

The Easton Planning Commission met on Wednesday, June 6, 2012 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, James Bloom, Dennis Lieb and William Heilman. Also in attendance were staff members Becky Bradley, AICP, Director of Planning and Codes; Brian Gish, Chief Planner; Carl Manges; City Planner and Tina Woolverton, Secretary. Solicitor Joel Scheer was present.

The agenda was approved.

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2012 meeting was made by Mr. Lieb, seconded by Mr. Sun, approved by all.

Privilege of the Floor. Jane Chir Wei of 218-220 Pine Street was present. She asked how she could determine if a neighbor's fence was properly located their property. Ms. Bradley replied it is a private property matter. Mr. Elliott suggested either commissioning a survey, or contacting a lawyer.

Special Exception – Development in the Floodplain – 624 Lehigh Drive. Mr. Manges said the applicant, Visiting Angels – Northern Lehigh Valley, has proposed to establish a Personal Services use in a 235.5 square foot office on the 1st floor of a two-story commercial building, located at 624 Lehigh Drive, Suite 113. It is anticipated there will be 1-2 individuals in the building during normal operations. The Visiting Angels is a national, private home care agency which provides in-home non-medical senior care. The Angels provide respiratory care, senior personal care, and companionship so elderly adults can continue to live independently in their own homes.

The property is located in the River Corridor and Other Green Areas Zoning District; Block Class A, where the proposed use is permitted by Special Exception. The property is also located in the Flood Hazard Overlay District, requiring Special Exception approval for use in the floodplain. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Map 42095C0287 D, 624 Lehigh Drive is located in a Federal Emergency Management Agency defined 100-year floodplain.

A zoning application has been provided to staff, and the applicant has provided additional information regarding measures to be taken in the event of a Flood Warning and/or Emergency. The applicant has indicated no hazardous materials of any kind will be stored at this site.

Mr. Manges said he applicant was contacted on May 9, 2012, and a follow-up clarification email was received on June 4, 2012. The conversation revealed that the office has been in operation at 624 Lehigh Drive since August 2011. Prior to this, the property owner was informed that all uses associated with the property would be required to submit a request for Special Exception review due to the property's location in a floodplain. The applicant informed staff the only materials in the office are a computer and a desk, and all calls are rerouted to their office in Bucks County. The applicant indicated to staff that someone will only be at the office on an as needed basis to check on the equipment. According to the applicant, the computer and desk are in an office that is locked at all times, and the room is secure in case a flood warning or event is in effect. Any personnel on-site during a flood emergency declaration shall be evacuated, and no use of the office may commence until the emergency is canceled.

The applicant, Keeley Kluesner, was present. Mr. Lieb questioned why he chose this location. Mr. Kluesner replied that Harrisburg requires that they have an office located in the service territory. Mr. Sun asked how many clients are located in the area. Mr. Kluesner said 10. Mr. Sun asked how many area employees there are, Mr. Kluesner said around fifteen. A motion to approve the revised resolution recommending approval to the Zoning Hearing Board was made by Mr. Lieb, seconded by Mr. Heilman, approved by all.

Special Exception – 1054 Northampton Street. Mr. Manges said the applicant, Cesar Montesdeoca, proposes to establish a Food Establishment (Deli/Grocery) use in the currently vacant first floor of an existing mixed-use two-story building at 1054 Northampton Street. The previous use at this location consisted of a retail store. The property is located in the West Ward Zoning District, Block Class B, where the proposed use is not permitted. However, the property is also located in the Street Corridor Enhancement Overlay District, where Food Establishment uses are permitted by Special Exception.

