

The Easton Planning Commission met on Wednesday, July 15, 2009 in the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Council Chambers, Easton City Hall. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Charles Elliott. Present: Charles Elliott, Robert Sun, Mary Viscomi (via conference call) and Roger Paul. Also in attendance were staff members Becky Bradley, Director, Carl Manges, City Planner and Tina Woolverton, Secretary. Joel Scheer, City Solicitor was present.

Mr. Elliott took a moment to welcome the new member of the Planning Commission, Mr. Dennis Lieb.

The agenda was approved.

A motion to approve the revised minutes of the July 1st, 2009 meeting was made by Mr. Sun, seconded by Mr. Lieb, approved by all.

**Privilege of the Floor.** None.

**Land Development and Special Exception for Development in the Flood Plain – Scott Park.**

Mr. Manges stated the applicant, the City of Easton, proposes to develop a Visitor Gathering Place, a drop off area, new pedestrian and bike paths and provide landscape improvements to Scott Park. The proposed improvements are located in the River Corridors and Other Green Areas Zoning District, Block Class A where the proposed B3 use is permitted. Scott Park is located in the FEMA defined 100 year flood plain. Mr. Manges said the Visitors Gathering Place will have a stage for performances, movie showings and other events. The audience area will consist of grassy areas and granite sitting walls. The Gathering Center will eliminate the ten off-street parking spaces currently on the site. Mr. Manges said the proposed drop-off area is part of the narrowing of Larry Holmes Drive from four lanes to two lanes. A grass medial strip with nine Bell Tower Columnar Maples and bollard lights is also proposed along Larry Holmes Drive from the intersection of Sitgreaves Street to the drop-off area. Mr. Lieb asked if improvements were planned for the other side of Larry Holmes Drive as well. Mr. Davis Hopkins, Director of Public Works for the City of Easton said this proposal did not include the other side of the street other than ADA improvements which were planned. Mr. Sun questioned the time frame of the improvements and the commitment with DRJTBC to complete the improvements by December 31, 2009. Mr. Hopkins said they plan to put the project out to bid the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of August and receive responses by the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of September. Construction should begin in early October. Mr. Sun questioned road disturbance and Mr. Hopkins said there would be intermittent lane closures. Mr. Elliott questioned the variance for off-street parking. Mr. Manges said he believed 12 off-street parking spaces were required. Mr. Elliott questioned the selection of the tree species proposed. Ms. West, Landscape Designer for Andropogon Associates said the trees were chosen for their tolerance of a wide range of moisture conditions and their suitability to the site. Richard Hieshetter of 304 W. Monroe Street distributed a drawing to the Commission. He said he feels this is a very historic park and would like to see a path to a platform containing three flags, the flag of the United States, the State of Pennsylvania and the City of Easton flag. He expressed concern that the proposed trees in the grassy median would block the view of the performance area. He also said that as the proposed bald Cypress trees are deciduous and will lose their leaves, and thought more attention needed to be given to including evergreens in the landscape. Mr. Elliott said there had been discussions on installing history boards throughout the parks and paths. Mr. Hopkins stated the scope of the work being looked at now was the very initial scope of work and is not where the project ends. A motion to accept the resolution granting conditional final approval of the development plan and recommending approval of the special exception to the Zoning Hearing Board was made by Mr. Sun, seconded by Mr. Paul, approved by all.

**Land Development and Special Exception for development in the Flood Plain – Riverside Park.** Mr. Manges said the applicant, the City of Easton, proposes new pedestrian paths,

landscape improvements and two tents for the existing amphitheatre in Riverside Park. The proposed improvements are located in the River Corridors and Other Green Areas Zoning District, Block Class A where the proposed B3 use is permitted. Riverside Park is located in the FEMA defined 100 year flood plain. Mr. Manges said the plan calls for paths and granite sitting walls with lighting. The Breast Cancer Garden is being moved to a bigger location, and a tot lot is being proposed for the current location of the Breast Cancer Garden. Two tents are being proposed to provide relief from the sun for the performers and audience of the amphitheatre. A variance from the Zoning Hearing Board will be required for the two tents. Mr. Lieb asked if it was planned to move the Columbus statue to a location where it would line up and draw people to it. Mr. Hopkins said it is not part of this plan, but future enhancements are planned. Mr. Paul questioned what the surface of the walking paths would be. Mr. Hopkins said they would be paved in brown asphalt. Mr. Sun asked if restrooms were being added. Mr. Hopkins said the current restroom is a new facility built after the last flood in 2006. Mr. Elliott noted the decorative bike rack was not addressed in the resolution and recommended it be added. A motion to accept the revised resolution granting conditional final approval of the development plan and recommending approval of the special exception to the Zoning Hearing Board was made by Mr. Paul, seconded by Mr. Lieb, approved by all.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20PM.