

The Easton Planning Commission met Wednesday, July 3, 2013, in the Council Chambers, Easton City Hall, Alpha Building, One South Third Street, Easton, PA 18042. Planning Commissioners Charles Elliott, Ron Shipman, Bonnie Winfield, Dennis Lieb, William Heilman, Robert Sun, and Mia Hatzis were in attendance. Planning & Codes staff in attendance were Becky Bradley, Brian Gish, Carl Manges, and Mike Handzo. City Solicitor Joel Scheer was also present.

Mr. Elliott called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Mr. Elliott welcomed Ms. Hatzis to the Commission, as she was attending her first meeting as a Planning Commissioner.

Ms. Bradley announced she was attending her last Commission meeting, as she had accepted a position as Executive Director of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. She thanked her staff for their support over her tenure with the City of Easton.

Mr. Elliott indicated the Commission would take a recess around 7:30 p.m., due to the length of the agenda.

Mr. Elliott noted several changes to the meetings of the June 6, 2013 meeting. A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Mr. Shipman, seconded by Mr. Heilman, and approved unanimously.

Privilege of the Floor. Mr. Sun commended Ms. Bradley for encouraging an exciting development climate in Easton over the past decade. He moved that the Commission provide her with a token of appreciation, and authorize the Chair and Co-Chair to seek an appropriate award. Mr. Sun's motion was seconded by Mr. Shipman and approved unanimously.

Mr. Elliott described the departure of Ms. Bradley to LVPC and Mr. Gish to doctoral studies at Lehigh University as bittersweet. He expressed that it was difficult to overstate their contributions to the City through projects such as the Silk Mill, Karl Stirner Arts Trail, Pomeroy's, S. 3rd Street improvements, and 600 Block Master Plan. Mr. Elliott characterized Ms. Bradley and Mr. Gish as engaged community members as well as intelligent, creative planners.

1350-1352 Northampton Street – Special Exception. Ms. Bradley indicated that the applicant, George Denger (AllState Insurance), has proposed to open an Insurance Office (D2) at 1350-1352 Northampton Street. In a conversation on June 21, 2013, Mr. Denger indicated he wishes to relocate his existing insurance business from Wilson Borough to the City of Easton. The applicant indicated an interest in being closer to his customers, largely located in the City, but preferring the West Ward to the Downtown District. The business was opened in 1960, and was purchased by Mr. Denger in 1998. The applicant has a conditional sale agreement with the current owners, Charles & Rosalind Gambino. Were the applicant to receive the necessary approvals, he intends to renovate the interior of the 1,200 square foot, single story building, adjusting the floor plan to better suit his needs. The business would employ three (3) full-time and two (2) part-time personnel, with hours 9:00am to 5:30pm, Monday through Friday, and 9:00am and 12:00pm Saturday. The business plans to conduct most of its business via telephone, with occasional walk-in customers, as it does currently. In addition to interior improvements, the applicant intends to replace window air conditioning units with a wall-mounted conditioner (for both aesthetics and security) and pending approval, replace the existing sign.

The Zoning Administrator has determined the proposed Finance, Insurance and Real Estate (D2) use, is not permitted in the West Ward Zoning District per Article XV of the Zoning Ordinance. However, the proposed location is also in the Street Corridor Overlay District, where the proposed use is permitted by Special Exception per §595-126. The Zoning Administrator has determined that the proposed use would result in no increase in parking demand relative to the businesses (tailor and hair salon) operated previously at the location. Ms. Bradley explained that the proposed use was consistent with the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Easton, the 1997 Comprehensive Plan, and neighboring land uses.

Ms. Bradley indicated that staff advocates a Planning Commission recommendation to the Zoning Hearing Board for the granting of Special Exception requests by George Denger for a Finance, Insurance and Real Estate (D2) Use at 1350-1352 Northampton Street with conditions.

The applicant, George Denger, was present. Commissioners had no questions for him.

