

Jim Thorpe Planning Commission
April 18, 2017

Meeting called to order: 6:35 p.m.

Roll call of members: Lou Hall, Joanne Klitsch, John McGowan, Jolene Evans, Clem McGinley, Nancy Porambo, Joe Micko

Visitors present: Michael Rivkin (Parsonage), Jennifer Christman, James Dougher, Todd Mason, Darrin Heckman (Keystone), Charles Stewart (JT Market), Jane Mason, Bill Mason, Elisa Marsden, Andrew Roberts, Maury Gruber

Approval of Minutes: February Minutes motion – Clem, Jolene seconded
March minutes will be approved next meeting

Discussion of Projects

JT Market – Darrin Heckman, we received plans for JT Market, one revision made to signature block on plan, call from Ivan Meitzel, wrong name on signature block. Sets are actually the same, 5,000 sq. ft. retail building on the JT Market property. Plans are a land development plan which shows the existing property and how its going to be managed. He received a letter from K. Mazer dated April 18th. Zoning issues are the most important.

Item 1 – industrial zoning district

Item 2 – paved - only allowed 10% of paved coverage, we exceed it. Prior to submitting plans, we met with zoning officer, went through project, showed non-conformities, provided letter in submittal pack, Kim is pointing out he wants to be sure they are in compliance. They are allowed to expand it up to 50%.

Item 3 – some additions, two corrections, no problem

Item 4 – set-back lines, you have to have a minimum 2' side arms. They have 20 and 80 on both sides. Wants to confirm we are in compliance.

New building will comply with signage.

Item 6, 17 parking spaces. On page 2 shows an overall of the property and their proposal. They want to move the spaces and rotate them. In back of the market, there are 7 spaces and on north side of market, there are 6 spaces. They are proposing an addition 20 spaces, 3 to the good.

Lou, are they functional? Employee parking. They usually park further away for the convenience of the customers.

Item 7 – will comply 9x19, they will be 9x20.

Something unique in the location of the property and the water main. It comes down River Street and feeds into market. Waterline on North side of market, tunnel runs through the property. There is a stream in there. Can't get across the tunnel and difficult to get across the sewer line. Todd connected with sewer works and they will put in an on-site well, unisex bathroom in each, not open to the public. PA Wine and Spirit store and a beer distributor. Todd, spoke to Vince Yaich and where they can hook onto water main, seems like a hardship and felt an on-site well would probably be best. They don't even know if there will be enough pressure.

Joe, will it impact any future uses? No impact to the water line itself. He doesn't see them being a high user of water. Sewer fees are based on usage.

Whatever tapping fees are based on usage, they can place a meter on the well. Todd said they have it on the car wash.

Conservation District, over 5,000 sq. ft. We need an E&S form, we did that. We need their approval or our consideration of Kim redoing this. What is the norm? Lou, preliminary plan approval this is what we do until we get feedback from the county.

Fire protection – waterline is on the North side of the property and there will be a new fire hydrant on the site. Todd, that won't work, closest fire hydrant is Center and Front, 1,000 feet. We will deal with the building code inspector and our occupancy load will be less to meet those requirements.

John, back to the fire hydrant, I am thinking about the store here too, how does it affect your insurance? Also, I thought it was 750' from a hydrant? Todd said he was on the phone with Vince, it's 1,000 feet. John, this is something we should provide a hydrant for.

John, we have a river and a stream, is it possible to draw water in an emergency, maybe it can help. Ex: Silk Mill?

The property is littered with easements, we are proposing dark gray area with new macadam. We won't encroach upon that easement, we will be covering it. Will that be acceptable?

Storm water – rooftop water and darker gray area will go into a rain garden. We conducted soil tests and its conducive. It's perfect for vegetation. There is an inlet in front of the zoning area and it will be piped into that. He did present a storm water management proposal to Kim, he got feedback and we can accommodate.

Lou, we'll look over these over the next 30 days and get back to you.

He plans to revise the plans and he will see us again next month. Carbon Planning recommended approval of the project. It's subject to three comments. They did review it this afternoon. Lou, surprisingly, there really isn't anything here. Anyone have questions?

John motioned, Clem seconded for preliminary approval and prepare for final and go through us and we sign off, back to Council. They will be back next month.

Jake and Kim thought it should be submitted as formal. We can put you on the agenda for next month, but you can ask to be put on the agenda with Council.

Michael with the Parsonage and JTTA, works with communities with 60 countries. VRBO and Air B&B issue is not small. Communities struggle. It's on the radar. Initially, Borough Council wants to ban them. Boroughs don't know how to manage. I just want to share with others have done.

They've adopted the same as other short term rentals. The same rules and requirements, parking, sales tax, lodging tax, Ronnie has been aggressive getting this into play. A loophole in JT, lodging known as guest houses, are not mandated to comply.

They must create a level playing field. Must meet the challenges. Parking is the biggest issue. It could create a hardship for existing businesses. You can stagger it. While a new air B&B, needs to have parking spots, existing ones would have parking, it manages rather than ignore or shut down others.

