

LANCASTER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES

November 15, 2017

The Lancaster City Planning Commission held a regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, November 15, 2017, at 6:00 p.m. in the Commission Room, Municipal Building, 120 North Duke Street, Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

PRESENT: Janice Stork, Chairperson; Eve Bratman; Jose Colon; Faith Craig; Joshua Druce; Willie Morant; and LaGena Wright

EXCUSED: Jon Lyons and Marshall Snively

STAFF: Paula Jackson, Chief Planner; and Craig Lenhard, Senior Planner

GUESTS: Cheryl Love, ELA Group; Matthew Griffith, M&M Architects; Tim Kotzmoyer, TK Building & Design; Henry Yagger, North Museum; Laura Proctor, LCPC; Nina Moragne, Lancaster Early Education Center; Sarah Laterza, F&M Student; and Tim Stuhldreher, LNP Staff Writer

Minutes of the September 20, 2017 Meeting

Chairperson Stork called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Minutes of the September 20, 2017 meeting were approved.

Final Plan – 154 South Queen Street – Lancaster Early Education Center Expansion Project

Ms. Love presented plans showing the proposed demolition of 154 S. Queen Street, which will be replaced with a new building that will provide for the expansion of the Early Education Center. She reviewed proposed site improvements, which include a green roof for stormwater management, and consolidation of lots comprised of 154, 150-146 S. Queen Street into one new parcel. The Shade Tree Commission has approved the removal of a small cherry tree in front of 154 S. Queen Street, which will be replaced. The Historical Commission and City Council have approved the plans for demolition and new construction. With the lot consolidation, the facility will have one new domestic water line with prior water laterals terminated. Ms. Love noted that the Zoning Hearing Board recently approved a variance to allow for an 8-foot high fence in the rear yard. This improvement is unrelated to the land development plan but will be a site improvement to address safety concerns caused by people throwing objects over the existing fence at the children.

Mr. Griffith displayed a rendering of the proposed Queen Street elevation and a floor plan showing the interior layout.

Ms. Bratman inquired as to the zoning district. The property is in the CB district which does not have a parking requirement. Employee parking is provided off site. Child drop-off is provided on Queen Street.

In response to a question from Ms. Stork, Center Director Ms. Moragne noted that the new building will add capacity for 102 children in addition to the current enrollment of 102 children.

Staff recommended approval of the plan subject to two minor conditions (see file 17-9-22).

Following the discussion Ms. Bratman moved to approve the plan with conditions as outlined by staff. Motion was seconded by Mr. Morant and unanimously approved.

Waiver Request – 201 West Walnut Street

Mr. Kotzmoyer explained that his construction company is seeking relief from the requirement of having to submit a land development plan for the construction of a 580 square-foot, roofed over patio/outdoor dining area located at Rachel's Café and Creperie along W. Walnut Street. Future approvals that are needed are Historical Commission and City Council approval of the architectural design, and zoning approval of additional building/lot coverage.

Ms. Bratman asked if the pedestrian sidewalk on Walnut would be impacted. Mr. Kotzmoyer replied that there would be a temporary impact during construction and that details would be worked out with Engineering. Construction is planned for the spring. The existing street trees will remain and will not be impacted by the project.

Following the discussion Mr. Colon moved to approve the waiver request. Motion was seconded by Ms. Bratman and unanimously approved.

Certification of Blight for Vacant Properties –237 S. West End Avenue, 423 Lancaster Avenue, 633 Marietta Avenue, and 530 S. Duke Street

The Commission reviewed the property fact sheet for each property, noting the conditions of blight as certified by staff. Photographs were also reviewed of building conditions. Several of the properties were noted as being in stable neighborhoods and the Redevelopment Authority should have no problem finding people willing to do the rehabilitation. A general discussion followed on issues of code enforcement, landlords not maintaining properties, and the Authority's enforcement of the deed restriction that properties be owner-occupied.

