

The Easton Planning Commission met on Wednesday, February 1, 2012 in the 6th Floor Council Chambers, Easton City Hall. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Charles Elliott. Present: Charles Elliott, James Bloom, Robert Sun, Dennis Lieb, Bonnie Winfield and Ronald Shipman. Also in attendance were staff members Becky Bradley, AICP, Director of Planning and Codes, Brian Gish, Chief Planner; Carl Manges, City Planner; and Tina Woolverton, Secretary. Solicitor Joel Scheer was present.

The revised agenda was approved.

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 4, 2012 meeting was made by Mr. Shipman, seconded by Mr. Lieb, approved by all.

Privilege of the Floor. None

Special Exception – 1210 Northampton Street. Mr. Manges said the applicants, Val and Dean Piacentini, propose to establish a Retail Specialty (T-Shirt Screen Printing) use in the currently vacant first floor of an existing mixed-use two-story building at 1210 Northampton Street. He said previous uses at this location consisted of an Insurance Agency and a 99¢ Discount Retail Store. The property is located in the West Ward Zoning District, Block Class B, where the proposed Retail Specialty use is not permitted. However, the property is also located in the Street Corridor Enhancement Overlay District, where the Retail Specialty use is permitted by Special Exception.

Mr. Manges said a conversation with Val Piacentini on January 25, 2012, revealed that the applicants want to move their T-Shirt Screen Printing business from their residence in Bethlehem Township, to 1210 Northampton Street. The applicant indicated that they have been operating this business since 2009, and most of their clientele are from the Easton area, including Lafayette College, Weed & Seed, and Paxinosa Elementary School. All orders are and will continue to be taken by phone, thus limiting the amount of customers visiting this aspect of the business per day. Deliveries of the products occur approximately twice a month with this business, and all the deliveries will continue to occur to the applicants' home in Bethlehem Township. Two heat press machines will be used to affix the images to the garments.

Mr. Manges said Mrs. Piacentini also indicated that they plan to add a do-it-yourself airbrush design studio for local youths at this location for designing their own designs on clothing, canvas, and pottery. There are six airbrush stations proposed for this component of their business. The applicant also stated that they are in the process of purchasing the building.

Mr. Manges said the applicants will be the only employees at the start for this business at 1210 Northampton Street. There is a possibility of additional employees (1-2) in the future depending on how well business does. The hours of operation will be Monday to Saturday 12pm – 9pm.

No one representing the applicant was present. Mr. Sun questioned that there would be no on-site deliveries. Mr. Manges explained deliveries would still be made to the applicant's home and transported by them to the business. Mr. Manges further explained that most deliveries are made in the morning, when the applicants would be at their home, not at their business.

Mr. Bloom asked if any chemicals and vapors would be dealt with by the Code department. Ms. Bradley said the applicant would need to comply with all existing building codes. Mr. Elliott said as the block was primarily commercial, he did not see how the proposed business would be a detriment to it. A motion to accept the resolution

recommending approval to the Zoning Hearing Board was made by Mr. Bloom, seconded by Mr. Lieb, approved by all.

Staff Update. Ms. Bradley explained the staff received a draft copy of a new FEMA flood map for the City. She added there is a very limited turn around time for the City to comment on it. She said a meeting will be held at the end of the month in Bethlehem, and at that time more will be learned about new roles and responsibilities. Meanwhile, she said staff would be comparing the new draft against the existing maps and notifying property owners of any changes. Mr. Elliott asked how old the existing maps are. Ms. Bradley said they are dated 2001. Mr. Elliott asked if the new maps will reflect changes in topography and flood data. Ms. Bradley said she would know more after the meeting.

Ms. Bradley reminded the Commission that the Karl Stirner Arts Trail has been open since fall, 2011 and the major construction phase is completed. She added capping still needed to be done at the 13th Street parking lot and signs are currently being manufactured for delivery in early April, with installation by the end of May. She distributed samples of the signs to the Commission.

Draft 2011 Comprehensive Plan Review. Ms. Bradley said the copies distributed to the Planning Commission were in draft form, and revisions have been ongoing. She said a final draft would be presented at the March meeting. She noted near the end of the publication was the timeline for the Comprehensive Plan re-write. Mr. Elliott said he was happy to see the early public involvement in the re-write process. Mr. Josh Rea of 633 W. Pierce Street was present. He explained he is vice-president of the College Hill Neighbors Association. He asked how the association could be assured they would have a seat at the table in participating in the re-write. Ms. Bradley assured him all the neighborhood associations would be involved.

EAC Update. Mr. Elliott said the EAC will meet next Tuesday, and is close to finalizing the EAC perspective on the Comp Plan re-write.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 PM.