

# MORGANTOWN PLANNING COMMISSION

## MINUTES

6:30 p.m.

July 14, 2016

Council Chambers

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Peter DeMasters, Bill Petros, William Blosser, Sam Loretta, Bill Kawecki, and Michael Shuman

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Carol Pyles and Tim Stranko

**STAFF PRESENT:** Christopher Fletcher, AICP and John Whitmore, AICP

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

II. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None

III. **MATTERS OF BUSINESS:**

A. Approval of the June 9, 2016 meeting minutes: Kawecki moved to approve as presented; seconded by Blosser. Motion carried unanimously with Petros abstaining due to his absence.

IV. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

A. **MJS16-01 / Stonehurst, LLC / Buckhannon Avenue:** Request by Trevor Lloyd of Cheat Road Engineering, on behalf of Stonehurst, LLC, for a major subdivision approval to create 19 parcels from a tract of land accessed from Buckhannon Avenue; Morgantown District, Map 42, Parcel 25 and Morgan District, Map 10, p/o Parcel 8; R-1, Single-Family Residential District. This petition was tabled at the Planning Commission's May 12, 2016 hearing. POSTPONED BY THE APPLICANT

B. **TX16-03 / Administrative / Bicycle Storage:** Administratively requested Zoning Text Amendments to Articles 1329.02, 1349.08, and 1365.04 of the City's Planning and Zoning Code as they relate to establishing bicycle storage requirements for Developments of Significant Impact. This petition was tabled at the Planning Commission's May 12, 2016 hearing. The Planning Commission held a related workshop with the City's Bicycle Board on June 2, 2016.

Kawecki moved to remove TX16-03 from the table; seconded by Petros. Motion carried unanimously.

Whitmore referred to the Staff Report Supplement and noted the supplement includes additional information obtained after the workshop.

Loretta asked for further clarification on bicycle storage requirements for redeveloped existing buildings. Whitmore explained that it depends on if the development would meet the threshold for a Development of Significant Impact and the location of the development. Whitmore referred to the Planning and Zoning Code to provide further clarification and explanation.

Loretta asked if a building on High Street with retail on the main floor and apartments would be excluded. Whitmore confirmed if the development did not qualify as a Development of Significant Impact.

Fletcher explained that if parking is not required at a non-residential and commercial mixed-use development then no short term bicycle storage would be required and noted that bicycle storage would be required for residential dwellings.

DeMasters referred to the Standard project and asked how many long-term bicycle storage units would be required. Whitmore explained that one space would be required for each apartment unit one space per retail shop. Whitmore noted that 72 cubic feet is required per storage space.

Loretta asked how many spaces would be required for short-term parking of bicycles. Whitmore explained the number of short-term spaces would be based on the commercial use.

Fletcher referred to the Standard project explained there is a lot of unused space in the corners of the parking garage and stated there is ample space to install bicycle storage units.

Shuman referred to the former Masonic Building and asked where a bicycle stand would be located if a commercial space were go within the building.

Fletcher explained that no long-term storage is required if the commercial space is less than 10,000 square feet.

Whitmore explained that if long-term or short-term space is required then space can be found within 300 feet of the building.

Shuman noted that properties downtown are locked in with no extra property for a bicycle stand unless something is anchored in to the sidewalk. Fletcher explained that the variance process is available in those types of situations.

Blosser asked if the City ever implemented short-term bicycle parking in the municipal parking lots. Fletcher referred the question to Mr. Wamsley who could provide an answer during the public comments portion of the hearing.

Kawecki noted that the Parking Authority has been working with some commercial renters downtown to provide space within their structure or their lots and there are options out there.

DeMasters expressed concerns with adding costs to new development as it could make it cost prohibitive. Kawecki noted that automobile space is far more costly than bicycle storage.

DeMasters noted he did not want to sacrifice automobile space for bicycle space and asked if there was infrastructure downtown to allow for additional bicycle stands. Kawecki understood and noted that the dependence on automobiles would diminish with the added bicycle stands.