Lou, we're not planning to ban them. We are definitely trying to have some regulation. We are forming a committee and involved business people so we can have some input that will make a level playing field. We need to find out who these people are so there is a permit. Life safety issues exist.

Mike, if he can be helpful, please feel free to draw upon me. Jen, as President of Tourism Agency, she owns two air B&B's, she would like to be on the Committee. Maury Gruber has an Air B&B on the East Side. She also would like to be on the Committee.

Goals of the Committee, Lou, we just want to look at neighboring communities, we just want to see the County implement their program first, then we will piggyback on that. Fire issues, parking, etc.. Timeline, we're forming at this meeting. We can then get a meeting date.

John, concerns, West Broadway parking for the residents. Have residents been complaining? Joanne, yes!

Kiosks are also becoming a problem on Broadway, not West Broadway. John, there will be a study between the town and NEPA, it will be for all of Broadway. It will consider West Broadway as well. Residents have a hard time parking now. Permit parking, doesn't guarantee a spot. If you're not parking with a permit, you will be towed. College towns have it, we need to get with it.

Every area will have to be looked at, East Side, etc..

Maury Gruber, Michael Rivkin and Jennifer Christman all volunteered for the B&B review committee.

Jake Arner – John, there are three new things we planned to talk about. Agriculture, we just define it, we don't zone for it. Our Zoning engineers are working at our current zoning and will look at how we need to write this into our zoning. One thing we want to do, Jake would be great to be on that Committee. A second one will be for signage. There are some odd rules on signage. We need to look at these things.

Storm water management ordinance – we've had some things to talk about at Council.

Elisa Marsden, ED, w/Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor. Nancy had called and asked what could be done with the tower going up. The reality is unless our ordinance addresses this, there is nothing we can do. One thing she was involved with when Jolene was involved, we have two drafts of an ordinance for protection of historic resources. National historic district start downtown to bus road and everything above the mansions to the Boro line going to Lehighton. There is even more resources of value to Jim Thorpe. Our location makes us JT! There are ways we can protect those things. View sheds on top of the mountain. She is here as a resource. The cell tower looks like a flag pole and people wrote letters. The company acquiesced. You could be proactive and take a new look at what the resources are to JT, look at the entire community.

When the bridge went in, pillars were supposed to go into the Lehigh Canal. They moved it. You have to have the data to back you up to make them stick. When they did this, they did a survey.

Her recommendation would be to do a historic resource survey. We have inventories available. We also have GIS data we were able to collect along gorge. Even though it's a state park, we're on the national registry. We can plan ahead for what might come our way.

She has someone on her staff who can help and someone on Historic Museum that we can use to help. Architectural Review Board might be good to set up. We can put an overlay over an area, and have guidelines.

Take a broader look, there is much more in the community. We're very image. She is leaving us with their annual reports, there is a map that shows all that's going on within the corridor. Education preservation, etc..

If you are interested in more detail, it's a special place. Lauren Golden is Trail Manager but has a background in historic preservation. Works with Allentown and also Emma or someone from PSMC come in and talk with us. There are ways to make this work.

There was a visioning committee in 2004. Jolene and Joe were on it.

lauren@delawareandLehigh.org is the contact person Elisa suggested.

Elisa also suggested we name the "Mansion House Bridge", it used to be there. Maybe we can drop a flag over the side of the bridge when it's open. She also indicated the steps belong to the County and keeping them is a question for them. Nancy indicated this would require borough maintenance of the steps as well as it may present added liability.

Zoning Change C3 – Nanovic reworked it. B&B's were excluded. A copy was provided for everyone. He received information from Maureen. Jim just completed it. Basically, commercial off-street requirements. He's left it off for churches, etc., places of private assembly. Personal care homes are not excluded and should be. Joe felt that these cause congestion. Lou, a business wants to go there, they should have a parking requirement.

#1 Off-street parking – not in a C3, this is the only thing that needs to be changed to this. Andrew, every other B&B has to have parking. John, we're taking away the requirements from Broadway. Lou, keep the name C3 Commercial, add boarding houses to the ordinance. Lou will meet with Nanovic to gain clarity on some of these issues. He will then get back to everyone.

We'd like to eliminate neighborhood complaints. We just want to make sure we have all the businesses covered. John suggested that everyone on Planning have a book.

Andrew, would you like for us to consider VRBO's, (short-term rentals), we may or may not want to have those included. Lou, they may be separate in all districts. Outside C3, they will be regulated.

Nuisance Ordinance – John and Clem looked at it. Clem had some good insights to it. John made copies for everyone in attendance. There are two sections on junked vehicles. There was a section on campers and such. It was repetitious, so there is now one category. The sub-heading was changed to "An Ordinance Maintaining the Quality of Life and Safety in the Borough of Jim Thorpe."

Suggestions that came from the group are putting garbage out early, swimming pools with stagnant water. How are we handling these? There was also a suggestion about the "entire sidewalk" removal of snow and ice if a business. This needs editing.

It was suggested that we review this material and bring back suggestions next month.

Suggestions or comments: Nancy will contact David Wilcox, Project contact for the Norfolk Southern Railroad Company.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn Nancy, Lou seconded 8:45 p.m.