Mr. Heilman moved that the Planning Commission recommend to the Zoning Hearing Board that they grant Mr. Denger a Special Exception for a Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate Use, with conditions. The motion was seconded by Mr. Shipman and approved unanimously.

225 Porter Street – Special Exception. Mr. Gish explained that the applicants, Jeffrey L. Watts and Laura E. Kahle, have proposed an Audio/Video Production Studio (D1) Use at 225 Porter Street. The current/most-recent use, a TV Production Studio, is also classified as (D1); however, as the applicant proposes to change the use per conditions associated with previous approvals, the use must be reviewed as changing one non-conforming use to another. Additionally, a residential use is proposed in the one-time church rectory, and is permitted by the article.

In a conversation with Laura Kahle on June 21, 2013, the applicant indicated an intent to adapt the existing television studio facilities to an audio studio, functioning in a manner nearly identical to the previous use. Ms. Kahle indicated the architecture of the former church afforded ideal acoustics for recording, particularly for her husband, Mr. Watts, a Grammy Award winning jazz percussionist. While capable of video recordings, the use of the space would be almost entirely audio in nature. The couple and their two children intend to live in the aforementioned rectory, with recording uses housed completely in the former church. No concert uses are proposed, though various artists and their guests would be at the facility for performance and recording sessions. Filming and recording would be conducted generally in the primary, older portion of the church, and performance production in the newer portion of the church, housing the sanctuary, after interior modifications. Day-to-day operations would be performed in a soundproofed studio, and additional portions of the older church structure have been soundproofed with the previous use.

The property is located in the College Hill District; Block Class C, where the proposed Audio/Video Production Studio (D1) use is not permitted per Article XII §595-55. However, the Audio/Video Production Studio (D1) is considered permitted by Special Exception since it is simply the adaptation of one non-conformity to another, per Article X §595-50.

Per Article X §595-50, a nonconforming use may be changed to another nonconforming use only by Special exception by the Zoning Hearing Board. Additional conditions, largely associated with the nature of such uses, adaptations to conforming uses, and increases in external effects, are associated with such approvals. As the applicant seeks to, for all intents and purposes, maintain the status quo in terms of impacts, Mr. Gish indicated that the proposal is consistent with these requirements. Mr. Gish additionally explained that the proposed use was consistent with the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Easton, the 1997 Comprehensive Plan, and neighboring land uses.

Ms. Bradley indicated that staff advocates a Planning Commission recommendation to the Zoning Hearing Board for the granting of Special Exception request by Jeffrey L. Watts and Laura E. Kahle for a (D1) Audio/Video Production Studio Use at 225 Porter Street with conditions.

John Dunn, a representative of Mr. Watts, and Rudy Vegliante, the current owner of the building, were present on the applicant's behalf. Mr. Dunn explained that Mr. Watts and Ms. Kahle were well-established instrumentalists, and distributed copies of their Wikipedia pages for further information.

Mr. Sun inquired about the size of the church, with Mr. Vegliante informing him it was 10,000 square feet. Mr. Sun asked the applicant to describe the frequency and nature of his musical activities. Mr. Dunn indicated that a quartet would rehearse and record several times per month, with an occasional solo performance; a roughly 25-piece big band would record no more than twice per year. Mr. Sun asked if the music could disturb neighbors. Mr. Dunn indicated that the church housed a pipe organ, previously played during services, and that the proposed use would create no more noise than the former use.

Mr. Elliott asked how frequently the recording studio and sanctuary would be used. Mr. Vegliante indicated the former, which was acoustically soundproofed, would be used daily; the latter would be used once or twice per month. Mr. Dunn explained the church was currently more utilized than it would be for the proposed use. He informed the Commission that the building had hosted Touchstone Theatre performances and film productions, with minimal awareness from neighbors due to the lack of noise

generated. He indicated the church had been previously approved for television use, which consisted of image and sound production; it would now be used exclusively for sound.

