

APPROVED

**MUNICIPALITY OF MT. LEBANON
PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

DATE: Tuesday, March 27, 2012

TIME: 7 p.m.

PLACE: Mt. Lebanon Municipality – Commission Chambers

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Pope, Rick Sabeh, Jackie Dunn, Alan London

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Municipal Planner Keith McGill, Municipal Engineer Dan Deiseroth.

Agenda Items

Minutes of the January 24, 2012, Planning Board meeting. Mr. London moved and Mr. Sabeh seconded to approve the January 24, 2012, Planning Board minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

None

New Business

- a. Request for a recommendation on an Ordinance of Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania amending Chapter XX (Zoning) of the Mt. Lebanon Code, Part 8, (Requirements Applying to All Districts) Section 823.5 (Authorized Signs). This ordinance adds a new Section 823.5.3.10 Internal Signs.

This ordinance adds a new Section 823.5.3.10 to permit and regulate Internal Signs in the R-1, R-2 and OS-A Zoning Districts. The ordinance: adds a definition for Internal Signs, setback and spacing requirements; regulates size and height; regulates illumination, and adds maintenance requirements.

Mr. McGill gave a brief overview of this ordinance. He said this was a request from the Commission to look at the ordinance to provide for the installation of ball field signs. This could be one means to allow the athletic association to generate additional funds for field improvements and maintenance. There were two basic ways of handling this where some communities used these as sponsorship signs, meaning a local business could purchase a sign with their name and their support of the baseball association. The second sign would be a general advertisement sign. The second sign could possibly generate a little higher revenue. Some communities viewed this as a policy issue rather than a zoning issue, where the recreation department controls the signage. In discussions with the municipal solicitor it was felt a zoning ordinance amendment would provide a level of regulation that would be appropriate. The signs would be required to face the interior of a field and be affixed to an

outfield fence. It would only be visible from the vantage point of those attending the event and not from a nearby roadway. They would be no higher than 10 feet and would not be illuminated. The face of the sign would not be visible from a public road with 150 feet, nor would it be visible from an occupied structure on adjacent property within 200 feet.

Mr. Pope asked if there was approximate revenue amount.

Mr. McGill said that there was no determined amount yet because it would be based on the response.

Ms. Dunn asked if other local communities allow for this.

Mr. McGill said he is not aware of another municipality close to Mt. Lebanon that has a similar regulation.

Mr. London asked if the sign would only be seen by people inside the field. He questioned the wording of the ordinance and possible inconsistencies.

Mr. McGill said the sign is intended to be viewed from inside the field only.

Mr. Sabeh said a sign would be designed with the intention that would be viewed by those inside the field.

Mr. London said he is opposed to the ordinance because he feels it is inconsistent with general signage regulations under the zoning code which is intended to permit signs on business premises that are necessary for conducting business. He also feels the fields are open space and greenspace, and benefit the community as such, especially in the winter. He thinks there may be other ways to raise funds, but is pleased that they are trying to do that without using tax money. He doesn't feel the benefits of the funds raised would outweigh the general appearance in the public realm.

Mr. Sabeh also indicated he is not for this ordinance. Currently the zoning ordinance does not allow a 10 foot opaque fence on private property, yet this ordinance would allow for that in public property. He also feels that organizations that want to use the various fields should pay for the use of those fields. Currently the hockey association must pay for ice time, but the soccer or baseball associations do not pay for field time.

Mr. McGill said the youth sports alliance does make a contribution to help take care of the fields, which they raise through registration fees.

Ms. Dunn said she is concerned with not being able to regulate the content of the signs.

Mr. Sabeh asked who would be responsible for inspecting the signs for wear and tear.

Mr. McGill said that would be done through the inspection office.

Mr. Pope asked if there would be a duration for the signs; would they be sold for a season, or a year.

Mr. McGill said there is no language in the ordinance related to that. It could be up to the athletic association to determine if this would be for a year or a season, since it is to help generate funds. There is nothing in this ordinance, or in the regular zoning ordinance, stating a time limit on a sign, unless the sign is identified in the ordinance as a temporary sign.

Mr. Kluck said the golf course and the ice rink sells signage through packages, paying a certain amount of money for a certain number of years. He said the golf course signs are on tee markers.

Mr. London asked if the zoning ordinance regulates signs inside of buildings.

Mr. McGill said not necessarily, but there are regulations relating to 50% window coverage for internal signs in the business districts. But there are no regulations for signs that are visible only from the inside of a building.

Mr. London said he doesn't think signs inside of a building should be regulated.

Mr. McGill said dasher board signs at the ice rink are not regulated by the zoning ordinance.

Mr. Kluck asked how this ordinance would affect naming rights of a field.

Mr. Sabeh said the naming of a field is different than advertising signs.

