

MORGANTOWN PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

6:30 p.m.

May 14, 2020

By Electronic Means

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Peter DeMasters, Carol Pyles, Tim Stranko, Bill Petros, Michael Shuman, Ronald Dulaney, AJ Hammond, William Blosser

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Sam Loretta

STAFF PRESENT: Christopher M. Fletcher, AICP

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL: DeMasters called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and read the explanation of the how the Planning Commission conducts business by electronic means and rules for public comments.

II. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

III. MATTERS OF BUSINESS:

A. Approval of the March 12, 2020 meeting minutes. Stranko moved to approve as presented; seconded by Shuman.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

A. RZ20-03 / West Virginia University Hospitals, Inc. / 445 Van Voorhis Road: Request by Seth Wilson of Bowles Rice, LLP, on behalf of West Virginia University Hospitals, Inc. for a Zoning Map Amendment to reclassify Seventh Ward Tax District, Tax Map 6, Parcel 76.1 and Seventh Ward Tax District, Tax Map 11, Parcel 258, from OI, Office and Institutional District to B-2, Service Business District.

Fletcher presented the Staff Report and noted the petitioner was present.

DeMasters recognized Seth Wilson, Bowles Rice LLC, representing WVU Hospitals, Inc. who also noted Alan Neptune of WVU Hospitals, Inc. was present as well. Wilson stated his client is requesting to rezone this parcel to adjust the boundaries of the existing B-2 District. WVU Hospitals, Inc. wishes to eventually build a medical office building at the site, but there are no immediate plans. In the short-term, they would use this parcel as a temporary surface parking lot. This is not permitted under the current zoning.

DeMasters asked if there were any questions. Stranko questioned the plans for the parking lot concerning screening, greenspace or other aesthetic improvements or considerations. Neptune stated that they have been working on the aesthetic improvements. Installation of a three-foot-high mound along Van Voorhis Road and Elmer Prince Drive has been completed, which has been hydroseeded,

will somewhat hide the view of parked cars. Neptune added there may be evergreen trees planted later. DeMasters asked for clarification regarding stormwater management. Neptune stated that the lot will need to be paved and stormwater management facilities will be designed and installed.

With no further comments or questions by the Planning Commission, DeMasters asked if there were any members of the public present to speak in favor of or in opposition to the petition. Fletcher confirmed there were no electronic requests to speak on this matter. There being no public comments, DeMasters asked for staff's recommendations, which was read by Fletcher.

DeMasters asked for discussion. Stranko noted he is concerned about the land use scenarios, specifically a surface parking lot that would be permitted by-right in the B-2 District.

Fletcher explained that if City Council approved the subject zoning map amendment, the property owner will be required to go through the building permit process for the surface parking lot use, which includes landscaping requirements. Fletcher reiterated that the parking area use is temporary.

Discussion ensued regarding the temporary period of the surface parking lot, the underutilization of the site, concern that the site is highly visible and serves as a gateway to the regional medical center, and the desire to ensure proper landscaping.

Fletcher noted the temporary use permit process is authorized and enforced by the City Manager, which could occur regardless of the current zoning classification of the site. Fletcher restated that the parking lot use would be required to go through the building permit process, which includes landscaping requirements.

Wilson noted the City's zoning regulations concerning temporary use appear to be more for seasonal purposes. Fletcher reiterated that the temporary use permit process is under the authority of the City Manager.

Pyles asked how many parking spaces would be provided in the temporary surface parking lot. Neptune noted between 100-125 spaces.

Fletcher noted that the ability to continue to grow WVU Hospitals, Inc. facilities is becoming more challenging with the limited available space to expand. Growth on the regional medical campus results in higher demand for employees and related parking. WVU Hospitals, Inc. has been forced to grow parking vertically with the recent addition of two parking garage facilities. Fletcher noted the subject site is of high value, will serve to meet the growth needs of the regional medical facility, and the B-2 zoning classification provides greater flexibility for site design in terms of mixed uses. Fletcher also noted that City Administration is confident the surface parking lot will not be the long-term use of the site.

Stranko moved to forward to City Council a recommendation that they adopt the request zoning classification; seconded by Pyles. Motion passed unanimously.

Fletcher stated that he would forward the City Council meeting dates coming up over the next few months where it will be on their agenda, assuming it continues to progress in a positive manner.

- B. TX20-02 / Administrative / Electric Vehicle Charging Stations:** Administratively requested zoning text amendments to add public and private electric vehicle charging station uses and standards to the Morgantown Planning and Zoning Code. Planning and Zoning Code Sections included are 1329.02 and Table 1331.05.01.

Fletcher presented the Staff Report noting the petitioner was unable to be present and asked that Staff represent him. There being no questions by the Planning Commission, DeMasters asked if there were any members of the public present to speak in favor of or in opposition to the petition. Fletcher confirmed there were no electronic requests to speak on this matter. There being no public comments, DeMasters asked for staff's recommendations, which was read by Fletcher.

Stranko motioned to approve the petition with staff recommended conditions; seconded by Hammond. Motion carried unanimously.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Committee Reports

- Traffic Commission Report: Paving projects have been altered for the year due to the significant loss of revenue resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Paving will be completed as available, but the majority of planned paving will be postponed.
- Other Committees: No reports.

- B. Staff Comments:** Fletcher noted staff is continuing to work with the stakeholders on Wiles Hill Gateway Overlay District recommended in the future Study Area No. 5. A workshop was held with the Planning Commission a couple months ago. Marvin Davis, City GIS Analyst, is preparing 3-D modeling of the proposed building height provisions. These will be included in the materials presented to the Planning Commission. Modeling should be completed next week and the information will be shared with the stakeholders from the neighborhood, the property owner, and hopefully to the Planning Commission in the June meeting packet.

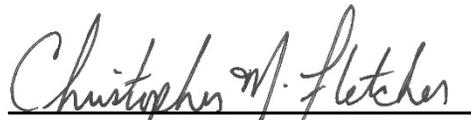
VII. FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMISSION: None.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: 7:30 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED:

June 11, 2020

COMMISSION SECRETARY:


Christopher M. Fletcher, AICP