

MEETING MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
BOROUGH OF PARKESBURG, PA
APRIL 25, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT –

Todd Brade
Jennifer Mayo
Dave Bashore

OTHERS –

Joe Reali, Borough Manager
John Carnes, Jr., Esq., Borough Solicitor
Ed Van Arsdale, PE, Arro Consulting, Borough Engineer
Robin Martin, Founder & Executive Director, Oaks Ministry
Winnie Sebastian, Esq., McMichael, Heiney & Sebastian, Oaks Attorney
Dawn Grieco, Oaks Program Manager
Casey Wyatt, Resident of E. 2nd Avenue
Jen Reynolds Dickenson, Resident of E. 2nd Avenue
6 other attendees (on behalf of Oaks Ministry)

Call to Order. Mr. Bashore called the meeting to order in the Borough Building at 7:00 p.m. A quorum of 3 of 5 members was present.

Approval of Minutes. Mr. Brade moved to approve the Minutes of the Commission’s March 28, 2024, meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mayo and passed 3-0.

Update on Land Development Plan of EPC Holdings 584, LLC re: *Construction of 130+/- attached and semi-attached townhouses for residential use on 29.8 acres at 200 North Church Street in the R-5 Residential District, to be known as “Meadowview.”*

* Mr. Bashore advised that on April 18th Borough Council officially approved an extension through August 16, 2024, as requested by EPC Holdings, for the borough to complete official action on its land development plan application. The developer previously advised that it expected to submit a revised plan for review at an upcoming Planning Commission meeting.

* In addition, the borough has received the Chester County Planning Commission’s review and comments on this land development plan, which are available for public inspection in the office of the Borough Manager.

Update on Land Development Desired by VistaBlock, Inc. re: *Development of 24.4 acres at 70 East Second Avenue (Stauffer Parcel aka The Christmas Tree Farm) into 131 residential units (25 single-family houses plus 106 attached and semi-attached townhouses) in the R-2 Residential District.*

* Mr. Bashore advised that a working group of borough officials, including borough council president Todd Brade, solicitor John Carnes, engineer Ed Van Arsdale, borough manager Joe Reali and Planning Commission chair Dave Bashore met with Kevin Myers of the Chester County Planning Department in

executive session on April 11th to review the county's first draft of possible amendments to the borough zoning and subdivision and land development codes that contemplate creation of Traditional Neighborhood Development provisions affecting the R2-Residential Zoning Districts in the borough, including this tract.

* The county is now in the process of updating the draft amendments, based on our meeting and feedback, and the borough Planning Commission expects to be able to share the proposed amendments at our May or June meeting.

Introduction of/Presentation by Oaks Ministry re: *Pending conditional purchase of the Parkesburg Arms Hotel located at 415 E. First Avenue in the C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zoning District.*

General comments from Developer:

- * Ms. Sebastian advised that Oaks Ministry has a contingent agreement of sale with the owner of the Arms Hotel that includes a six-month due diligence period that ends on or about October 4, 2024.
- * She presented Oaks' written responses to questions submitted by Mr. Bashore in advance of this meeting (attached to these minutes). Among other things, Oaks clarified that it would "seek tax exempt status for the property."
- * Oaks' position is that their desired use as a rooming house would represent continuation of the hotel's existing non-conforming use as a rooming house that hasn't lapsed; restoration of the building would maintain its existing historic nature.
- * She advised that, given the borough solicitor's position that the non-conforming use has lapsed, thus requiring Conditional Use approval, Oaks was amenable to providing a mixed-use of the property with commercial activity on the front part of the ground floor and residential group home living on the top three floors.
- * Ms. Martin then read a statement about Oaks' founding, evolution, mission to minister to hurting women who need a safe place to heal and its intent to purchase the Arms Hotel to provide "housing and Christian-based support services to women who desire to actively work toward financial stability and other life goals."
- * She said Oaks has a strong donor base that would be counted on to raise the necessary funds for the purchase of the property (\$700,000), restoration (\$500,000) and initial operating expenses (\$300,000).
- * Ms. Grieco then presented numerous slides detailing Oaks' history, purpose, core values, program offerings, existing houses, operations and rules, impact on the community, letters of support, and a timeline for restoration of the Arms Hotel with potential occupancy by June 2025 (assuming purchase by October 2024).
- * A housing manager would be assigned to each floor with Group Home residents who would be subject to a daily curfew (10:00pm on weekdays; 11:00pm on weekends).
- * Under a mixed-use plan, Oaks would lease approved commercial space on the ground floor, with a separate, secure entrance to the Group Home space in the rear of the first floor and on the upper floors.
- * Oaks' presentation packet, including Ms. Martins' statement and Ms. Grieco's slides, is available for public inspection as an attachment to these minutes in the office of the Borough Manager.

General comments/questions from Borough officials and others:

* Mr. Carnes referred to borough zoning requirements related to a Conditional Use in the C1 zoning district – including parking, stormwater management, traffic and fiscal impact analyses – and wondered if Oaks was aware of the related expense and time involved vis a vis its due diligence timeline.

* Mr. Brade suggested that a mixed-use project seems more desirable than the property's sole use as a group home.

* Mr. Carnes noted that a minimum of 1,000 sq. ft. is required by the borough zoning code to qualify for commercial use.

* Mr. Carnes suggested that he believed renovating the interior and exterior of the property could cost in excess of \$1 million.

* Based on 2024 millage rates and the property's assessed value of \$220,080, Mr. Bashore estimates that removing the property as a taxable entity would result in the annual loss of revenue to the taxing jurisdictions as follows (in 2024 dollars): County \$1,002, Borough \$3,290, School District \$9,305, Total \$13,597.

* Mr. Carnes reiterated his position the Arms Hotel's previous use as an existing, nonconforming rooming house has lapsed and that Oaks' desired use of the Arms Hotel – either as a Group Home or as Mixed-Use – requires a Conditional Use application along with the related obligations in the zoning code.

* Mr. Bashore then suggested that Oaks now understands the sense of the Planning Commission and other borough officials with respect to the desired uses of the property and advised the Ministry to submit a Conditional Use application(s).

Old Business. None.

New Business. None.

Adjourn. There being no further business, Mr. Brade made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mayo and passed 3-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Dave Bashore, Chair

(NOTE: *These minutes were approved 5-0 by Planning Commission on 5/30/2024.)*