as opposed to being diametrically opposed and dissimilar. This is especially so, since both Townships are in the process of updating their Ordinances. The two Community Planners assigned to both Townships will coordinate this process.

An example studied by the Select Committee, was Moss rehab all the way east to Township line, for which looking at both proposed Ordinances, the two areas in both Townships were not the same. The recommendation made was to consider changing the area from Church Road, West along Township Line Road to Jenkintown Road to MU1

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Mixed Use District, while Church Road East along Township Line Road to the Philadelphia boarder, would become C2 Commercial district.

A discussion ensued on the definition of mixed use: the proposed ordinance seemed to limit the mixed use aspect and created some confusion. It was agreed that Mr. Nixon would need to revisit some of the language in the C2 Commercial District, Section 295-1201.A.1.k.ii use H-1 and consider changing it from 'multiple dwellings' to 'a dwelling,' and also change H-1 under MU1 Mixed Use District, Section 295-1301.A.12.b. Under Class I and II, uses permitted by right should be revisited to ensure a clear distinction. Additionally, Mr. Nixon will need to look at uses under H. Residential uses, and consider making them one or two residential units as opposed to multiple units.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. with a recommendation to reconvene on November 10 and 24, 2014.



Bryan T. Havir
Township Manager

As per Henry Sekawungu