

PARKS, RECREATION, AND COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

The Parks, Recreation, and Community Enhancement Committee Meeting was held on May 12, 2014, at 3:01 p.m. with Chairman Dixon presiding. Members present were Mr. Hutchison, Mr. Perza, Mr. Caldwell, and Mrs. Horsey (arrived at 3:02).

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Councilman Hutchison moved for approval of the agenda, seconded by Mr. Caldwell and unanimously carried.

Proposed Ordinance #2014-08 - Amending Appendix B - Zoning - Article 3 - District Regulations - Section 10 - Institutional and Office Zone (IO); Section 11 - Neighborhood Commercial Zone (C-1); Section 12 - Limited Commercial Zone (C-1A); Section 13 - Central Commercial Zone (C-2); Section 14 - Limited Central Commercial Zone (C-2A); Section 15 - Service Commercial Zone (C-3); Section 16 - Highway Commercial Zone (C-4); Section 26 - Commercial/Professional Office Development District (C-PO); Article 4 - Zoning Bulk and Parking Regulations; Article 10 - Planning Commission; and Article 12 - Definitions

During the Parks, Recreation, and Community Enhancement Committee meeting held on April 14, 2014, members considered Proposed Ordinance #2014-08. After much discussion, members recommended that Proposed Ordinance #2014-08 be referred back to staff for a final read through to make recommended changes and clarify language, and returned to the Parks, Recreation, and Community Enhancement Committee on May 12, 2014. City Council approved the Committee's recommendation during their regular meeting held on April 28, 2014.

During the Parks, Recreation, and Community Enhancement Committee meeting on May 12, 2014, Mrs. Ann Marie Townshend, Director of Planning and Community Development, advised members that Proposed Ordinance #2014-08 was before the Committee in its original draft format with no revisions since the previous meeting.

Mrs. Townshend stated that she had met with Councilman Perza regarding this matter to address the concerns he expressed during the previous meeting. Mrs. Townshend explained that, historically, when staff proposed zoning text amendments without involving the regulated community, they were often directed to do so before any action could be taken. As a result, the decision was made to approach the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (CDCC), the Kent County Association of Realtors, and other members of the community to review the commercial and office zone ordinances to obtain input before bringing the amendments before Council. A little over a year was spent reviewing the ordinances in great detail and each section was scrutinized in an effort to simplify the zoning ordinance and to broaden specific uses to more general use categories. She stated that another goal was to address consistency from one section to another. Bulk standards were also examined, since experience had shown that these standards were causing good design to be set aside because of setback requirements. It was noted that the Planning Commission had the authority to determine if the circulation on the site did not work well. Thresholds for projects that must be considered by the Planning Commission were also considered.

Mrs. Townshend indicated that more clarification might be needed in Lines 414-420 of the ordinance to make it clear that new buildings would be treated differently than existing buildings.

Mrs. Townshend stated that, to this point, primary discussions had been through the CDCC and the real estate community. Mr. Keith Cooker, Landmark Engineering, and Mr. Bob McLeish, Lighthouse Construction, participated on behalf of homebuilders. She stated that she had spoken with downtown merchants to inform them of the proposed changes. She reminded members that two (2) public hearings would be held regarding the ordinance, one (1) before the Planning Commission and one (1) before City Council; therefore there would be opportunities for the public to share its concerns.

In reference to his original concerns in terms of clarity of some sections of the Proposed Ordinance, particularly Section 2.11(a)-(c), Mr. Perza stated that, after meeting with Mrs. Townshend, reviewing the historic process, and understanding the additional steps that would include opportunities for public input before any changes were made, he withdrew his objection to moving forward to Council with the draft Ordinance as presented.

Mr. Perza moved to recommend adoption of Proposed Ordinance #2014-08, as drafted by the Planning Department, seconded by Mrs. Horsey and unanimously carried.

Updates

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

Mrs. Tracey Harvey, Planner I, advised the Committee that the staff had met the U. S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Department's timeliness standard for expenditure of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and that all funds were expended 60 days prior to the end of FY 14.

Mrs. Harvey stated that the last Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) home was sold last month, closing this program with a total of 11 homes sold and settlement assistance provided to 10 first time home buyers.

In response to Councilman Hutchison's inquiry as to the level of requests for assistance and support, Mrs. Harvey advised that the number of such requests had increased, and the FY 2014 CDBG budget was increased to support those needs. She noted that the summer tends to be a busier time for the program.

Responding to Mr. Dixon regarding activities related to the Restoring Central Dover Initiative, a planning initiative for the revitalization of central Dover, Mrs. Harvey stated that several related open houses were held during the previous week at Bayard Plaza and they were well attended (approximately 150 people). A successful street fair also took place on May 10, 2014. She indicated that the National Council on Life and Labor Research (NCALL), the lead agency for the Initiative, was the recipient of a related grant from the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation and that completion of an implementation plan for this grant would be the next step for those working on the project.

Recreation Needs Assessment

Mrs. Ann Marie Townshend advised the Committee that staff was approximately six (6) weeks behind where they hoped to be at this point in terms of accomplishing the Recreation Needs Assessment. She stated that it was planned to issue a survey to recreation providers in the area for review and then to distribute the survey to the community within the next two (2) weeks.

In response to Mr. Hutchison regarding the status of demolition of the recreation building at the Dover Park, Mrs. Townshend advised members that demolition bids were due on May 14, 2014. Once Council approves a bidder, staff will move forward with the project. She indicated that an \$80,000 placeholder was included in the FY 15 Capital Improvement Plan budget for future use at Dover Park and the planned use of these funds would be determined by the results of the needs assessment.

Mr. Hutchison moved for adjournment, seconded by Mr. Caldwell and unanimously carried.

Meeting adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

Wallace R. Dixon
Chairman

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