A conversation with the applicant on May 2, 2012, revealed that he proposes to establish a corner Deli/Grocery store business at 1054 Northampton Street. The applicant indicated this will be a family-operated business, and he and another family member will be the only two employees. The hours of operation will be everyday from 8am – 8pm. The applicant indicated that there is one off-street parking space located behind the building where an employee would park during business hours. According to the applicant, the deliveries will be made in small delivery vans, and no tractor-trailer deliveries will be associated with this business. The applicant also informed staff that he and his family operated a corner grocery store previously in New York City. The applicant anticipates the majority of customers will be walk-ins from the neighborhood. The applicant was present for questions. Mr. Bloom questioned if they would be selling ready-made sandwiches. The applicant said they would. A motion to approve the resolution recommending approval to the Zoning Hearing Board was made by Mr. Bloom, seconded by Mr. Lieb, approved by all.

Special Exception 2750 Hugh Moore Park Road. Mr. Gish said the applicant, Henry Meeker (Iron Mule Rentals), has proposed to establish a Personal Services use in the porch area of the Emrick Technology Center located on Hugh Moore Park. When the Park is open, his intent is to provide approximately nine bicycles for rent to the Park's visitors. The applicant has proposed the use in this location to capitalize on existing park infrastructure and trails, expand recreational opportunities within the park, and integrate with natural and historic resources. The applicant proposes the he will be the only employee, operating between 8am and 5pm, on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, between April 1 and October 31 annually. A variety of bicycle accessories including helmets, child seats, trailers and ride-along attachments are proposed by the applicant for rental along with bicycles, with helmets being mandatory for all children 12 and under. The applicant has indicated that upon receiving appropriate approvals, he will acquire a liability policy for \$500,000, and all renters will be required to sign a waiver (or have a waiver signed by a parent or guardian) and provide identification, to be used by the applicant in the event of theft or damage to equipment. The applicant has proposed rates ranging from \$5 to \$8 per hour or \$25 per day, with accessories and equipment available for an additional charge, all of which can be paid for in cash or via credit card. The applicant intends to operate historic bike tours from the location in the near future.

The property is located in the RC River Corridor and Other Green Areas Zoning District: Block Class A, where the proposed use is permitted by Special Exception. The property is also located in the Flood Hazard Overlay District, requiring Special Exception approval for use in the floodplain. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Map 42095C0286 D, this property is located in a Federal Emergency Management Agency defined 100-year floodplain.

The applicant was present. Mr. Sun suggested a revision to the resolution specifying “non-motorized” bikes. A motion to approve the revised resolution recommending approval to the Zoning Hearing Board was made by Mr. Bloom, seconded by Mr. Lieb, approved by all.

Certifications of Blight. At the Vacant Property Committee meeting of May 23, 2012 the Committee had certified the following properties as blighted:

- 900 Lehigh Street
- 614 Northampton Street
- 140 Nevin Terrace
- 153 W. Wilkes Barre Street

The properties were brought before the Planning Commission for their certification of blight. The following motions for certification of blight were made:

900 Lehigh Street – motion made by Mr. Lieb, seconded by Mr. Heilman, approved by all.

614 Northampton Street – motion made by Mr. Sun, seconded by Mr. Bloom, approved by all except Mr. Lieb who abstained from voting.

140 Nevin Terrace– motion was made by Mr. Heilman, seconded by Mr. Lieb, approved by all.

153 W. Wilkes Barre Street - motion was made by Mr. Lieb, seconded by Mr. Bloom, approved by all.

Determinations of Blight. At the Vacant Property Committee meeting of May 23, 2012 the Committee had determined the following properties as blighted:

- 428 Filbert Street
- 58 Centre Square
- 809 W. Wilkes Barre Street
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The properties were brought before the Planning Commission for their determination of blight. The following motions for determination of blight were made:

428 Filbert Street – motion made by Mr. Heilman, seconded by Mr. Sun, approved by all.

58 Centre Square – motion made by Mr. Heilman, seconded by Mr. Bloom, approved by all.

809 W. Wilkes Barre Street - motion was made by Mr. Sun, seconded by Mr. Bloom, approved by all.

Comprehensive Plan Re-write Update. A power point presentation was presented by staff.

EAC Update. None

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:11 PM.