

The Easton Planning Commission met on Wednesday, November 2, 2011 in the 6th Floor Council Chambers, Easton City Hall. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Charles Elliott. Present: Charles Elliott, Robert Sun, William Heilman, Dennis Lieb and Ronald Shipman. Also in attendance were staff members Becky Bradley, Director; Brian Gish, Chief Planner; Carl Manges, City Planner; and Tina Woolverton, Secretary. Solicitor Joel Scheer was also present.

The agenda was approved with the addition of the introduction of the proposed changes to Palmer Township's Comprehensive Plan as item #8 and all other items being renumbered accordingly.

A motion to approve the revised minutes of the October 5, 2011 meeting was made by Mr. Shipman seconded by Mr. Lieb, approved by all.

**Privilege of the Floor.** None

**Special Exception 417 Cattell.** Mr. Manges said the applicant, Peter Melan, proposes to establish a Business Service (Background Checks) use on the second floor of an existing mixed-use two-story building at 417 Cattell Street. The second floor has two residential apartments, and Mr. Melan is proposing to convert the vacant, 650 square foot, rear apartment for this business use. Mr. Melan is also the property owner of 417 Cattell Street. Mr. Manges said the first floor is currently used by Kimball Communications, which is an agency that provides public relations services for their clientele. The property is located in the College Hill Zoning District; Block Class C where the proposed use is not permitted, however, the property is also located in the Street Corridor Overlay District, where the proposed use is permitted by Special Exception.

Mr. Manges said a conversation with the applicant on October 18, 2011, revealed that he intends to establish a Background Check business on the second floor of the existing mixed-use building located at 417 Cattell Street. The applicant indicated that the proposed business is to consist primarily of performing background checks of potential employees for employers, and of potential tenants for landlords. The applicant's proposal stated that he is to be the only employee, and that no clientele are to frequent this place of business. The proposed hours of operation are Monday-Friday from 9am – 5pm.

The applicant was present. Mr. Sun asked for confirmation that there would be no clientele at the site. Mr. Melan confirmed that all client contact was via the internet.

A motion to approve the resolution recommending approval to the Zoning Hearing Board was made by Mr. Heilman, seconded by Mr. Shipman, approved by all.

**Special Exception 512 Line Street .** Mr. Manges said the applicant, Shari Pearson, has proposed to establish a Small Family Day Care Home use for up to three children in the first floor of her Single-Family, Semi-Attached dwelling at 512 Line St. He said the property is located in the South Side Zoning District, Innovation Overlay District, Block Class B, where the proposed use is permitted by Special Exception. The definition of a Small Family Day Care Home is an accessory home occupation operated for profit or not for profit in which child day care is provided on a regular basis to no more than three (3) children, who are not relatives of the caregiver, during any 24 hour period.

Mr. Manges said, per a conversation with the applicant stated she intends for children to spend the day on the first floor (approximately 690 square feet), of her home. The first floor consists of a living room, kitchen, and a dining room and has two means of egress: one exit in front leading to Line Street, and the other exit in the back of the house. The applicant proposes to use the six off-street parking spaces to the rear of the property as a drop-off/pick-up area for the children. These spaces are accessed from Wilton Street,

which is a public alley. The daycare is proposed to operate Monday through Friday, 7:00am to 6:00pm. The yard is fenced, which would provide safety to the children, and aid in keeping the children on the applicant's property, while they are playing outside. Mr. Manges said the applicant will submit her state registration for operating a day care service if she receives the necessary approvals from the City.

The applicant was present, Shari Person, was present. Mr. Lieb asked if there was adequate evacuation from the property. Mr. Gish said in an emergency, either the front or back doors could be used to exit the house. Mr. Elliott questioned how the applicant intended to enforce that all drop-offs and pick-ups be from the rear of the home. The applicant stated there is not on-street parking at the front of her home, and having to cross Line Street was already a deterrent, but additionally, that is the only entrance the parents will be instructed to use. Mr. Elliott suggested adding a condition to the resolution that required the daycare use be accessed from the rear. Mr. Lieb asked if there were problems with snow removal in the alley. The applicant said there is not. Mr. Sun asked if the condition of using the rear entrance would make the City responsible if someone was injured while doing so. Mr. Scheer said it would not, it would be the property owner's liability. A motion to approve the revised resolution recommending approval to the Zoning Hearing Board was made by Mr. Lieb, seconded by Mr. Shipman, approved by all.

**Determination of Blight.** Ms. Bradley told the Commissioners that on October 26, 2011 the Vacant Property Review Committee met to consider properties for the determination of blight. Five properties were determined as blighted by the Committee and are being brought before the Planning Commission for further determination of blight.

- 153 W. Wilkes Barre Street – residential. Mr. Shipman asked how long it had been vacant. Ms. Bradley said since 2008 or 2009. Mr. Shipman asked about the lack of utilities. Ms. Bradley said they had either been turned off or removed. She added the City does not request removal of utilities, the utilities themselves decide whether or not meters are removed. A motion to approve the resolution determining blight was made by Mr. Sun, seconded by Mr. Shipman, approved by all.
- 900 Lehigh Street – residential 2 unit. A motion to approve the resolution determining blight was made by Mr. Lieb, seconded by Mr. Heilman, approved by all.
- 614 Northampton Street – commercial. A motion to approve the resolution determining blight was made by Mr. Shipman, seconded by Mr. Lieb, approved by all.
- 515 Spruce Street – residential. A motion to approve the resolution determining blight was made by Mr. Heilman, seconded by Mr. Shipman, approved by all.
- 140 Nevin Terrace – residential. Mr. Lieb asked where Nevin Terrace was located. Ms. Bradley said between the N. Third Street and Route 611. A motion to approve the resolution determining blight was made by Mr. Lieb, seconded by Mr. Heilman, approved by all.

**Proposed changes to Palmer Township's Comprehensive Plan.** Ms. Bradley said she had just received the information in the mail earlier in the day. She said staff would review the proposed changes and welcomes any comments from the Commission. She said the City has 45 days to comment on the changes.

**600 Block of Northampton Street Master Plan Update.** Terry Briggs, an owner of real estate on the block, said he has attended many of the meetings and is concerned with how soon the grass strip between the curb and sidewalk will be replaced by pavers. He said he has a large daycare operation moving into one of his buildings on the block and needs a way for the children to access the building without stepping in the muddy mess

it has become. Ms. Bradley said another public meeting will be held shortly to start the process moving forward.

**Staff update.** Ms. Bradley said the Karl Stirner Arts Trail is having its opening this Saturday, November 5 at 1:00. She said a tree planting with WDYL and Lafayette College took place on October 15. She added signage is being manufactured and will be installed in spring.

Ms. Bradley told the Commission an additional four million dollars in grant funding for the intermodal had been awarded to the City by the FTA. She added demolition of the Perkins and theater buildings has begun.

She said the City is in the middle of a parking study, a second public meeting is scheduled for November 17 at 7:00 pm and there will be three more additional meetings.

Ms. Bradley said the contract for the Coddington School study has been awarded to Steve Glickman.

She said in October, Urban Land Institute spent two days in the City working on a design charrette for the 500 block of Northampton Street. She said it was very well attended and she anticipates the full report in December or January.

Ms. Bradley said the final version of the 600 block of Northampton Street will be presented at the December Planning Commission meeting.

She told the Commission she had been interviewed by Planning Magazine on the City's planning system and said she would let the Commission know when it was published.

**EAC Update.** Mr. Elliott said the annual potluck dinner is scheduled for December 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm at the Grand Eastonian. He said presentations would be made by staff and the community.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.