Citizen Comments

There were no citizen comments.

Mr. London moved and Mr. Sabeh seconded to recommend disapproval of the proposed ordinance amending the zoning ordinance regarding signs. The motion passed unanimously.

- b. Request for a recommendation for the sale of 788 and 794 Washington Road. The Commission is currently contemplating the sale of the two structures located at 788 and 794 Washington Road (former Parking Authority properties). The Commission is requesting the planning board's recommendation with respect to this matter. Under the Municipalities Planning Code, certain proposed actions of the Commission must be submitted to the planning board for its recommendations when the proposed action relates to the location, erection, demolition, removal or sale of any public structure located within the municipality. The recommendations of the planning agency should be a specific statement as to whether or not the proposed action is in accordance with the objectives of the comprehensive plan, and should be made in writing to the Commission within 45 days.

Mr. McGill said the municipality took over the operations and maintenance of the parking authority at the beginning of the year. 794 is rented by SHACOG with a portion of the property subletted to the Historical Society; 788 is still in use on a limited basis by the municipality, but is mostly vacant. The Commission has had discussions regarding the best course of action for those properties; should the municipality continue to maintain the properties; do they continue to rent 794, and possibly rent 788. There are limited uses to those properties because of the zoning. The properties could be rented as single-family homes, or could be used by a public or semi-public entity to lease the property. The historical society has expressed an interest in the 788 property to move their operations to that building either by leasing the property or possibly buying the property. A decision does need to be made at some point regarding the future of those parcels. The municipality is in the interviewing process for the 2012 Comprehensive Plan. These properties will be taken in consideration for the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Kluck said there are time constraints because of leasing agreements that will be coming due soon for 794.

Ms. Dunn asked if the Planning Board was making recommendations based on the current comprehensive plan. She also asked why this should be considered now instead of after a new comprehensive plan has been developed.

Mr. McGill said the Commission requested this at this time because the current tenant will need advance notice if the property is being sold so that they have adequate time to relocate to a new space. The historical society has expressed an interest in the 788 property, but regardless a public process needs to be followed for selling the property.

Mr. London asked if the planning board will be involved with the 2012 comprehensive plan.

McGill said a steering committee has not been established yet. He wants to give the consultant that is retained as much input and flexibility as possible. He envisions the planning board in a lead role but is unsure of what that will look like at this time. There are several options being discussed at this time, but no decisions have been made. In Mr. McGill's opinion the planning board will be intimately involved with the comprehensive plan process.

Mr. London asked if the planning board would have a voice in the choice of the consultant.

Mr. McGill said a selection committee had been chosen containing Municipal Manager Steve Feller, himself, Mr. Pope, Commissioner John Bendel, and Jim DiGregory, the chair of the Mt. Lebanon Partnership.

Mr. London asked what types of business were being looked into.

Mr. McGill said requests for proposals were sent to 13 companies, along with public advertisements. Nine responses were received, all of which have professional planners on

staff that would be part of the consultant team. The respondents range from one consultant made up of three independent contractors who are one individual firm, to a consultant who has all of the required staff in-house, two others have most parties in-house but with some outside contractors.

Mr. London voiced concerns with selling the two properties and then them being developed in a way that was inconsistent with the comprehensive plan.

Mr. Sabeh said that in order to sell the property a public process must be observed.

Mr. McGill said the comprehensive plan states those properties can be sold but they should be developed per the Chan Krieger Strategic Plan for Washington Road.

Citizen Comments

Dave Egler, 121 Poplar Drive, gave the board spreadsheets based on the milage rates and county assessment of these properties, which indicates the values of properties are going down. He said Lou Gorski, the head of SHACOG, said they are interested in staying at the 794 location. The historical society is fast out-growing the downstairs of 794. He believes the 788 property would be a perfect location for the historical society. SHACOG is paying approximately \$1,000 a month in rent, but selling it now would take any future plans off the table. He asked the board to not recommend selling 788 and 794 Washington Road.

Mr. Pope asked Mr. McGill if this motion is solely on recommending if the sale of these two properties is in accordance with the comprehensive plan.

Mr. McGill said that assessment is correct, and the board is free to recommend any other options, but those would need to be added to the recommendation to the Commission.

Mr. Sabeh moved and Ms. Dunn seconded determining that the sale of 788 and 794 Washington Road is in accordance with the adopted Comprehensive Plan, so long as, the sale of the property would be completed through a standard RFP or similar process which defines the intended use and any development restrictions in a manner consistent with the current Comprehensive Plan. The motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments

There were no other citizen comments.

Mr. McGill said he received an application from Fresh Market today. This item should be on the April meeting agenda.

Next Meeting — The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Mt. Lebanon Planning Board is Tuesday, April 24, 2012, at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.