

The Easton Planning Commission met on Wednesday, November 4, 2009 in the 5<sup>th</sup> 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, James Bloom, Mary Viscomi, William Heilman and Dennis Lieb. Also in attendance were staff members Becky Bradley, Director, Carl Manges, City Planner and Tina Woolverton, Secretary. Joel Scheer, City Solicitor, was present.

The agenda was approved.

A motion to approve the minutes of the October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009 meeting was made by Ms. Viscomi, seconded by Mr. Heilman, approved by all.

**Privilege of the Floor.** None.

**Special Exception – 79 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.** Mr. Manges said the applicant, Calvin Wade, Jr. proposes to convert a three story mixed use building into a two-family detached dwelling at 79 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Mr. Wade proposes to have one apartment on the first and second floors, where he will reside, and a second apartment on the third floor will remain. The property is located in the Downtown Zoning District, block class B where the proposed use is allowed by special exception. The applicant was present for questions. Mr. Lieb recused himself, as his real estate office is handling the sale of the property. Ms. Viscomi asked if any commercial use of the building was proposed. Mr. Wade said he planned no commercial space, just residential. Mr. Sun asked if the third floor apartment had a separate entrance. Mr. Wade said it did. Mr. Elliott said he would assume the parking demand would remain approximately the same as it was when the first floor housed a beauty salon. Mr. Manges said the zoning administrator determined the off-street parking requirements were grandfathered. Mr. Mike McFadden of 109 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street said he is in favor of the proposal. A motion to recommend special exception approval to the Zoning Hearing Board was made by Mr. Sun, seconded by Mr. Bloom, approved by all.

**2010 Planning Commission meeting schedule.** The 2010 proposed meeting schedule was introduced. All meeting are to be held on the first Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm. Special meetings are to be held on the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm with proper advertisement. A motion to approve the resolution of the 2010 meeting schedule was made by Mr. Heilman, seconded by Ms. Viscomi, approved by all.

**Land Development and Special Exception – Bushkill Creek Corridor Trail – City of Easton.**

Ms. Bradley recused herself from any discussion, as she is involved in the management of the project's RACP grant. Mr. Manges said the applicant, the City of Easton, has proposed to develop a 1.35 mile trail from North 13<sup>th</sup> Street to the intersection of Bushkill Drive and Sullivan Road. Only 0.71 miles of the trail will be new construction of the trail, the remaining 0.64 miles is pre-existing. The plan before the commission was for Phase 1, and an additional plan for the remaining trail will be submitted at a later date. Mr. Manges said the trail is to be utilized by bicycles and pedestrians. The City's intent is to acquire properties from Wildlands Conservancy, the Easton Cemetery, and Norfolk Southern Railroad for the purpose of constructing a 10 foot wide paved trail along an abandoned railroad bed up to the underpass of US Route 22 and tie into the existing paved roadway. The paved roadway will be rehabilitated by milling and overlaying with new pavement. A new trail will be constructed along Bushkill Drive from the bridge through the lands of Met-Ed and Union Fuel crossing Bushkill Drive and then continuing along a reconstructed sidewalk to the intersection of Bushkill Drive and Sullivan Road. There will also be proposed pedestrian trail pavement striping and bicycle share lane markings along Bushkill Drive to the intersection of College Avenue and N. Third Street. Mr. Manges said the proposed improvements for the Bushkill Creek Corridor Trail are located in the River Corridors and Other Green Areas Zoning District, Block Classes A & B, where the proposed B3 – Parks is a permitted use. The Bushkill Creek Corridor Trail is located in a Federal Emergency Management Agency

defined 100 year floodplain, and is required to receive a Special Exception from the Zoning Hearing Board. Mr. Chad Helmer of Taggart Associates, managers for the Bushkill Creek Corridor was present to answer questions. He said the City has put a lot of effort into the Bushkill Creek Corridor plan and has done a tremendous job of engaging the public in the planning process. Mr. Lieb asked if the existing bridge in the cemetery would be utilized. Ms. Bradley said it would, as the bridge is structurally sound and would only require visual improvements. Mr. Lieb asked if repairs would be made to the existing stone walls that are collapsing. Mr. Helmer said repairs would be made to the wall on the portion north of route 22, but the portion south of route 22 would still be owned by the cemetery. Mr. Lieb asked if it had been considered to take the path through the city owned maintenance facility at 500 Bushkill Drive. Ms. Bradley said numerous scenarios had been explored, including that one, but the expense of permitting and structural work would have consumed the entire grant. Other areas would have required bridges, and some were not wide enough. Ms. Bradley said there is a sidewalk on the north and east side of Bushkill Drive that is currently over-taken by growth. Ms. Viscomi asked the Wildlands Conservancy, the cemetery and the railroad have been approached about their properties. Ms. Bradley said the City is working on an agreement of sale with the cemetery and has signed agreement with the other two parties. Mr. Sun asked for details on the annual maintenance budget. Mr. Helmer said it would be maintained by the Public Works Department in the same manner of other city owned parks. Mr. Sun questioned security features for the trail. Ms. Bradley said it will be patrolled as other parks and the possibility of cameras is being considered. Mr. Bloom questioned lighting. Mr. Helmer said the trailhead and parking locations would be lit, but the trail would be a closed from dusk to dawn. Mr. Sun asked if, in the future, the dams are removed, what impact it would have on the trail. Ms. Bradley said a study is currently being done on the removal of two dams, and if removal is decided upon, portions of the trail would be closed during the work. Mr. Sun asked if the on street portion of the bike trail would be marked. Mr. Helmer said it would be. Mr. Bloom questioned the surface material to be used behind the fuel station and under route 22. Mr. Helmer said it would be paved. Mr. Bloom asked if there would be signage along the cemetery mentioning the history. Mr. Helmer said an aggressive signage plan was in place for both historic and interpretive signage. Mr. Bloom asked if speed bumps were an option on the roadway. Ms. Bradley said it is being looked into, but would require the permission of either the City or PennDOT, depending on the roadway. A motion to approve the resolution recommending the Zoning Hearing Board grant the Special Exception for development in the flood plain and granting conditional final approval of the development plan was made by Mr. Lieb, seconded by Mr. Bloom, approved by all.

The Commission held a discussion regarding the status of the Supreme Mart development and the remediation of the gas storage tank.

**EAC Update.** Mr. Elliott said the EAC would be holding a potluck dinner at the Grand Eastonian on December 1, 2009. He said the approved street tree list was being discussed and some native trees would be added. He said the EAC was happy to see the installation of round 1 of the decorative bike racks and a call to artists for round 2 would be going out soon. He said there have been preliminary discussions about a recycling event.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.