

City Planning Commission

Erie, Pennsylvania

November 21, 2017

-Minutes-

MEMBERS OF THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION:

The regular meeting of the City Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, November 21, 2017 at **1:00 pm** in Room 500, Municipal Building, 626 State Street.

1. *Roll Call*

Members Present: Thomas Dworzanski, Armand Chimenti, and Richard Speicher

Members Absent: Mark Kloecker and Don Marinelli

2. *Approval of October 17, 2017 meeting minutes.* On a motion by **Mr. Speicher**, seconded by **Mr. Dworzanski**, the October 17, 2017 meeting minutes were approved unanimously as received.

3. *The Planning Commission reviewed a subdivision submitted by the City of Erie School District for Irving School (between Cascade and Plum Streets and West 23rd and West 24th Streets). The new lot will be 1.77 acres. The residual lot will be 2.33 acres. The property is located in the R-2 District. See below.*

4. *The Planning Commission reviewed a subdivision submitted by the City of Erie School District for Roosevelt School (between Washington Place and Cranberry Street and West 22nd and West 24th Streets). The new lot will be 3.58 acres. The residual lot will be 4.97 acres. The property is located in the R-2 District.*

Randolph Pruchnicki from the Erie School District was present to describe both of the subdivision requests. Mr. Pruchnicki explained that the two schools are now closed as part of the school district's recent facilities planning. He indicated that the subdivisions are being done to separate the school buildings from the remaining area of each school campus. Both schools have large open/playground areas in addition to the area immediately surrounding the buildings. Creating the separate lots will allow the school district to market / offer the buildings/lots separately without affecting Ainsworth field and the other existing park/play area.

On a motion by **Mr. Speicher**, and seconded by **Mr. Chimenti**, the Planning Commission approved both subdivisions since all provisions of the Erie City Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance were met.

5. *City Council respectfully requested the City Planning Commission to review the proposed Alternative Lawn Ordinance and to make a recommendation to City Council for any appropriate amendments to the International Property Maintenance Code Ordinance and report recommendations back to City Council for consideration.*

Sarah Galloway, the Erie City Arborist and author of the Alternative Lawn Ordinance, was present to describe the background on creating the proposed ordinance and discuss the content of the latest draft.

Several members of the public were present who expressed their support for the Alternative Lawn Ordinance.

There was discussion of a couple of the technical details of the proposed language. One item discussed was a provision regarding plant height and distance restrictions from the street curb vs. the edge of the right-of-way (ROW). A modification to the language was suggested to have the provision be consistent with the zoning ordinance height and distance restrictions relative to the front property line/ROW. Another provision defining the allowable percentage of grasses present in an alternative landscape was also discussed. It was decided to remove that provision from the draft.

There was also discussion and questions relating to potential enforcement issues for the ordinance, since the City's property maintenance inspectors are not specifically trained to identify the alternative plant species. Ms. Galloway indicated that she would provide the technical assistance to the inspectors when there were questionable alternative landscape areas.

A motion was made by **Mr. Speicher** and seconded by **Mr. Dworzanski** to recommend adoption of the ordinance in concept only; not the final content and language. The recommendation was to have the solicitor's office prepare the final language of the ordinance for adoption by council. The motion was approved unanimously.

6. *City Council respectfully requested the City Planning Commission to review regulations, or lack thereof, within the City concerning mobile/manufactured homes, and to make a recommendation to City Council for any appropriate amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to permit such residential dwelling types with proper safeguards and restrictions.*

The Planning Commission continued their discussion of proposed changes to the ordinance regarding mobile/manufactured homes. The Planning Commission wants to review a revised draft incorporating the latest comments/suggestions to the density requirements for mobile home parks, individual lot sizes, and setbacks prior to making further recommendations.

On a motion by **Mr. Chimenti**, and seconded by **Mr. Speicher**, the item was tabled until next month to review the latest revised draft and to continue research on the proposed amendments.

7. *City Council respectfully requested the City Planning Commission to review existing regulations and proposed amendments to Section 306 – Condition Uses – Waterfront Districts and 306.10 – Public Access – Waterfront Districts, of the City of Erie Zoning Ordinance, and to make recommendations to City Council for appropriate amendments. The goal of the proposed amendments is to clarify the existing ordinance language in order to provide clear and concise regulations for future waterfront development and free public access.*

The Planning Commission had previously requested a legal opinion from the City Solicitor's office regarding the proposed amendment language submitted for review. City Solicitor Greg Karle was present to discuss his review of the proposed language/text changes to Section 306 and 306.10. Mr. Karle stated that his review of Section 306 and 306.10 found that the current language in the ordinance is reasonable regarding public access requirements, and did not recommend making the proposed text changes. Discussion followed regarding waterfront public access. Mr. Karle noted during the discussion that the recent appeal involving the interpretation of Section 306 requirements regarding public access was resolved in favor of the City.

Discussion followed regarding other possible amendments to the waterfront zoning regulations, such as adding / defining permitted uses in the waterfront zoning districts. Members agreed that looking at the zoning ordinance and Section 306 in its entirety to identify possible amendments in other areas as well was the best strategy moving forward prior to making any formal recommendation to council.

Brenda Sandberg, executive director of the Western Pennsylvania Port Authority, was present and stated that the Port Authority was in the process of finalizing the update to their master plan. Ms. Sandberg suggested a separate meeting after the plan is final to discuss possible amendments to the waterfront zoning regulations, including Section 306.

On a motion by **Mr. Speicher**, and seconded by **Mr. Chimenti**, the item was tabled to allow for additional coordination with the Port Authority and further review of all the waterfront regulations in the zoning ordinance.

8. *With all business completed, the Commission adjourned.*