Barbara Conover, a neighbor at 230 Porter Street, addressed the Commission on the proposed use. She explained the current use generated no noise and limited traffic, but that she held concerns on potential noise and traffic generation by the proposed use. Mr. Vegliante indicated the church had hosted rock music performances through the "SteelStacks Live" series, with minimal noise created. Ms. Conover asked the applicant if neighbors could contact them in the event of loud noise, to which the applicant agreed.

Mr. Sun moved that the Planning Commission recommend to the Zoning Hearing Board that they grant Mr. Denger a Special Exception for an Audio/Video Production Studio Use, with conditions. The motion was seconded by Ms. Winfield and approved unanimously.

1022 Northampton Street & 405 Warren Street – Land Development. Ms. Bradley explained that the plans before the Commission from the applicant, Presbyterian Home, were different from similar plans approved several months prior. She indicated the applicant had formally withdrawn the old plans and submitted the current plans.

Mr. Sun explained the previous plans had been denied by the Zoning Hearing Board, and asked how the plans had changed. Ms. Bradley explained that the Zoning Hearing Board denied the applicant a parking variance, and that the resubmitted plans incorporated additional parking.

Mr. Shipman affirmed his support of the previous plans, and asked what the previous plans had included on the space allocated for increased parking on the current plans. Mr. Manges responded that 40 parking spaces on the current plans had been substituted for open green space on the former plans. Mr. Shipman requested more detail on the Zoning Hearing Board's findings regarding parking. Ms. Bradley explained they had required more parking in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance, and that current parking roughly met the amount specified.

Mr. Sun asked if there were any other changes included in the resubmitted plans. Ms. Bradley responded that the new plans depicted improvements to the front of the building, creating a grade corresponding more closely to the existing street wall and a more detailed façade.

Mr. Shipman asked about accessibility of the parking facilities, with staff explaining that entry and exit to the parking would be via Pine Street, with traffic carried along S. 10th St.

Ms. Bradley asked the Commission if they wished to hear the review read in its entirety. Mr. Elliott deemed that unnecessary, as the Commission was familiar with the plans. Ms. Bradley indicated that the only issues to be resolved, which she characterized as minor, were outstanding agency reviews pending completion and a dumpster to be fenced. She suggested that the Commission should support the proposal again.

Mr. Elliott asked if there were any further changes that had not yet been discussed. Mr. Manges explained the South Warren Street parking lot had grown from 17 to 21 spaces, and that the number of trees had increased from 60 to 80 to meet codes for parking islands. Mr. Elliott asked if a parking variance would still be necessary. Staff responded affirmatively, but indicated that the variance would be for only two spaces and motivated by the worthy cause of adding more landscape.

A representative of Presbyterian Home, Rodney Fenstermacher, was present. He indicated that the applicant was drafting a lease agreement with another property owner so they could furnish 15 additional parking spaces.

Mr. Elliott indicated that the seventh condition of the staff resolution has been changed, and suggested it be consequently struck.

Mr. Shipman moved that the Planning Commission support preliminary plan approval with conditions, and that the Planning Commission recommend to the Zoning Hearing Board that they grant a Special

Exception for a Mid-Rise Residential (A9) Use. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sun and approved unanimously.

219 North 3rd Street (Lafayette College Film & Media Studies Center) – Land Development.

Mr. Gish indicated that the applicant, Lafayette College, proposes to demolish an existing building and garage (previously Case Tire), and develop a four-story Film and Media Studies Center at 219 N. 3rd Street. This approximate 22,500 square foot building is proposed to contain a Black Box Theater, a Scene Shop, studio rooms, offices, and storage rooms. The building is designed to be constructed on piers so that the 1st floor would be above the floodplain elevation as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The 1st floor of the building is proposed to be elevated 14'6" above ground level. Beneath the building a plaza and a 14 space parking lot are proposed. This area beneath the building would be illuminated constantly with light columns 24 hours a day, and security would monitor the area. This proposed building would be used by the faculty and students of Lafayette College. The facility would also be open to the public during performances. Additionally with this proposal, the applicant has proposed to consolidate part of the 223 N 3rd Street property into the proposed lot at 219 N. 3rd Street.

