

The Easton Planning Commission met on Wednesday, March 6, 2013 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, Dennis Lieb, William Heilman, Bonnie Winfield and Ronald Shipman. Also in attendance were staff members Becky Bradley; Director of Planning and Codes, Brian Gish; Chief Planner, Tina Woolverton, Secretary.

The agenda was approved.

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2013 meeting was made by Mr. Shipman seconded by Mr. Lieb, approved by all.

Privilege of the Floor. None

2012 Comprehensive Plan Review. An updated copy of the 2012 Comprehensive Plan Review was distributed. Ms. Bradley said it incorporates the comments received from Mr. Elliott and Mr. Shipman. Ms. Bradley noted that the Commission reviewed a record total of 29 special exceptions in 2012, which shows how much business activity is taking place in the City. She also noted that the numbers of permits had increased.

Ms. Bradley pointed out to the Commission that the rental occupancy rate has exceeded 50% in 2012. Mr. Elliott asked if the increase was caused by conversion of previously single-family homes. Ms. Bradley said the increased was due primarily to the addition of upper-floor housing in mixed-use buildings, not conversion of single-family homes. Mr. Shipman added that 2012 brought in upscale rentals in the downtown, such as the Pomeroy Building.

A discussion ensued on whether the surplus of rentals units was also a product of foreclosures. Mr. Shipman asked how the City would be able to track that. Ms. Bradley said from Code Officers being on the streets and buyer notification inspections.

Mr. Lieb said he would like to see a breakdown of the increase between single-family homes becoming rentals and the addition of the upper floor housing.

Mr. Elliott asked if the 50% mark changed anything categorically for the City, regarding federal funding or grants. Ms. Bradley said it did not, but could affect the way the City needs to be managed.

Mr. Elliott said the mapping included in the Comprehensive Plan Review was very constructive. Mr. Heilman suggested adjustments made to the lay out of page 1. Mr. Elliott added that it is a very enlightening document. Mr. Shipman said the data gathering and analysis was a great job. Mr. Lieb suggested checking with the Westward Neighborhood Partnership on the number of sidewalk replacements, as the number seemed low. Mr. Elliott requested a final version being presented to the Planning Commission before being presented to City Council.

A motion to approve the resolution recommending adoption of the plan with revisions was made by Mr. Lieb, seconded by Mr. Shipman, approved by all.

Comprehensive Plan Re-write Update. Ms. Bradley said staff has spoken to over 200 people in gathering input for the Comprehensive Plan re-write. She distributed a tracking sheet showing all the individuals and groups that they planned to speak with, those they have spoken with, and those they have scheduled to speak with. A discussion on items the Commission would like to see addressed and included in the Comprehensive Plan re-write followed.

Additional Planning Commission Meeting scheduled for March 20, 2013. Ms. Bradley said agenda items will include the finalized business guide, the Intermodal Development Plan, a development plan for Lafayette College's Oechsle Center and a special exception.

EAC Update. Mr. Elliott said the EAC discussed at their March meeting:

- Evasive plants and herbicide use
- Management plan for Hugh Moore Park
- How to increase recycling rates
 - Developing a more robust education plan
- An Arbor Day event in conjunction with the 1st day of the Farmers' Market on May 4
- Urban forestry
- Community outreach in the form of a park improvement project

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.