
**MEETING MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD
MARCH 14, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

VISITORS PRESENT

Attorney Jim Preston
David Ronca
Duane Wagner

MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

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

The April 12, 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 February 8, 2024

Motion #1: Ms. Cohen made a motion to approve the February 8, 2024 Planning Commission minutes as presented.

Second: Mr. Burgos

Result of Vote: The motion carried 4-0-1 Mr. Barker abstained.

AGENDA ITEM #2: Site Plan Review

(24-001 Site Plan Review) – 24020001 – 1800 & 1804 CALYPSO AVENUE – SITE PLAN REVIEW – Ward 13, Zoned RS, plan dated February 12, 2024.

Property Location: 1800 & 1804 Calypso Ave.

Property Owner: Macada Partners, LLC

Proposed Work: Representing the property was Atty. Preston, and Mr. Ronca, who discussed the proposed plan.

Discussion: Mr. Preston noted that the site of the property is along a zoning boundary that separates RS and RT. For this reason, this creates a unique circumstance and Mr. Preston states they would like some relief from the Zoning Hearing Board in order to pursue the project. Today, Atty. Preston and Mr. Ronca are present to discuss the site plan, Mr. Melosky reminded everyone that this is a site plan review and the land development plan will be presented at a later date.

Mr. Peiffer reviewed the recommendations of the Planning Bureau and the request for variances for this project. He noted that the new structure should be compatible with the surrounding structures.

Ms. Cohen questioned the type of roof that is on the sketch. Mr. Ronca states they are doing a gable roof while on the sketch there are hipped roofs. Ms. Cohen noted that she appreciates that the parking is on the side.

Mr. Malozi agrees with the recommendations the City of Bethlehem has brought forth. He reminded Mr. Ronca of the sensitivity of the neighbors already in the neighborhood.

Atty. Deschler spoke about the accommodations that were brought up in the letter. If the applicant addresses the accommodations for the sloped roof and the mass building the project can move forward to the Zoning Hearing Board. Any updates can be made at that time and give to the City staff.

Comments from the Public

Mr. Scheirer of 1890 Eaton Ave. appreciates the sensitivity that is being shown to the surrounding neighborhoods and finds it refreshing.

Motion #2: Mr. Malozi made a motion to forward the City's comments to the Zoning Board for consideration.

Second: Mr. Barker

Result of Vote: The motion carried 5-0.

AGENDA ITEM #3: CURATIVE AEMNDMENT

Petitioner: BAHX, LLC.

Petitioner's Property: Real property situated in both the City of Bethlehem and the City of Allentown with the street addresses of 2300 Hanover Avenue, 2220 Florence Avenue, 2235 West Broad Street, and 2211 West Broad Street and

further identified as Tax Map Parcels – 64175804513, 641758239955, 641758202273, 641758456810

Discussion: Attorney Deschler discussed the curative amendment that has been brought to the board by BAHX, LLC. Mr. Deschler discussed what exactly is being proposed by BAHX, LLC. and reviewed the curative amendment process in detail.

Atty. Preston briefly reviewed the curative amendment that BAHX, LLC. is bringing to the board in regard to the 180' limitation in the CL zoning district. He spoke that BAHX, LLC.'s perspective of the zoning denial from the City of Bethlehem is inappropriate. There have been projects approved in CL zones that have exceeded the 180' limit.

Ms. Heller reviewed the Planning Bureau memo and the differences between the zoning districts that are in the curative amendment. The discussion continued to review the five (5) criteria in the municipalities planning code which outlines the provisions for a curative amendment. The Planning Commission does not recommend support of the curative amendment.

Atty. Preston reiterated that BAHX, LLC. is questioning the single, 180ft building length limitation on an apartment complex. Mr. Melosky responded with a question as to why the developer does not consider changing the length. Mr. Deschler also answered Mr. Preston's question.

Mr. Melosky questioned about the part of the project in Allentown City as well. Ms. Heller clarified that about a third of the project site is in Allentown. Atty. Preston stated that they met with the Allentown but they did not yet get their approval. Mostly only parking is located in Allentown.

Mr. Melosky asked Mr. Wagner of BAHX, LLC., what the current length of the building is. It is 286ft.

Ms. Cohen asked about a previous variances approved for another building 180ft in length. Ms. Heller clarified that all zoning appeals are reviewed on their own merit and they do not set precedent for other appeals. Ms. Cohen also questioned why BAHX, LLC., was bringing the curative amendment to the table when the Zoning Hearing Board had denied them. Atty. Preston responded that there have been a number of buildings that have been approved that were 180ft. Atty. Preston states that this specific case has been treated differently and so this must be handled differently.

Comments from the public:

Ms. Terry Colbert of 345 Grandview Boulevard asked who is the true owner of the property because it is not clear. Secondly, Ms. Colbert noted that there was little communication about this request.

Ms. Mary Makoul of 449 Grandview Boulevard raised concerns about the impact of the project overall.

Mr. Scheirer of 1890 Eaton Avenue spoke of his concerns regarding the proposed buildings.

Mr. Paul Fondle noted issue he has with the intersection of West Broad Street, Hanover Avenue and Club Avenue. Mr. Fondle stated that there are too many accidents that occur at this intersection and more needs to be done to resolve the issue.

Motion #3: Mr. Malozi made a motion to recommend denial of the curative amendment.

Second: Ms. Cohen

Result of Vote: 4-1

AGENDA ITEM #4: DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. Peiffer spoke about 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 7:00 PM.

ATTEST:

Darlene Heller, Commission Secretary