The proposed E1-Educational Services and B2-Amusement uses are located in the River Corridor and Other Green Areas Zoning District, Block Class B, where the proposed uses are not permitted per Article XVII §595-88. However, the property is also located in the Street Corridor Enhancement Overlay District where both the E1-Educational Services and B2-Amusements are permitted by Special Exception per Article XXIII §595-126. The property is also located in the Flood Hazard Overlay District, requiring Special Exception approval for development in a floodplain. According to the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map 42095C0279 D, 219 N 3rd Street is located in the FEMA defined 100-year floodplain. The base flood elevation is 197 feet, and with the proposed building situated on piers, the 1st floor will be located 9'9" above the base flood elevation. The applicant indicated to staff in a meeting on June 12, 2013, that no hazardous materials of any kind would be stored at this location.

Lafayette College has submitted a section of its Incident Action Plan, particularly 119.03 Flood Plan – Heavy Rain Storms. The applicant is committed to constantly monitoring the water levels from the United States Geologic Survey's National Water Information System Gauge for Easton/Phillipsburg located on the US Route 22 Bridge over the Delaware River. During a Flood Warning/Event, the building will be closed, secured, and all faculty, staff, and students will be evacuated from the site.

The applicant received concept approval for the replacement of the existing buildings with a new college building for the arts from the Easton Historic District Commission at the December 10, 2012, meeting. Easton Historic District Commission approval is required for the façade of the proposed building, and any signage proposed with this development. The applicant is currently scheduled to appear before the HDC on July 8, 2013.

Mr. Gish indicated that the proposal was consistent with the City of Easton Zoning Ordinance, the 1997 Comprehensive Plan, and neighboring land uses. He communicated the staff recommendation that the Planning Commission grant conditional preliminary approval of the plans, and recommend to the Zoning Hearing Board that they approve Special Exception Requests for an Educational Services (E1) and Amusements (B2) use, and for development in a floodplain.

A contingent representing Lafayette College's project team was present, consisting of Mitch Wein and Mary Wilford-Hunt of the College, Ximena Valle of KSS Architects, David Calhoun of Barry Issett & Associates, and Chad Helmer of Taggart Associates. Ms. Wilford-Hunt distributed plans to the Commission; Mr. Gish advised that the plans constitute visual aids only, not a submission.

Ms. Valle delivered a formal presentation on the proposed project. She showed renderings of the completed buildings and samples of the materials to be used.

Mr. Shipman inquired about ingress and egress to parking facilities. Ms. Bradley explained that ingress would be via Snyder St, and Ms. Wilford-Hunt explained traffic would exit off N. 2nd St onto Snyder Street. She additionally explained that existing College lots, located on N. 3rd St and at the intersection of N. 2nd St and Snyder St, would serve the proposed facility. Mr. Shipman asked how many staff would be housed in the building, with Ms. Valle indicating it would be occupied by 18. Mr. Shipman requested an in-depth explanation of the College's parking demand determination methodology, which was provided by

Ms. Wilford-Hunt. Mr. Shipman inquired into the cost and timetable of construction. Ms. Wilford-Hunt explained that the project would cost in excess of the \$10 million donation furnished for the purpose, and that construction would begin pending approvals and permitting.

Mr. Heilman expressed concerns with the large "Lafayette College" signage, facing US-22, depicted on the plans. He asked, and staff confirmed, that such signage was restricted by ordinance. Ms. Wilford-Hunt indicated the College would seek a variance. Mr. Heilman inquired into the scope of Lafayette College's film program, with Ms. Wilford-Hunt explaining it was currently housed in Skillman Library and would not increase student or faculty rolls in the future.

Mr. Sun asked if the large sign would surely read "Lafayette College," and Ms. Wilford-Hunt explained that was the only possible text approved by the College's Board of Trustees. He asked, and Mr. Wein affirmed, that the smaller sign with space for a donor's name would display the name of an individual versus a corporation. Mr. Sun expressly highlighted the importance of developing a specific zoning amendment to conclusively determine appropriate parking requirements to accompany Lafayette College expansion.

