

The Easton Planning Commission met on Wednesday, November 3, 2010 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, Mary Viscomi, James Bloom, William Heilman and Dennis Lieb. Also in attendance were staff members Becky Bradley, Director of Planning and Codes; Brian Gish, Chief Planner; and Tina Woolverton, Secretary.

The agenda was approved.

The minutes of the October 6, 2010 meeting were approved.

Privilege of the Floor. None.

Eco Park Presentation by Bill Collins.

Mr. Bill Collins of Simone Collins Landscape Architecture was present. He explained his firm was hired by ACLV to perform a study on the feasibility of an Eco Park at the area of the flats along the Lehigh River. He added the entire area of the study is either in the flood plain or is steep slope and is environmentally sensitive. He said the objectives are to protect the river and watershed and preserve open space. He presented a power point presentation. Mr. Elliott commented the plan presented some interesting ideas, and said the timing is good as it could possibly be included in the Comprehensive Plan rewrite. Mr. Lieb said the reuse of existing structures for art related functions seems to be a saturation of art-related development in the City and suggested the site be used for an urban tree farm. Ms. Viscomi asked if there has been any financial commitment to the plan. Mr. Collins said only the \$30,000 for the cost of the study by ACLV. Mr. Sun questioned where the existing rails connects to. Ms. Bradley responded the rail runs into Phillipsburg, NJ and to the west as well. Mr. Elliott asked if the presentation was part of a larger document. Mr. Collins said it was. Mr. Elliott requested the entire document be made available to the Planning Commission. Mr. Collins said he would see to it.

Special Exception – 709 Wood Avenue. Ms. Bradley said the applicant, Joe Williams, proposes to establish a C6-Retail Specialty Clothing and accessory store in the currently vacant first floor of 709 Wood Avenue. The property is located in the Street Corridor Enhancement Overlay District where the use is permitted as a Special Exception. Mr. Sun asked if the clothing would be new or vintage. Mr. Williams said it would be new. Mr. Sun asked if it would be a walk-in establishment or an internet business. Mr. Williams said it would be walk-in. Mr. Sun asked where deliveries would be received. Troy Shuman, owner of the property, said both the front and rear of the building can be accessed for deliveries. He said a motorcycle repair shop was located in the rear of the building. A motion approving the resolution recommending approval to the Zoning Hearing Board was made by Mr. Lieb, seconded by Mr. Bloom, approved by all.

Special Exception – 338 Spring Garden Street. Ms. Viscomi recused herself as she personally knows the applicant. Mr. Elliott said he represented the applicant in 2004 on a matter regarding this property, but not regarding this application, therefore he felt he did not need to recuse himself. The rest of the board agreed with him. Mr. Gish said the applicant, Douglas Jones, proposes to convert an existing three-story A-2 single-family semi-detached building into an A5-two family semi-detached dwelling. He said one dwelling unit would be located on the first floor, and the second and third floors would be the second dwelling unit. The applicant, Douglas Jones was present. He said the property was a three unit when they purchased it, which they converted to a two unit until the tenant died. They then converted it to a single unit, which they are now requesting to convert to the former use of a two unit. Mr. Lieb questioned the square footage of the entire house. Mr. Jones said it was between 2500 and 3000 square feet. Mr. Elliott asked, during the 2009 conversion to a single unit if actual interior renovations were made. Mr. Jones replied only the stove was removed. A motion to approve the resolution recommending approval to the Zoning Hearing Board was made by Mr. Bloom, seconded by Mr. Heilman, approved by all.

Staff Presentation 600 Block of Northampton Street Master Plan. Ms. Bradley explained a lot of interest, thought and talk has been occurring over the 600 block of Northampton Street, starting with the vacant armory building. She said a sketch plan for a mixed use of grocery store and housing had been presented. She said the Westward Neighborhood Partnership asked for help in preparing a plan for the block. She presented a Power Point Presentation which profiled the demographics of the area. Mr. Elliott complimented the presentation stating it was information rich.

EAC Update. Mr. Elliott said he had not attended the November EAC meeting, but reminded everyone about the pot luck event on December 7 at the Grand Eastonian Suites.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.