

APPROVED

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

DATE: Tuesday, January 28, 2014

TIME: 7 p.m.

PLACE: Mt. Lebanon Municipality – Commission Chambers

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Rick Sabeh, Dennis Pittman, Carolyn Byham, Bill Pope

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

Agenda Items

- a. Minutes of the November 26, 2013, Planning Board meeting. Mr. Pittman moved and Mrs. Byham seconded to approve the November 26, 2013, Planning Board minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Pittman asked if anything had happened with the property on Cedar Boulevard.

Mr. McGill said the property now belongs to the municipality.

Old Business

- a. None

New Business

- a. Request for a recommendation on An Ordinance of Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania. Amending the Zoning District Map

Ordinance (Bill No. 2-14), is an ordinance that the Mt. Lebanon Zoning District Map made a part of the Zoning Ordinance in Section 106.3.1, of Chapter XX, Zoning, shall be amended by changing the zoning classification of the following certain property from R-2 Single-Family Residential District to R-4 Multi-Family-Mixed Residential District.

All that certain parcel of land, being Block and Lot 97-F-185, having a street address of 2904 Castlegate Avenue, most formerly known as the Bradley Center, to be rezoned from R-2 Single Family Residential District to R-4 Multi-Family-Mixed Residential District.

This parcel is one of the three key sites for redevelopment identified in the Comprehensive Plan. The intent of the Comprehensive Plan for these sites was to understand what the effect of the current ordinance provisions are compared to what the community's ideas for potential redevelopment and sustainability are. The recommendation for this site was to provide for additional density through an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. McGill said the existing property is zoned R-2, was most recently used by the Bradley Center, and before that was Toner Institute. At one time the Salvation Army had submitted an application for this property but then decided to build on the site next door. The Comprehensive Plan, recently adopted by the municipality, looked at three key development sites, this being one of those sites. The recommendation of the Comprehensive Plan was to look at a mixed use overlay to provide for additional density, as well as possible commercial development on this site. The property has been on the market for a number of years without much interest to this point. It is currently tax exempt. The property is currently zoned R-2, single-family district which allows for single family detached housing, schools as a conditional use, public and semi-public uses, places of worship, municipal facilities or hospitals. There is also a continuing care overlay which provides for a use such as the Devonshire. Seton LaSalle was developed as school, as a conditional use. While this site and the various sites around it are zoned R-2, the bulk of land developed has been other than single-family residential, except for the single-family homes on McNeilly Road. The applicant is requesting the property be re-zoned to R-4, which would provide for single-family detached dwellings, single-family attached dwellings, duplexes, a mass transit passenger station, hospice care, and a number of conditional uses that mirror the R-2 zoning. The Comprehensive Plan recommended a mixed use overlay district which would provide for townhouses, or as a conditional use, office buildings – excluding medical clinics or facilities – or a health club. The MX overlay district provides for development but ties that development into the lot area and yard requirements of the underlying district. An R-3 zoning provides for many of same uses as an R-4.

Mr. Deiseroth summarized a memo from Gateway Engineers dated January 9, 2014, reviewing the legal description for the zoning.

Ernie Sota, part of the development team, provided aerial views of the property. The Comprehensive Plan calls for a higher density development than what they are proposing. They are proposing a four-story, multi-family building for seniors that would be age-restricted, and town houses. The senior building would be rental, and the town houses would be for sale.

Mr. McGill clarified that what is before the board tonight is a recommendation to change the zoning of this property based on the merits of that rezoning itself, and not any possible future land development proposals.

Mr. Sota says he feels this project is in concert with the Comprehensive Plan. If the rezoning is approved, then they would go before the planning board with an application for development.

Ken Joseph, attorney, Pepper Hamilton, representing Mr. Sota. They brought information regarding their project to show the board how they would like to develop this property should the rezoning be approved. The R-2 zoning makes development on this property very difficult; rezoning to R-4 would allow for greater flexibility.

Ben Kelley, Oxford Development, potential development partners, agrees with the comments previously made that this is one project that could be submitted should the rezoning go through. There is a great need for a senior building in Mt. Lebanon.

Paula Shultz, 597 Dorchester Avenue, is concerned with how detached from Mt. Lebanon this property is, and if townhouses are built, where would any children go to school? She has concerns with current traffic issues as these are narrow streets and very busy.

Mr. Sabeh said that whatever development happens would need to go through full site plan review and land development which would include traffic studies and storm water review. There are multiple levels of review and studies that would need to be done.

Liz Merrell, 933 Dorchester Avenue, is for the rezoning. She would like to see development done as the existing buildings are in poor condition.

Amber Britton, 995 McNeilly Road, is concerned with rezoning this property, and feels a variance would be sufficient. Anything other than a residential development would be detrimental to the surrounding community.

Mr. McGill said a request for a variance would most likely not be successful because they would be requesting a variance for a use that's provided for in another zoning district. A change in the zoning is procedurally the most appropriate way to approach the site. He said the Comprehensive Plan suggested a mixed use overlay, which would provide for commercial development; however an R-4 zoning provides for residential, but very limited commercial, development. He then proceeded to describe the process for this recommendation, if passed, going before the Commission, who would then introduce the ordinance at a public meeting, set and hold a public hearing, then take an action on the ordinance. Those residents surrounding this property that received notice of tonight's planning board meeting, would also receive notification of the public hearing that would be conducted by the Mt. Lebanon Commission.

Mr. Pope asked why an R-4 zoning was being recommended instead of an R-3.

Mr. McGill said the zoning request was made by an applicant for an R-4 zoning. He did look at other zones such as the R-3; there are not a lot of differences between R-3 and R-4, however an R-3 district allows for a mobile home site, while an R-4 does not, and there are some minor differences in setback requirements. The R-4 zoning is the best fit based on the Comprehensive Plan. A mixed use overlay provides for more commercial development.

Mr. Pittman asked how a senior building or senior high rise could legally be restricted by age.

Mr. Joseph said there are financing options available which are restrictive to buildings for those aged 62 and older, or in some cases, 55 and older.

Mr. Sabeh asked if an R-4 district can limit by age.

Mr. McGill indicated that it cannot.

Mr. Kelley said if Oxford Development were to develop a senior housing project there are restrictions with financing; there's an ownership entity tied into the developer that has to hold on to the property for at least 15 years. After that they would have the ability to sell that property should they desire.

Mr. Pope moved and Mrs. Byham seconded to recommend the ordinance as proposed and find it to be consistent with the recommendation for additional density as identified in the adopted Comprehensive Plan. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Sabeh recognized the new Commission liaison, Kelly Fraasch.

Next Meeting - The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Mt. Lebanon Planning Board is **Tuesday, February 25, 2014**, at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.