The Commissioners raised concerns about the proposed building's compatibility with the existing urban fabric. Mr. Elliott commended the creativity of the proposed large sign, but expressed concerns that it was designed to highway, not community, scale. He recognized Lafayette College's interest in acknowledging its presence, but suggested the proposed sign was unduly assertive to meet that need. In addition to signage concerns, Mr. Elliott suggested that the proposed lighting scheme would be incompatible with existing City lighting. Mr. Heilman asked how large the sign could be per ordinance, with Mr. Gish indicating 20 square feet per side. He suggested that the sign proposal could potentially face challenges from the Historic District Commission and/or Zoning Hearing Board, even if it was accepted by the Planning Commission. Mr. Wein communicated the College's intent to produce unique, artistic signage, and suggested the project team would reexamine the design in light of concerns. Mr. Shipman expressed his support for Lafayette advertising its presence in the community.

Mr. Lieb indicated he would likely vote "no" to the proposal, due to architectural concerns. At Mr. Sun's request, he shared his perspective that the minimalist modern design of the proposal may not integrate well with existing architecture or stand the test of time. He additionally indicated that the proposal was too boxy in form, and lacked sufficient windows. Ms. Wilford-Hunt explained that the box would be elevated above street level to emphasize a sculpture garden; Ms. Valle emphasized that the proposed film screening room necessitated darkness.

Mr. Elliott inquired about the width of the building's riparian buffer at its narrowest point, with Mr. Calhoun indicating it was wide enough to avoid issues. Mr. Elliott asked for a description of proposed stormwater management facilities. Mr. Calhoun discussed the existing inlets along the roadway, and the proposed downspouts, underground collection system, and inlets in the rain gardens.

Mr. Elliott suggested that the staff draft resolution include conditions that the applicant shall receive all required variances and a PA DEP stream encroachment permit. Mr. Sun moved that that the Planning Commission grant conditional preliminary approval of the plans, and recommend to the Zoning Hearing Board that they approve Special Exception Requests for an Educational Services (E1) and Amusements (B2) use, and for development in a floodplain. The motion was seconded by Mr. Shipman. Ms. Winfield abstained from the vote, and Mr. Lieb voted nay. Mr. Shipman, Mr. Sun, Mr. Heilman, Mr. Elliott, and Ms. Hatzis voted in favor, causing the motion to be approved.

Mr. Elliott called a recess at 8:43 p.m. The Commission returned to order at 9:14 p.m.

118-120 Northampton Street – Land Development and Reverse Subdivision. T&M Associates provided the review for this proposed development, as the applicant, Redevelopment Authority of Easton (RDA), is affiliated with the City. T&M Associates was represented by Mark Buchvalt and Monica Wall.

Mr. Buchvalt explained that the applicant, Redevelopment Authority of Easton, proposes to renovate the existing vacant buildings at 118 and 120 Northampton Street with a Mixed Residential/Business Use (A12). The buildings, once renovated, will be one single building.

Mr. Buchvalt explained that T&M Associates had not received floor plans from RDA, but understood the proposed renovations to contain (2) retail spaces and (1) residential unit on the first floor and (11) residential units on the upper floors with laundry facilities provided in each residential unit.

Parking for the (12) proposed residential units will be provided at the existing parking lot located across the street at 129 Northampton Street. It is our understanding that existing on-street parking will be utilized to satisfy the parking requirements for the (2) proposed retail spaces.

The proposed A12 Mixed Residential/Business use is located in the DD Downtown Zoning District – Zoning Block Class B and is a permitted use per §595-108.A(4). The proposed A12 use is also located in the SC Street Corridor Overlay District and is a permitted use per §595-125.B.

Per FEMA FIRM Panel 279, the site is located within the 100-year floodplain. Special Exception consideration is required for development in a floodplain per §595-143B(3)

A variance is required to allow a residential use within a mixed residential/business building on the first floor per §595-129.A(5).

