

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

DATE: Tuesday, January 21, 2020

TIME: 7 p.m.

PLACE: Mt. Lebanon Municipality – Commission Chambers

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrew George, Dennis Pittman, Clint Rounsfull

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Municipal Planner Ian McMeans, Municipal Engineer Dan Deiseroth

1. Minutes

- a. December 17, 2019, meeting. Mr. Pittman moved and Mr. George seconded to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2019, Planning Board Meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Old Business

- a. Request for recommendation for an ordinance amendment. Victor-Wetzel Associates has requested a text amendment to Chapter XX of the Municipal Code, *Zoning*, to Section 208 which contains regulations for the “R-7 High Density, High-Rise, Multi-Family, Limited Commercial District.” The requested ordinance amendment would:
 - i. Add “Townhouse Dwelling” as a Use by Right in the R-7 Zoning District;
 - ii. Add area and bulk regulations, lot width standards, and additional standards for Townhouse Units to the R-7 Zoning District;
 - iii. Add “Townhouse Unit” as a defined term.

Steven Victor, Victor-Wetzel Associates, said his colleagues made a presentation at the last planning board meeting, which he was unable to attend, and he came this evening to answer any questions the board might have.

Mr. Pittman asked for clarity regarding height restrictions that might be needed for development.

Mr. McMeans said at the last meeting there was some discussion because there were no height restrictions on the last proposal. The planning board discussed potentially including one in their recommendation. The current height requirements in the R-7 district is 98 feet, but in other districts where townhouses are permitted the height requirements is 35 feet. The question from the board is whether a 35-foot height requirement would be prohibitive.

Mr. Victor said no it would not be prohibitive. He feels that the architecture of the townhouses would be self-limiting. Townhouses are not typically five or six stories high, which then would most likely be apartments, if they were stacked housing. He said they do not have a problem with a 35-foot height requirement.

Mr. George said he is concerned with unintended consequences this change might have for the rest of the properties in the district, such as the property owned by the church, which could be more easily developed.

Mr. George asked if there had been any thought to ingress and egress; if driveways would be from the rear of the property and not off Washington Road.

Mr. Victor said he was anticipating any site plan concerns would be discussed in the land development review process. They are looking at how to conceptually lay that out, which would be similar to what they had proposed with the previous condominium proposal. The main access would be from Kenmont, with a secondary access from Bower Hill and no accesses onto Washington Road.

Mr. Pittman asked if they would be impacted by the right-turn lane from Bower Hill to Washington Road that was approved by PennDOT.

Mr. Victor said they have made provisions for that lane in all of their designs. They have already dedicated the easement for that purpose.

Citizen Comments

Dan Early, 322 Pennsylvania Boulevard, said he was impacted a year ago by a proposed development of townhouses. He asked if there is a definition of townhouse in the municipal code. He said the proposed townhouses on Pennsylvania Boulevard were going to be one building from side of the property to the other, providing very little green space, and not conforming to the density of the neighborhood. He was unsure of what it meant to add "Townhouse Unit" as a defined term.

Mr. McMeans read the definition of Townhouse Dwelling from the municipal code. He said the proposed amendment would give a definition of Townhouse Unit which would describe the entire townhouse structure as a whole.

Mr. Early said he is concerned with how this would affect other zones such as R-3. He asked if there was a way to control the density of a townhouse unit or make green space requirements. He is concerned with making a single-family home area too dense because of townhouse units.

Mr. George asked why they were defining townhouse units separately for R-7.

Mr. McMeans explained this definition will help define side yard setbacks, so a term for the whole structure is needed.

Mr. Early asked if a percentage of green space could be imposed based on the size of the townhouses.

Mr. McMeans said there are minimum lot area requirements, with no more than 13 units per acre, in the R-3 district. In the R-7 district, which is currently the highest density district, the minimum

lot area is much smaller than in the R-3 district, but there is a maximum building coverage of a lot of 50% in the R-7 district.

Mr. Early said he would like to see a definition of townhomes for all of the district, and not specifically for the R-7 district.

Mr. Pittman said he appreciated Mr. Early's concerns, but they are not appropriate for what the developer is proposing for the R-7 district this evening. This might be a conversation the planning board has in the future.

Mr. McMeans said the planning board has the ability and capacity to recommend changes to the zoning ordinance and would notify residents in the districts affected by those proposed changes.

Mr. Victor said there was nothing in the proposed ordinance that would affect the R-3 district.

Steven Apke, 427 Kenmont Avenue, said he supports having this property developed, but an R-7 district is high density, high rise, multi-family, and wants to know why is it being proposed to add townhouses. He is concerned about making changes to the ordinance specifically so one developer can build something. He's also concerned about the potential left-hand turn from Bower Hill Road that could cause even more traffic tie-ups.

Mr. McMeans said there is a process in place that any private individual, or developer, can apply to a change to the zoning ordinance which is then reviewed by the planning board. The developer came to the municipality, made an application to change the zoning code, and the next step in the process is for the planning board to review the request. The planning board makes a recommendation to the Commission who then conducts a public hearing that the public is invited to attend.

Donald Moshart, 349 Ashland Avenue, asked if the definition of townhome would be restricted to R-7, or would there be an opportunity for it to be applied to the R-3 district.

Mr. McMeans said the definition that he read earlier in the meeting would be applied to all districts. The other specific area and bulk regulations, such as setbacks and minimum lot widths, would only apply to R-7.

Mr. Deiseroth said most townhouses are between five and six units, but it would be up to the board to determine what the number would be.

Mr. Moshart said he would like to have a voice regarding any changes that might affect the R-3 district where he lives.

There was discussion between Mr. Moshart, the planning board, and the municipal planner regarding proper procedure for notifying residents of potential zoning code changes.

Tim Rogers, 10 Oak Way, asked about the egress to Bower Hill Road, or Oak Way.

Mr. McMeans said the board cannot answer that question because there is no land development before them at this time. He suggested that Mr. Rogers speak with Mr. Victor after the meeting to discuss options.

Mr. Rounsfull said it is worth noting the R-7 district is a high-density district, but the proposed change to the zoning ordinance would allow for a less dense project to be developed.

Mr. Pittman moved and Mr. George seconded to recommend approval of an ordinance to amend Section 208 of Chapter XX of the Mt Lebanon Code, entitled "Zoning," to add "Townhouse Dwelling" as a Use by Right to the R-7 Zoning District, add area and bulk regulations, lot width standards, and additional standards for Townhouse Units, and to add "Townhouse Unit" as a defined term. Additionally, recommend to include a maximum building height of 35 feet for townhouse units in the R-7 district. The motion carried unanimously.

3. New Business

None

4. Citizen Comments

There were no citizen comments.

5. Next Meeting — The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Mt. Lebanon Planning Board is **Tuesday, February 18, 2020**, at 7:00 p.m.

6. Adjournment

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