



Minutes of the Planning Commission
January 4, 2023

Approved: February 1, 2023

Peter Nagrod called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Because of the Coronavirus pandemic, this meeting took place via ZOOM videoconference. In attendance were Commissioners Georgette Cole, Jonathan Dail, Christine Dibble, Dave Hix, and Robert Johnson. Also in attendance were Woods Committee Co-Chair Joan Mahaffey, HPC Alternate Marilynn Frey, residents Paula Puglisi and Susan Van Nostrand, and potential resident at 103 Brown Street Bill Earl.

Approval of Agenda: Georgette Cole moved to approve the agenda. Robert Johnson seconded the motion. The Commission added the following to Other Business; 103 Brown Street, Montgomery County e-permit process, and empty houses in Town. Approved: 5-0, as amended.

Building Permit Applications: The potential buyer of 103 Brown Street explained his plans to build a basement level swimming pool and a screen porch in the back yard. There was a discussion about the following:

- Setbacks
- percentage of lot coverage
- Enclosed space
- Placement of the pool

Dave Hix needs more time to analyze the plans and Christine asked for a photograph or the proposed pool room. This review is considered informal.

Public Ways & Property Permits: There were none.

Public Appearances: There were none.

Approval of the Minutes – December 7, 2022: The minutes from the December meeting were not quite finished. The Commission will approve them at the January 18, 2023 meeting.

Licensing Rentals in Washington Grove – continue discussion: Chairman Nagrod spoke briefly about licensing rentals and the difficulty the Town could have with enforcement.

There was a discussion about the following:

- Owner occupied rentals and no County enforcement
- Basement egress
- Loophole with owner-occupied and non-owner-occupied homes.
- Recognizing rentals that currently exist in Town
- Accepting and regulating current rentals
- Tenancy without exchanging money
- Definition of a bedroom

- Town's experience with a rental at 104 Maple Road

Paula Puglisi and Georgette Cole volunteered to do some research on how Montgomery County handles this. Paula and Georgette will present their findings at the February PC meeting.

Updates: 100 McCauley Street and 408 4th Avenue – non-complying fences:

- *100 McCauley Street*: The fence on this property was recently damaged by a large tree branch. Nothing more to report.
- *408 4th Avenue*: Moving the non-complying fence is in the works. Mayor Compton has written a letter to the property owner about removal.

Review Document with Background Information on the PC Memo to TC Regarding the Request to buy Land at 404 Fourth Avenue: Georgette Cole moved to approve sending the document with background information to the Town Council for review at their next meeting. Robert Johnson seconded the motion. Approved: 5-0. The Commission discussed the difference between an ordinance and a resolution for handling the policy for sale of Town land. They believe this document should be a resolution. It was also recommended a summary statement to this effect should be added at the bottom.

Georgette Cole moved to have the Town Council codify the policy for buying Town land by resolution. Peter Nagrod seconded the motion. Approval: 5-0.

Georgette Cole moved to amend the background information document with a final opinion and change the format to a letter from the PC to the TC dated December 7, 2022. Approval: 5-0.

Report from Town Council: Christine Dibble reported the following:

- Town Council approved the new holiday leave policy
- Dog Spot gate was repaired by Steve Werts
- Rob Gilmore appointed to fill Darrell Anderson's Council vacancy
- 150th Town anniversary committee will be led by Meredith Horan

Gateway Committee – Update: Chairman Nagrod reported the following:

- 4th Ave. and Grove Ave. (North of McCauley) will be topped with gravel and hybrid grass
- The bollards at Center and WGL and at Oak and WGL will be installed soon
- The new Town signs will be corrected soon
- The speed limit on Washington Grove Lane has been lowered to 25mph

Other Business:

- **E-permits** – The Commission discussed Montgomery County’s electronic building permit process and how to make our process work better. Dave Hix offered to call the County. Robert Johnson moved to have Dave Hix call the County for further information about how a municipality should handle the E-permitting process. Peter Nagrod seconded the motion. Approved: 5-0.

- **Abandoned Homes** – There is no activity at 17 The Circle or at 402 5th Avenue. Both homes are unoccupied and abandoned. The Commission would like the Town to take more action against these properties. Paula Puglisi reported the HPC is working on this issue. There was a discussion about the follow:
 - Demolition by neglect
 - Special taxing of abandoned homes
 - Calling Montgomery County about abandoned homes
 - Enforcement by the Town
 - Citizen’s complaints to the Mayor
 - Hazards to life and health

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Kathryn L. Lehman, Town Clerk