Mr. Buchvalt reported that the proposal was consistent with the City of Easton Zoning Ordinance, the 1997 Comprehensive Plan, and neighboring land uses.

Mr. Buchvalt communicated that T&M Associates advocates Planning Commission recommendation to the Zoning Hearing Board for granting a Special Exception request to the Redevelopment Authority of Easton for an A12 Mixed Residential/Business use in a floodplain and a variance to allow residential use on the first floor, and that the Planning Commission approves Conditional Preliminary plan approval.

Tina Woolverton was in attendance to represent the RDA. Borko Milosev of Post Road Management, the developer of the property, was also in attendance. Ms. Woolverton presented a letter from Executive Director Gretchen Longenbach requesting conditional final approval for the plans.

Mr. Shipman requested clarification on the location on the parking lot, with Mr. Buchvalt explaining it was located between two buildings on the opposite side of the street from the proposed development. It currently consists of 19 metered spaces. Mr. Heilman inquired into the current status of the parking lot. Ms. Woolverton explained that the City had purchased the previously-private lot 1½ years ago as it planned for the proposed project. Therefore, the City would not lose a significant public parking facility upon the completion of the project.

Mr. Lieb asked why the RDA was completing the project, rather than issuing a private RFP. Ms. Woolverton explained the RDA has issued an RFP on three occasions over the past eight years, most recently in September 2012. The September 2012 RFP led to the selection of a developer. The RDA held public funds that could be used for lead and asbestos abatement at the site. Once environmental remediation is complete, the property will be turned over to the developer, who will bid out the remainder of the scope of work. Mr. Lieb inquired about advertisement of the RFP, with Ms. Woolverton indicated it had been listed in *The Express-Times* and several trade publications.

Mr. Sun asked if the property would be immediately sold to the developer upon the completion of remediation work. Ms. Woolverton explained that a sales agreement to that extent was already drafted. Mr. Elliott requested the name of the developer; Ms. Woolverton indicated it would be Post Road Management. Mr. Lieb asked if the firm was local. Mr. Milosev summarized Post Road Management's previous experience completing similar redevelopment projects in Allentown and Bethlehem.

Mr. Lieb inquired about the reasoning behind combining the two buildings into one. Ms. Woolverton explained that the two buildings would remain separate due to different floor levels, but were bundled together as a single development project. Ms. Wall additionally indicated that a single stairwell serves both buildings. Mr. Elliott asked if, and Ms. Woolverton confirmed that, all three lots would be under common ownership.

Mr. Lieb asked why an apartment was proposed for the first floor, given the lack of first-floor residential uses in Downtown District mixed-use buildings. Mr. Milosev explained this unit would comply with ADA

accessibility regulations, as the building may not include an elevator. Mr. Elliott asked if any other first-floor residential uses existed Downtown. Mr. Lieb indicated they were limited to a section of Pine Street behind the Hotel Easton.

Mr. Elliott asked about RDA's reasoning for requesting combined preliminary and final approval. Ms. Woolverton indicated that pre-construction work was complete, funds were available, and RDA was ready to mobilize construction. She also expressed an interest in completing roof repair while the weather was suitable. Mr. Elliott indicated that, while both approvals had been simultaneously granted in the past, it was an unusual occurrence. In light of the number of conditions and staff recommendation limited to preliminary approval, he asked Ms. Woolverton if the extra month needed for final approval would make a difference. She indicated it potentially could.

Mr. Shipman asked if the properties were ever on the blighted property list, with Ms. Woolverton responding that 120 Northampton Street was in the final phase of blight determination. Mr. Shipman inquired about the structural integrity of the building for upper-floor apartment development. Mr. Milosev explained a more accurate assessment could be made following remediation. Mr. Lieb expressed that he would be most comfortable viewing revised plans before granting final approval. Mr. Shipman and Ms. Winfield agreed with Mr. Lieb's assessment.

