

The Easton Planning Commission met on Wednesday, March 3, 2010 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, Robert Sun, William Heilman and Dennis Lieb. Also in attendance were staff members Becky Bradley, Director; Brian Gish, Chief Planner; Carl Manges, City Planner; and Tina Woolverton, Secretary.

The revised agenda was approved.

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 3, 2010 meeting was made by Mr. Sun, seconded by Mr. Lieb, approved by all.

Privilege of the Floor. None.

Special Exception – 42 Adamson Street. Ms. Bradley said the applicant, John Sefcik, has requested to sign a continuance waiver allowing him to continue his application until the Planning Commission meeting of May 5, 2010. A motion to accept the continuance waiver was made by Mr. Sun, seconded by Mr. Heilman, approved by all.

Special Exception – 319 Cattell Street. Mr. Manges said the applicant, Mortgage Now, Inc. proposes to establish a D-2 Finance, Insurance, Real Estate use in the previously vacant 700 s.f. first floor of an existing mixed use building. The previous use was a retail card store. The proposed is permitted as a Special Exception in the Street Corridor Enhancement Overlay District. Two off-street parking spaces will be provided and Mr. Manges noted the Zoning Administrator determined no increase in demand from the previous use will be created, so existing capacity is sufficient. The hours of operation are to be Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm and the business will employ 4 full-time employees. The applicant was not present. Mr. Elliott asked the staff if the off-street parking was in the rear of the building. Mr. Manges said it was. Mr. Anthony Bassoline of 313 Cattell Street said parking in the neighborhood is tough, and that the rear parking lot containing the two off-street parking spaces is normally occupied by the upper floor tenants. A motion to recommend approval to the Zoning Hearing Board was made by Mr. Heilman, seconded by Mr. Lieb, approved by all.

Land Development Pomeroy's Building 322-336 Northampton Street. Ms. Bradley said the applicant, Pomeroy Development, LP, proposes to develop the vacant three-story mixed use Pomeroy Building. The first floor of the building is proposed as commercial/retail use, and the second and third floors are to contain a total of twenty apartments. The plan also includes the creation of a 28' x 106' open air courtyard in the middle of the building, which will require the middle section of the building to be demolished. The main entrance to the apartments will be on Northampton Street, with a rear door leading to the courtyard. The project will be completed in two phases, of which only the first was under review by the Planning Commission. Phase I consists of 20 apartments on the 2nd and 3rd floors, the open air courtyard, commercial space on 1st floor and keyed storage lockers in the basement. Phase II, when submitted, will contain plans to develop the rear of the building, including the seven story tower. Ms. Bradley said the Zoning Administrator determined that off-street parking requirements are grandfathered. There is no parking available at the site and the developer had indicated they intend to lease 10 to 20 spaces in the parking garage. Mr. Heilman questioned changes to the tax base. Ms. Bradley said the property would be re-assessed when completed, and taxes could possibly increase. Mark Mulligan, a partner of Pomeroy Development, LP, said taxes are now current, they paid back taxes when they purchased the property. He said taxes are approximately \$12,000 to \$13,000 per year, and he anticipates them rising. Mr. Sun asked if the group has acquired title to the building. Mr. Mulligan replied they have. Mr. Sun questioned the background of Pomeroy LP. Mr. Mulligan said it consists of 5 partners with development experience. He named projects of

similar scale they have completed in Hunterdon County, NJ. Mr. Sun asked if this was their first Pennsylvania project. Mr. Mulligan said it is. Mr. Sun asked if financing is secured for Phase 1. Mr. Mulligan said it is. Mr. Sun questioned the size of the apartments and the monthly rents. Mr. Mulligan said the approximate square footage would range from 878 s.f. to 1200 s.f. and prices would range from \$850 per month for a one bedroom apartment to \$1,050 per month for a two bedroom. Mr. Sun asked if there is any concern regarding the structural soundness. Brian Ritter of Jenna Engineering said the building is mostly in very good structural condition and explained on the wall to be removed, an interior wall would first be built, which would then support the structure as the exterior wall was removed. Mr. Sun asked if there would be an elevator. Mr. Ritter said there would be. Mr. Sun questioned the time frame for completion. Mr. Mulligan said the best case scenario would be approximately 15 months, completing in fall of 2011, with worst case scenario of 24 months. He said the second phase should be started within two years. Mr. Elliott asked staff to confirm the action being requested was for the first phase of the project only. Ms. Bradley said the approval being sought was for the first phase and the mothballing of the second phase, securing it and making it more attractive. Mr. Elliott asked if there were plans for subdivision. Mr. Mulligan said not at this time. Mr. Sun questioned what the s.f. price would be for the retail component. Mr. Mulligan said in the range of \$10.00-\$13.00/s.f. Mr. Sun questioned the total cost of Phase 1. Mr. Mulligan said it would cost \$3.5 – 3.9 million dollars. Mr. Elliott asked if the basement would house other tenant amenities besides storage lockers. Mr. Mulligan said the individual units would have washers and dryers and it was hoped the first floor retail tenant would use the basement space. Colleen Lavdar, Executive Director of the Northampton County Historic and Genealogical Society was present. She said as their new building nears completion, she is very excited about the adaptive reuse of this building. A motion to approve the revised resolution granting conditional preliminary approval was made by Mr. Lieb, seconded by Mr. Heilman, approved by all.

Comprehensive Plan Review Acceptance. Ms. Bradley said the city is under obligation to review the Comprehensive Plan yearly. She said the 2009 review was distributed to the Commissioner's at the February meeting. She asked if any of the Commissioners' had changes or questions. As there were none, a motion approving the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan review and the forwarding of the review to City Council was made by Mr. Lieb, seconded by Mr. Sun, approved by all.

Staff Update – Comprehensive Plan Re-write. Ms. Bradley said the EAC had been presented with the sections of the Comprehensive Plan that are required to be updated by the Municipalities Planning Code. She said sections cannot be deleted from the list, but the list can be added to. She said she met with the Mayor to begin formalizing the steering committee, which will run similarly to the Zoning re-write steering committee.

Ms. Bradley presented a sketch of the proposed dog park and said a formal plan will be forthcoming as an amendment to the Bushkill Creek Trail Plan. She added a very productive meeting was held with the College Hill Dog Owners' Association. Mr. Sun asked the size of the proposed dog park. Ms. Bradley said 6,000 s.f. Mr. Elliott questioned the surfacing of the park. Ms. Bradley said pavers would be preferred, but may be cost prohibitive.

EAC Update. Mr. Elliott said the EAC had met the previous evening and was treated to an explanation of the Comprehensive Plan Revision. He said there general conversation about the process and the role of the Planning Commission.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.