

The Easton Planning Commission met on Wednesday, August 5, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers, Alpha Building, One South Third Street, Easton, PA 18042. Planning Commissioners Ron Shipman, Bonnie Winfield, William Heilman, Charles Elliott, and Robert Sun were in attendance. The following Planning Bureau staff members were present: Chief Planner Carl Manges. City Solicitor Joel Scheer was also present.

Mr. Elliott called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

The agenda was approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes. Mr. Ron Shipman moved, with Robert Sun seconding, that the minutes of the July 1, 2015 meeting be approved as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Privilege of the Floor. None

825 Lehigh Street. Special Exception request to convert an A12 – Mixed Residential/Business Retail use in the West Ward Zoning District to an A4- Two-Family use. Carl Manges read proposal. This request was previously denied by the Zoning Hearing Board in 2012 because applicant failed to establish that the existing nonconforming use could not be reasonably changed to a permitted use. The vacant first floor was previously used as a day care. Residential unit on the second floor. Staff advocates the Commission to recommend approval of the special exception request with conditions. Mr. Elliott asked the applicant, Judith Rodriguez, if she would like to add to the comments. Mrs. Rodriguez stated that her intention was to establish her residence on the first floor. Mr. Sheer asked if there was anything different between first application and now. She tried to sell it and could not. Mr. Shipman said as a general matter the policy is to discourage approving a non permitted use, unless it can be shown that house can not be reasonably be converted to a single family home. If the block was a different block class it would be a permitted use. Is this block class unusual in the vicinity? Mr. Manges said that this whole block is the only block within the West Ward with this class and doesn't present any problems to have residential on this block. A discussion of, "Is one nonconforming use more of a burden over the other?" took place. Mr. Sun asked questions about property being rented as a commercial. Carl said that business uses are not permitted, and would have to get the necessary approvals to operate. A multi-family dwelling is also a special exception use in the district. Robert Sun asked if she moved into the first floor and didn't rent the second would it be a financial burden. Applicant said no, but the building was up for sale and didn't sell. Mr. Sun discussed hardships and properties going into foreclosure and asked if she attempted to sell the building as a single family building? Applicant said no. Mr. Sun asked, "Do you have to make major changes to occupy the first floor." Applicant said, "Not really." The Commission recommended that the applicant bring counsel to zoning meeting. Mr. Robert Sun moved the staff resolution for approval of the special exception request with conditions, with Mr. Ron Shipman seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

40-42 S. 6th Street Lot Consolidation/Land Development for a Multi-Family Building. Carl Manges read proposal. Proposes to consolidate two adjacent single parcels to construct a 3 story, four-unit multifamily building. The property is located in the Historic District, and has received a certificate of appropriateness for construction the HDC. The building would be an A7- multifamily dwelling use without a commercial first floor. Staff advocates for recommendation of special exception request with conditions and conditional approval of plan titled "40-42 S. 6th Street", and states that it is in conformity with the comprehensive plan and city codes. Mr. Elliot asked if applicant, Blue SD Investments, wanted to add to the comments. The applicant's representative, David Drake, did not have anything to add. Mr. Sun asked to see a rendering of the building. Mr. Drake displayed renderings indicating that there were 4 units, 2 in the front and 2 in the back, and they were 2,400 square feet each. Mr. Sun asked for a ballpark on how much each unit would sell for, and the applicant stated about \$180,000. Mr. Ron Shipman moved the staff resolution for approval of the special exception request and conditional preliminary plan approval, with Ms. Bonnie Winfield seconding, and all others were in favor. This motion passed.

Comprehensive Plan Update. Mr. Manges reported Urban Matrix submitted a draft comp plan without the appendices. Mr. Manges asked the Commissioners to review and provide any comments or if they seen any errors, After the Commissioners review the plan, the Task Force will receive a copy. Mr. Shipman said he read it and made comments but the link expired. Carl said he will send a lower resolution. Mr. Shipman said up to page 26 he was concerned about the plan, but after page 26 it was dynamite. The plan prioritized many projects, models such as Chattanooga and center city of

Philadelphia. Mr. Shipman said we should be following this. Mr. Shipman said he was also concerned that this comprehensive plan that would get dusty, but it includes a plan to implement. Charles Elliot said everyone involved in the process needs something to take us to the next step. An external reviewer will keep the city on track, and removes the political process. The appendices has a process to get the ball rolling. Appendices was too big a file that some member did not get to see/read it. City will be careful to carry out the things that have been recommended. They make sense to move forward. Mr. Elliott said he was very pleased with the level of service.

Environmental Advisory Council Update. Mr. Elliott summarized the following business addressed at the June Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) meeting:

- The EAC hopes to look at standards of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, the LEED ND program, for possible changes to our subdivision and land development ordinance at next month's meeting. The EAC is moving forward on this, but no action has been taken.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.