Following a brief discussion Ms. Craig moved to consolidate the four properties under one motion for a certification of blight. Mr. Druce seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The properties were noted as having the following conditions:

Address	Conditions of Blight met	Water-Sewer Liens	Trash /Recyl.	Housing License	Unpaid Taxes	Alarms/ Violations
237 S. West End Ave	8	\$340.50	\$2390.00	0	0	0
423 Lancaster Ave	7	0	918.75	0	0	0
633 Marietta Ave	9	0	0	0	0	0
530 S. Duke St	11	267.53	47.25	0	0	0

Zoning Discussion

Ms. Jackson began the discussion by focusing on the housing component of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Municipalities Planning Code sets forth the requirements of the housing element of the plan to include provisions for various housing types to meet expected demand, conservation of existing housing stock, rehabilitation of declining neighborhoods and creation of density goals.

The City's Comprehensive Plan Housing Chapter contains three major goals: 1) To preserve and maintain the existing housing stock; 2) To promote home ownership; and 3) To assure that housing is affordable for various housing types and household incomes.

When the 2013 Zoning Ordinance was written, attention was given to the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. As an example, language was added to permit three unrelated people to live together in the R1, R2 and R3 districts, provided that the owner lives in the unit. This provision protects the neighborhood from conversions of single family homes into rooming units, creates affordable housing options and allows owners to generate additional income that can be used to maintain or improve the property.

Ms. Jackson asked Commission members for their thoughts on the existing Zoning Ordinance provision requiring buildings to have a minimum square footage, as listed in the Ordinance, for a building to be converted to two-units or multifamily units. This provision was the outcome of considerable neighborhood input into the 1993 Comprehensive Plan, with residents throughout the Lancaster advising City staff that single-family dwellings should not be converted to apartments. Ms. Jackson asked Commission members to consider their own neighborhoods in recommending whether or not the building square footage thresholds should be retained. Commission members generally supported retaining square footage thresholds for conversions.

The Zoning Ordinance provides for various housing types. Ms. Jackson asked if the ordinance needed to provide for any additional types.

Ms. Bratman suggested that tiny homes or units within accessory buildings might be considered. The question was posed to Mr. Morant, would he or his neighbors likely support or oppose the allowing of tiny homes or accessory dwellings in the R1 zoning district, which is currently restricted to single family homes. Mr. Morant stated that he would personally be opposed to such provisions and felt his neighbors would feel the same. Mr. Colon stated that tiny homes are too small for families. Since most units are in the 400-square foot size range, they are more like an efficiency unit. He also questioned how they would fit in architecturally within historic areas. Mr. Lenhard noted that the addition of an accessory dwelling in an out building would require the owner to extend water service from the main house. Adding accessory dwellings adds a parking requirement and this can cause issues since most city lots are small. The Commission also discussed how the addition of smaller unit types might increase the tax base.

Ms. Bratman asked about accessory dwelling units, which could serve as in-law quarters or as small rental units. Mr. Lenhard and Ms. Jackson provided examples of owners who had installed such units in their homes without obtaining zoning approvals or building permits. When the parent or in-law is no longer there and the owner tries to sell the house as a two-unit dwelling, the City must inform the seller or real estate agent that the dwelling must be returned to a single-family unit. Ms. Stork agreed that creating such units has caused problems in the past.

Ms. Bratman encouraged the staff to undertake research about tiny homes and accessory units in order to explore their appropriateness for the City of Lancaster.

Mr. Druce commented that he would like to see more mixed use development. Ms. Jackson noted that the ordinance allows mixed uses in existing commercial buildings and corner commercial buildings. The ordinance does not permit a mid-block dwelling to be converted to a commercial use. Mr. Lenhard added that residential lots are generally small and that required parking cannot be accommodated in the rear yard.

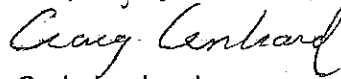
Other Business - None

Public Participation - None

Adjournment

Having no further business to be brought before the Commission, Chairperson Stork adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Craig Lenhard
Senior Planner