

The Easton Planning Commission met on Wednesday, January 7, 2009 in the 5th Floor Council Chambers, Easton City Hall. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Charles Elliott. Present: Charles Elliott, James Bloom, Robert Sun and William Heilman. Joel Scheer, City Solicitor was present. Also in attendance were staff members Becky Bradley, Director, Carl Manges, City Planner and Tina Woolverton, Secretary.

The first item on the agenda was the Reorganization of the Easton Planning Commission. A motion to have Mr. Elliott remain as Chair was made by Mr. Sun, seconded by Mr. Bloom, agreed by all. A motion to have Ms. Viscomi serve as Vice-Chair was made by Mr. Heilman, seconded by Mr. Bloom, agreed by all.

A motion to accept the minutes of the December 10, 2008 meeting of the Easton Planning Commission was made by Mr. Sun, seconded by Mr. Heilman, approved by all.

Public Comment. Mr. Curt Ehly of 305 W. Monroe Street was present. He asked the status of a proposed billboard at Bushkill Street and Larry Holmes Drive. Ms. Bradley stated it has not come before the Planning Commission, as no application has been submitted. She said it will also need HDC for approval. Mr. Elliott asked if the proposal is for a double illuminated billboard. Ms. Bradley said it is. Mr. Ehly asked why the proposal would be reviewed by the EPC. Ms. Bradley explained the proposed location is in the flood plain, and per the City's ordinance all flood plain development is reviewed by the Planning Commission, who then offers a recommendation to the Zoning Hearing Board.

Special Exception – 321 Northampton Street – Easton Salsa Company. Mr. Manges said the applicant, Arthur Skrzenski proposes to establish an F-2 Food Processing business for the manufacture of salsa at 321 Northampton Street. The property is located in the Downtown zoning district where the proposed use is permitted by Special Exception. The applicant intends to manufacture the salsa in an area located in the existing Easton Coffee Exchange. He will produce the salsa on Mondays and/or every other Sunday and will store the salsa in a commercial refrigerator on-site. The applicant stated his intent, once he is manufacturing and selling 240 jars a month, is to utilize the services of a co-packer who would manufacture the salsa in bulk in their facility. Staff advocated recommending approval to the Zoning Hearing Board for the Special Exception. Mr. Sun asked what use the Easton Coffee Exchange is considered. Ms. Bradley replied an Eating and Drinking Establishment. Mr. Sun asked if Mr. Skrzenski would be utilizing the same space as the Easton Coffee Exchange. Mr. Dan Cohen, attorney for the applicant, replied he would be using the same space, but on different days and times. Mr. Bloom questioned what controls were in place to make sure the applicant didn't begin producing more salsa a month without going to a co-packer. Ms. Bradley said there were no conditions in the resolution that would enforce the quantity of salsa being produced, however the applicant was limited by the amount of time and space available to manufacture the salsa. Diane Bower, owner of a shop adjacent to the Easton Coffee Exchange, asked if she should have received notification of the Special Exception request. Ms. Bradley stated letters are sent to property owners within 100 feet of the proposed development, even though it is not required, and the owner of the building would have been notified. Mr. Sun recommended adding a line to the letters asking landlords to notify their tenants. A motion to accept the revised resolution recommending approval of the Special Exception request to the Zoning Hearing Board was made by Mr. Bloom, seconded by Mr. Heilman, approved by all.

Final Lot Consolidation and Development Plan – Northampton County Youth Detention Center. Mr. Manges stated the applicant, County of Northampton, proposes to consolidate parcels and construct four additions to the Northampton County Juvenile Justice Center located at 105 S. Union Street. The additions will consist of an office addition, storage addition, and a canopy addition, all on the second floor and a building addition on the first and second floors. The proposed development is located in the Institutional-2 Zoning District, Block class A where

the proposed E7 use is permitted. The additions will house 24 juvenile residents and between 12 and 14 employees will be added for a three shift schedule. A preliminary plan was before the Commission in November and received conditional approval. Mr. Manges noted parking is of some concern. The County complex as a whole has 651 off street parking spaces, which is a deficiency of 443 off-street parking spaces. The plan received a variance for off-street parking from the Zoning Hearing Board on December 15, 2008. Staff recommended conditional final approval of the plan. Mark Buchwalt of CMX Engineering, project engineer, stated approval had been received from NCCD. Mr. Bloom asked where the red oaks were being planted. Mr. Manges said they would be in front of the building, on Ferry Street. A motion to approve the resolution for conditional final approval was made by Mr. Bloom, seconded by Mr. Heilman, approved by all.

Newsrack Code. Ms. Bradley said the City has no ordinance for controlling newsracks. She has been working with Main Street and the Easton Ambassadors to address problems with the racks in the downtown, and throughout the city. A draft ordinance had been included in the packets and she was looking for input from the Planning Commission. She said the proposed ordinance would require all newsracks in the Downtown Zoning District to be licensed and attached to the sidewalk, with a total of three allowed per block. She said Center Square would be a multi-rack zone and no freestanding boxes would be allowed. The Planning Commission meeting is the first public meeting in which the proposed ordinance is being discussed, although Ms. Bradley said the HDC has reviewed the draft and made recommendations. Mr. Sun asked what the registration fee would be. Ms. Bradley said it has not yet been determined, but thought it would be a minimal fee to cover costs. Mr. Sun asked who would maintain the multi-racks. Ms. Bradley said the City would. Mr. Sun asked if there has been conversation with the local papers. Ms. Bradley said she has calls in to them to discuss. Mr. Elliott suggested consistency in naming the responsible parties, as the terms distributor, owner and applicant were all used in the draft ordinance. Mr. Ehly of 305 W. Monroe Street said he feels the majority will applaud this ordinance as there is a need for control of the racks. Sandra Levisay, Operations Manager of the Easton Ambassadors said the existing newspaper racks are difficult to clean, and in some cases, keep upright. Mr. Elliott raised questions of private property rights regarding where newspapers could place racks without permission from the property owner. He added the draft ordinance is an excellent approach to the problems of newsracks and only requires minor tweaking.

Ms. Bradley informed the commission the Comprehensive Plan Re-write would be commencing and they would be hearing more about it in the upcoming months.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.