
MEETING MINUTES
BETHLEHEM PLANNING COMMISSION
February 8, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT

Robert Melosky, Chairman
Matthew Malozi, Vice Chairman
Joy Cohen
Eddie Burgos

VISITORS PRESENT

Joe Rentko, Black Forest Engineering

MEMBERS ABSENT

Thomas Barker

STAFF PRESENT

Darlene Heller, Bureau of Planning & Zoning
Basel Yandem, Public Works
Matthew Deschler, Solicitor
Sara Satullo, Deputy Director of Community
Development

The February 8, 2024 meeting of the Planning Commission held at the City of Bethlehem Town Hall, was called to order by Chairperson, Robert Melosky at 5:00 PM.

AGENDA ITEM #1: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Ms. Cohen made a motion to approve the January 11, 2024 Planning Commission minutes as presented.

Second: Mr. Burgos

Result of Vote: The motion carried 3-0-1. Mr. Burgos abstained.

AGENDA ITEM #2: 219 and 227 Craig Avenue Minor Subdivision Plan

(23-004 MIN) – #23090014 – 219 and 227 CRAIG AVENUE – MINOR SUBDIVISION PLAN – Ward 13, Zoned RG, Plans Dated September 12, 2023, last revised November 15, 2023.

Property Location: 219 -227 Craig Avenue

Property Owner: JAMA Properties, LLC

Developer/Engineer: Black Forest Engineering

Proposed Work:

Joe Rentko from Black Forest Engineering provided an overview of the project.

Discussion:

Ms. Heller noted that minor subdivisions are typically reviewed and approved administratively and signed off internally. Because there are public improvements that need to be constructed, the project is actually a major subdivision. They will record the subdivision plan and a developer's agreement will be required.

Mr. Malozi stated that administratively they are doing a consolidation and a subdivision. He anticipated that this will be voted as one decision by the PC. Mr. Deschler stated that he is ok with consolidating the decision.

There were no comments from the public.

Motion: Mr. Malozi made a motion to approve the minor subdivision inclusive of the lot consolidation and subdivision as proposed and upon the condition of meeting all of the requirements noted in the City's February 2, 2024 review letter.

Second: Ms. Cohen

Result of Vote: The motion carried 4-0.

AGENDA ITEM #3: Annual Report

Ms. Heller summarized projects worked on in 2023. There were no questions or comments by the PC members.

Motion: Mr. Melosky made a motion to pass along to City Council the PC's approval of the 2023 Annual Report.

Second: Ms. Cohen

Result of Vote: The motion carried 4-0.

AGENDA ITEMS #4: Housing Strategy Report Update

Ms. Heller introduced Ms. Satullo, Deputy Directory of Community Development, who is leading the City's housing strategy plan. Ms. Satullo stated the study was completed last Fall. She provided the PC with a presentation regarding the data and findings.

Ms. Heller discussed the strategies tied to zoning and land use which would affect the PC. She also noted that there are two new positions that are being added to the department to support the implementation efforts for this plan. One is a Housing Policy Lead and the other is a Senior Planner. The different planning initiatives were reviewed.

Ms. Cohen asked if there are regional studies being conducted or just the City of Bethlehem. Ms. Satullo stated that the City of Allentown is in the process of doing a study, Northampton County completed a study but has not released the

results, and the City of Easton did a smaller scale study. The LVPC will also be working on a regional analysis of housing trends and issues.

Mr. Melosky stated that a few years ago there was funding to assist landlords to convert a 2-unit home to a single-family home. Ms. Heller does not believe there is funding available for that at this time. She also stated that there was not a lot of participation in that prior program. He also asked about the residential LERTA program. Ms. Heller stated that there were actually few opportunities for use of the LERTA for residential properties because the tax benefit was not sufficient.

Mr. Malozi asked what the healthy balance of rentals vs homeownership is. Ms. Satullo stated that we are about 50/50.

AGENDA ITEM #5: General Discussion:

None

ATTEST:

Darlene Heller, Commission Secretary