DeMasters expressed there had to be a happy medium in order to make it cost effective.

Blosser asked if bicycle standards could be listed as guidelines instead of being listed as mandatory for development. Fletcher stated it could be listed as guidelines but "should" statements would most likely not be observed.

Fletcher explained there are current bicycle requirements downtown with the same standards for long-term parking but there is more flexibility with delivering the long-term parking under the proposed standards.

Blosser asked if the long-term and short-term spaced could be combined. Fletcher confirmed but e they are serving two different purposes. Fletcher explained the differences with short- and long-term parking and expressed that some people would not want to store their bicycles at a short-term facility on a daily basis.

Whitmore referred to the Staff Report Supplement and explained why the Bicycle Board feels it is necessary for the change in ordinance and the proposed text amendment.

There being no further comments or questions by the Commission, DeMasters asked if anyone was present to speak in favor of or in opposition to the proposed bicycle standards.

DeMasters recognized Chip Wamsley of 1114 Baton Drive who explained the importance of why this text amendment should be approved as it makes economic sense and will make Morgantown a more viable place and property owners would have more profit for their properties.

Loretta asked how the new plan is more beneficial than the old plan. Wamsley explained the new plan covers a larger area.

Loretta asked for the occupancy of the existing long-term storage spaces. Wamsley stated he did not have the information readily available but noted the Bicycle Board or the Planning Department would have that information.

Fletcher referred to the Beechview project and noted it was a PUD so they were not required to provide bicycle storage, however bicycle spaces were provided but not to the standards within the code. Therefore, some damage could occur with the bicycles. Fletcher noted future projects have been approved for long term bicycle storage but have not been constructed as of yet.

Loretta expressed there is not a way to know if there is a need for the long-term parking. Fletcher confirmed.

Wamsley noted that a City Council member took a picture of the bicycle rack at Beechview Place, which showed the bicycle storage spaces being fully occupied. Fletcher noted he has observed the bicycle racks being full as well.

DeMasters recognized John Rosenbaum of the Suncrest area who noted he is a cyclist and has challenges in the past with finding a place to park his bike. Rosenbaum expressed the need for more parking and noted business would increase for places that offered parking close to their establishment.

DeMasters recognized Frank Gmeindl of Wilson Avenue who stated the infrastructure in Morgantown difficult and expressed a bike lane would be beneficial. Gmeindl noted that Morgantown is the only City in West Virginia that recognized by the National League of America Bicyclists as a bicycle friendly community based on the bicycle plans submitted. Gmeindl expressed the biggest problem in Morgantown is motor vehicle traffic and stated bicycling is a

viable alternative. Gmeindl referred to the Standard project and noted the excessive number of vehicle parking spaces proposed and asked how that is going to benefit the City with all the current traffic problems. Gmeindl expressed Morgantown could be a more viable community by lessening vehicular traffic and encourage growth in bicycling.

DeMasters recognized Christina Hunt of 2612 University Avenue who stated she uses bicycling as her primary transportation and noted that West Virginia is working to increase its image as a bike friendly state. Hunt expressed if cost is a concern, then developers could charge for the bike storage. Hunt noted the plan proposed supports the Long Range Transportation Plan of having 5 percent of trips in something other than cars and therefore the bicycle storage is necessary along with infrastructure.

DeMasters recognized Jeff Hunt if 2612 University Avenue who stated he is a cyclist and does not go to downtown Morgantown due to the lack of parking and noted Morgantown is very accessible but needs more bicycle parking.

DeMasters asked if anyone was present to speak in opposition to the proposed bicycle storage standards. There being none, DeMasters declared the public hearing closed and asked for Staff recommendations.

Whitmore presented the Staff recommendations.