Mr. Elliott requested that the submission of a revised Impact Assessment Report be added to the draft resolution from T&M Associates.

Mr. Heilman moved that the Planning Commission recommend to the Zoning Hearing Board the granting of a Special Exception request to the Redevelopment Authority of Easton for an A12 Mixed Residential/Business use in a floodplain and a variance to allow residential use on the first floor, and that the Planning Commission approve Conditional Preliminary plan approval. Mr. Lieb seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Blight Determinations. Mr. Elliott explained that staff had noted the presence of several blight conditions at each of the following properties, and that the Vacant Property Review Committee determined each property met blight considerations.

Motions were made to declare each of the below properties as blighted:

- **32 S. Raspberry Street:** Moved by Mr. Heilman, seconded by Mr. Shipman, passed unanimously.
- **36 S. Warren Street:** Moved by Mr. Shipman, seconded by Mr. Heilman, passed unanimously.
- **38 N. 7th Street:** Moved by Mr. Heilman, seconded by Mr. Lieb, passed unanimously.
- **104 Madison Street:** Moved by Mr. Sun, seconded by Mr. Lieb, passed unanimously.
- **113 Cooper Street:** Moved by Mr. Heilman, seconded by Ms. Winfield, passed unanimously.
- **130 S. 12th Street:** Moved by Mr. Shipman, seconded by Mr. Lieb, passed unanimously.
- **147 Lachenour Avenue:** Moved by Mr. Lieb, seconded by Mr. Shipman, passed unanimously.
- **260 W. St. Joseph Street:** Moved by Mr. Shipman, seconded by Mr. Lieb, passed unanimously.
- **1032 Washington Street:** Moved by Mr. Shipman, seconded by Mr. Sun, passed unanimously.

The Commission took up discussion of **622 Northampton Street**. Mr. Lieb announced he would recuse himself from the vote, as he knew the owner. He explained the owner owned several lots he was seeking to assemble for a mixed-use project, and that one small adjoining tract prevented him from combining the lots. Mr. Lieb asked if the Commission may wish to speak to the owner and ask him to secure his building, rather than declaring it blighted. Mr. Elliott explained that the owner would be at no risk of acquisition or eminent domain proceedings until the Vacant Property Review Committee provides a certification of blight. Mr. Lieb asked about the timetable for this process; Ms. Bradley indicated that the owner would have over two months because of due diligence requirements. Mr. Elliott indicated he appreciated Mr. Lieb's concerns, and thought a blight determination would provide the owner appropriate urgency for maintenance while still providing time to remedy blight conditions.

A motion to declare 622 Northampton Street as blighted was made by Mr. Shipman and seconded by Ms. Winfield. Mr. Lieb abstained; the motion passed, with all other Commissioners voting in favor.

Comprehensive Plan Update. Ms. Bradley reported that staff spoke to roughly 800 people during the initial information gathering project, and that a summary of this feedback was included in the packet. She requested the Commissioners review this summary with an eye toward omissions, in preparation for a future discussion.

The Commission highlighted the urgency of promptly filling the Director of Planning & Codes and Chief Planner positions following the departure of Ms. Bradley and Mr. Gish. Mr. Heilman moved that the Commission be authorized to formally communicate to the Mayor the necessity of expeditiously filling staff vacancies, via the chairman. Ms. Winfield seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) Update. Mr. Elliott reported that the EAC sent a letter to the Mayor and City Administrator expressing a wish for continuity in the planning philosophy and imperatives established during Ms. Bradley's tenure, and acknowledging the need for continued forward momentum on the Comprehensive Plan Rewrite following the departures of Ms. Bradley and Mr. Gish.

Mr. Elliott indicated that the EAC held an extended discussion on providing increased environmental stewardship information to citizens through the City website overhaul.

Mr. Elliott reported additional discussions concerning management of City dead tree fall and actions following the City's decision to discontinue chemical herbicide usage.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:24pm.

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, August 7, 2013, at 6:30 p.m., in the 6th Floor Council Chambers.