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**MEETING MINUTES  
PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD  
JULY 18, 2024**

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MEMBERS PRESENT

Robert Melosky, Chairman  
Matthew Malozi, Vice Chairman  
Eddie Burgos  
Thomas Barker

VISITORS PRESENT

Gary Lader, 4/4 Architecture  
Kathleen Russo, 540 8<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Douglas Jones, 523 8<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Fred Chamberlain, 807 W. Broad St.  
Kathy Bulman, 534 8<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Scott Arnold, 323 Prospect Ave.  
William Bulman, 534 8<sup>th</sup> Ave.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Joy Cohen

STAFF PRESENT

Matthew Deschler, Solicitor  
Darlene Heller, Bureau of Planning & Zoning  
Craig Peiffer, Bureau of Planning & Zoning  
Stephany Sebesta, Secretary  
Basel Yandem, Public Works

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The July 18, 2024 meeting of 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 June 13, 2024**

**Motion #1:** Mr. Melosky made the motion to approve the minutes as submitted.

**Second:** Mr. Barker

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

**AGENDA ITEM #2:    SKETCH PLAN AND SITE PLAN REVIEW**

**Property Location:** 817 and 821-823 West Broad Street

**Property Owner:** Spinozzi 2, LLC

**Developer/Engineer:** 4/4 Architecture

**Proposed Work:** Representing the property was Mr. Gary Lader from 4/4 Architecture who discussed the proposed plan. The Applicant proposes to consolidate both parcels. The Applicant also proposes to convert 817 West Broad Street into four dwelling units and convert 821-823 West Broad Street into eight units. The Applicant proposes to demolish the two accessory garages and

construct a four-story structure at the rear of the parcel with 24 off-street parking spaces at grade beneath the structure and 18 dwelling units on floors two thru four. The consolidated parcel would total 0.5144 acres or 22,408.5 SF, and contain a total of 30 multi-family dwellings (apartments) and 25 off-street parking spaces.

**Discussion:** A brief overview of the proposed project was presented by Mr. Lader. He indicated their intent to maintain the existing dwellings along with their historic architecture and convert them into apartments. Mr. Lader stated that he and the land owner (Mr. Andretti) have reviewed the City of Bethlehem's review letter and are willing to continue talks with the City. Mr. Andretti is interested in adding affordable housing within the apartments.

Mr. Melosky questioned if there will be any demolition done to the existing dwellings. Mr. Lader clarified, the current structure at 817 West Broad Street will not be touched on the exterior. The building that resides on 821-823 West Broad Street there will be partially demolished in the rear for the addition. Mr. Meolsky asked if the addition is elevated strictly for the parking. Mr. Lader responded confirming that the sole reason for the raised addition is for parking.

Mr. Barker asked how many parking spaces are proposed for this plan. Mr. Lader answered that there will be 25 parking spaces with one being ADA compliant.

Mr. Malozi questioned where tenants will be able to access the parking lot. Mr. Lader responded access will come from Schaffer Street in the rear and the existing driveway at 817 West Broad Street. Mr. Malozi wanted clarification whether Schaffer Street is a one-way or two-way. Mr. Heller explained Schaffer Street is extremely narrow, yet the street is still two-way.

Mr. Peiffer spoke about the relief this proposed plan requires from Zoning, such as, density, lot area per dwelling, decrease in the buffer yard and off-street parking requirements. Mr. Peiffer explained that the parcels are located in the CL (Limited Commercial) district. In this zoning district, there is a requirement that the first floor be commercial; in this plan there is no commercial space proposed. However, the City does commend the Applicant for preserving the two structures and making no changes to the front of the façade and their porches. The City does have concerns with Schaffer Street being too narrow and whether the fire apparatus has enough room for its turning radius. Lastly, the City recommends Applicant include affordable housing in the dwellings and comply with the climate action plan.

Mr. Melosky echoed the concerns of the City and shared his opinion about the addition not blending in with the neighborhood. At this point, there is a long way

to go before anything can happen at this site. The dialogue with City staff shall continue as this project moves along.

Mr. Malozi sought clarification from City staff regarding the zoning relief that is mentioned in the review letter. The calculations for the zoning relief is based on the consolidation of the two parcels. Mr. Peiffer affirmed that is correct.

**Public Comments:** Kathleen Russo of 540 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue made note that the addresses labeled on the sketch plan are incorrect. 827 West Broad Street and 540 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue have been switched along with the lot sizes. Mrs. Russo also disputes where the property lines are located. The rebar cap and iron pipe that were found in the southwest corner of 821-823 West Broad Street belong to Mrs. Russo at 540 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. If the structure is built as presented the landscaping at the rear of her property would be destroyed.

Douglas Jones of 523 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue has concern about the fire apparatus not being able to gain access off of Schaffer Street in an emergency situation. There also a great concern of parking. Parking on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue will be where the overflow of parking will be which is already condensed. Mr. Jones also questioned where the trash receptacles will be placed. Mr. Lader explained there is an area for the trash but it currently not label on the plan. Mr. Jones then voiced concerns of a garbage truck driving down Schaffer Street because of the narrowness of the street.

Fred Chamberlain of 807 West Broad Street spoke shared concerns about parking. Mr. Chamberlain has a small business and with the overflow of traffic pouring onto the streets, it will make it hard for his clients to park and create a financial hardship for his business. With the uncertainty of how long this would take to construct the noise would also be a hindrance on his business.

Kathy Bulman of 534 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue agreed with the concerns that were mentioned by Mr. Peiffer earlier. The narrowness and access issues on Schaffer Street are a concern for both construction, fire and residents alike. The entrance from West Broad Street is too narrow to be two-way which will cause more traffic on Schaffer Street. Mrs. Bulman spoke of her concerns with children walking to school. There is low visibility on West Broad Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Sunlight is also a concern; with the addition in the rear much of the sunlight will disappear due to the height of the addition. Mrs. Bulman asked for the character of the neighborhood to be considered moving forward.

Scott Arnold of 323 Prospect Avenue stated that he agrees with all the concerns that have been voiced. He questioned if one historical building is torn down, when will it end.

William Bulman of 534 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue is very supportive of affordable housing in the neighborhood and the City of Bethlehem. Mr. Bulman's main concern is the cleanliness and other conditions of the property.

**AGENDA ITEM #3:    DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Mr. Peiffer reviewed the upcoming Agenda items.

There being no further business, upon a Motion by Robert Melosky, a Second by Matthew Malozi, and a unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 6:08 PM.

**ATTEST:**

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Darlene Heller, Commission Secretary