Blosser asked if there was a way to move this plan forward as guidelines and not mandated of development. DeMasters explained that a guideline could not be enforced and if the demand increases then an amendment would have to be completed at a later date.

Blosser expressed the need for development in the City and noted that if the population demands these facilities then they will get them without having to put the burden on the developer.

Discussion ensued with Commissioners discussing the pros and cons of requiring bicycle storage. Loretta noted if a developer sees they are losing occupancy because of bicycle storage then the developer has the opportunity to add storage at that time.

Petros noted a variance could be requested if there is not sufficient space to provide the storage. Fletcher confirmed and explained that existing buildings are non-conforming uses and would not have to comply with the changes in the code.

Fletcher suggested Staff could craft different language that would exempt certain projects. Fletcher stated that in order to promote the Comprehensive and Long Range Transportation Plans, some sort of storage is needed and suggested to at least consider the short-term parking now and work towards long-term parking standards later.

Petros expressed he is in favor of the proposed storage standards as it promotes exercise but expressed concerns with the major arteries in town as being labeled dangerous in mapping prepared by the Bicycle Board. Petros stated if the Planning Commission moves to recommend these standards, the public needs to understand the Planning Commission is not promoting riding their bikes on these dangerous routes and encourages the Bicycle Board to come up with alternate route mapping.

Whitmore explained the mapping provided has a red line to label the corresponding bicycle route and is not meant to be labeled as dangerous. Petros asked for a Bicycle Board member for

further explanation on the color coded routes. A member in the audience confirmed that red is dangerous.

Kawecki noted even recreational biking needs storage and stated the proposed storage is to prepare for the future.

Kawecki moved to forward a favorable recommendation to City Council for Case No. TX16-03 as recommended by Staff and the Bicycle Board; seconded by Petros. Motion carried 5-1 with Shuman voting nay.

## **V. NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. RZ16-04 / Jason Turak / Jerome Street:** Request by Jason Turak for a Zoning Map Amendment to reclassify property from R-1, Single-Family Residential District to R-1A, Single-Family Residential District; Tax Map 22, Parcels 25.1 and 26.

Whitmore presented the Staff Report.

DeMasters recognized Jason Turak of 26 Riverview Drive who stated he is a developer and explained how he gained control of the property. Turak noted the City had once looked at the area for consideration of rezoning to R-1A. Turak stated he spoke with the neighbors surrounding the property and submitted a list of names in favor of the map amendment. Turak explained his plans for the property and stated he would like to make the lots 40 feet in width and 200 feet deep to total 8,000 square feet per lot and further explained the development costs associated with the project for utility extensions. Turak expressed that if zoning of the property is not changed then it will remain vacant as the costs to develop the site are too expensive.

Loretta asked if the lots would be accessed from Jerome Street. Turak confirmed.

DeMasters asked how many houses were visited. Turak explained he visited the three direct neighboring properties and was able to acquire 12-15 signatures.

DeMasters asked if neighbor notifications were sent out. Fletcher confirmed and expressed he is surprised there has not been opposition to the proposed map amendment given the level of opposition demonstrated during the Area 17 Small Area Study process to changing the zoning classification of the

Petros asked how many lots were in the study area as he remembers there was opposition to volume and the possibility for an increase in traffic. Fletcher guesstimated the petitioner's proposed zoning reclassification represents approximately 10-15 percent of the study area.

Loretta asked if the plan to build would be to the scale of the neighborhood. Turak stated his plans are for a typical 1,500 square foot home and would follow City zoning codes.

Fletcher referred to the map in the Staff Report to further explain the area around parcels included in the zoning map amendment petition.

There being no further comments or questions by the Commission, DeMasters asked if anyone was present to speak in favor of or in opposition to petition. There being none, DeMasters declared the public hearing closed and asked for Staff recommendations.

Whitmore read the Staff recommendations.

Fletcher explained the reason for Staff's recommendation to deny the request was based on substantial opposition to zoning reclassification from R-1 to R-1A expressed during the Area 17 Small Area Planning process.

DeMasters expressed he wonders if the people in opposition then are not opposed the petition because it is a small area or is it they are not aware of the petitioner's request.

Kawecki noted the opposition before was due to size and scale of development and the belief that their land would be acquired or taken. Kawecki expressed it is hard to find fault in what is being requested as it follows the Comprehensive Plan and is located across from R-1A and next to R-3.

Fletcher noted the individuals highly involved during Area 17 Small Area Plan process are not listed among the names in support of the petition presented by Turak.

Petros expressed favor in the amendment as it does not significantly impact the road and because it is located at the end of the road but noted something needs to be done in the future for when others come forward with petitions.

Petros moved to forward a favorable recommendation to City Council for approval as requested by the petitioner for Case No. RZ16-04; seconded by Shuman. Motion carried 5-1 with Kawecki voting nay.

- B. TX16-06 / Administrative / Administrative Appeals and the Board of Zoning Appeals:** Administratively requested Zoning Text Amendments to Articles 1383, 1389 and 1391 of the City's Planning and Zoning Code as they relate to Administrative Appeals and to the establishment, powers and duties, and judicial review of the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Fletcher presented the Staff Report. There being no comments or questions by the Commission, DeMasters asked if anyone was present to speak in favor of or in opposition to proposed zoning text amendments. There being none, DeMasters declared the public hearing closed and asked for Staff recommendations.

Fletcher read the Staff recommendations.

Kawecki moved to forward a favorable recommendation to City Council for approval as presented by Staff for Case No. TX16-06; seconded by Blosser. Motion carried unanimously.

- C. TX16-07 / Administration / Parking Lot and Parking Structure Uses:** Administratively requested Zoning Text Amendments to Article 1329.02, Table 1331.05.01 "Permitted Land Uses", Article 1365.04, and Article 1365.07 as they relate to parking lot and parking structure uses.

Fletcher presented the Staff Report. There being no comments or questions by the Commission, DeMasters asked if anyone was present to speak in favor of or in opposition to recommendations report. There being none, DeMasters declared the public hearing closed and asked for Staff recommendations.

Fletcher read the Staff recommendations.

Kawecki moved to forward a favorable recommendation to City Council to approval as presented by the Staff for Case No. TX16-07; seconded by Petros. Motion carried unanimously.

## **VI. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **A. Committee Reports**

- Traffic Commission: Blosser stated that Councilman Redmond put forth a set of guidelines and procedures to clarify the public interaction with the traffic commission.
- Green Team: No report.

### **B. Staff Comments: Fletcher stated Charles McEwuen has resigned from the Planning Commission and the City Manager is working to identify a candidate.**

Fletcher stated the Downtown Design Standards Development project continues to move forward and hopefully the steering committee can meet in late August or early September 2016. Fletcher explained the intent and scope of the project and noted it is a challenging policy development project with lots of moving parts and conflicting desires.

Fletcher stated the Zoning Regulations Objections workshop will be scheduled after the summer months in response to interests expressed by Commissioners for the workshop to be held at a time when a higher level of public participation can be captured.

Fletcher stated a consultant has been retained to redraft sign regulations given the numerous variances granted over the past ten years. Fletcher noted the project's scope of work was included in the hearing packet.

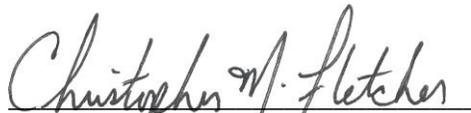
## **VII. FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMISSION:**

Fletcher noted from the Monongalia County Planning Commission was received requesting for appointment of ex officio members on each of the respective Planning Commissions. Fletcher suggested and the Commission agreed to schedule a joint workshop with the MCPC to discuss.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT: 8:25 PM**

MINUTES APPROVED:

COMMISSION SECRETARY:

  
Christopher M. Fletcher, AICP