

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MEETING
Monday, August 5, 2019

Present: Christopher Bobbitt, Mayor
Maria Connolly
Ian Dember
Philip Duran
James Kownacki, Councilman
Kevin Nerwinski, Municipal Manager
John Ryan
Edward Wiznitzer, Chairperson (arrived 7:06 p.m.)

Absent: Terrence Leggett, Vice Chairperson

Excused Absence: Kim Y. Taylor
Brian Slaugh, Planning Consultant
Edwin Kochenour, Traffic Consultant

Also Present: Andrea Malcolm, Acting Planning Consultant
James F. Parvesse, Municipal Engineer
Edwin Schmierer, Planning Board Attorney
Susan Snook, Recording Secretary

The meeting was opened by Philip Duran at 7:02 p.m. in the absence of Chairperson Wiznitzer.

Statement of Adequate Notice:

Adequate notice of this meeting of the Lawrence Township Planning Board has been provided by filing the annual meeting schedule with the Municipal Clerk as required by law; by filing the agenda and notice with the Municipal Clerk, posting prominently in the Municipal Building and mailing to the Trenton Times and the Trentonian newspapers.

Public Comment:

Kate from Lawrenceville Fuel wants to put a mural on the side of the warehouse and wanted to see what is needed to make that happen. It exceeds the usual permissible sizes for signs but considers this to be a work of art; it does contain advertising but it is done in a style that is vintage and will compliment the aesthetics of the building and will enhance it.

Mr. Parvesse stated they did discuss this issue, the result was to look at different options and come up with one that would work that will not necessarily be only the business. It will be a Zoning Board application, while this Board would not have any jurisdiction.

Ms. Einstein from the Main Street Society stated they are definitely in support of what they want to do over at Lawrenceville Fuel because it enhances the Town and fits the feel on what they are trying to achieve. Ms. Hullfish asked what the next step is. Mr. Parvesse stated they presented a couple of drawings with some ideas you have designed and have to decide if you want to appear before the Zoning Board and see how they react to the plan. Mr. Parvesse explained to Ms. Hullfish what the procedure was to appear before the Zoning Board. Ms. Hullfish commented it seems excessive for some art work. Ms. Einstein asked if it was a non-profit organization that wanted to do something similar, if it was not advertising, would the process be the same. Mr. Parvesse stated if the judgement was that it was a sign, this would be a billboard under the Township ordinance, if it was classified as art, something like in Weeden Park, like a statute, it would not be a use variance and would be handled administratively or potentially by the Planning Board.

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Ms. Einstein asked if it were more pop art and less advertising, it is a mural, does that fit. Mr. Parvesse responded that if you submit something then a determination can be made, until you see it, it is kind of hard to say what is considered art and what would be a sign. He continued something that is to attract people to a business is considered a sign, if it is more for the generic public, it would be looked as if it was art. Mayor Bobbitt stated if it is a mural that incorporates its various businesses and might not necessarily say Lawrenceville Main Street, but add businesses in the area like the Gingered Peach and the Jigger Shop where it had a combination of historic and present businesses, is it still considered advertising or is it art.

Mr. Parvesse stated the ordinance has a viewpoint sign and for a business you are allowed a certain amount of square footage, it could be either viewpoint or it can be an advertising sign, but you can't have both. If this was classified as a viewpoint sign then it has to be in place of your commercial sign and would it still would be limited to the size.

Minutes for Approval:

May 20, 2019 and June 17, 2019 minutes were approved per unanimous vote with minor changes.

Resolutions:

Resolution of Memorialization No. 11-19; Master Plan Amendment – Circulation Plan Element and Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan was approved per unanimous vote.

Applications:

None

Public Hearing:

NJDCA Small Cities Community Block Grant Program

Ms. Malcolm stated the Township is seeking a grant and one of the grant requirements is to hold a public hearing. The grant is in the amount of \$400,000.00 and there is also a Township match of \$175,000.00 to the project.

The purpose is to provide pedestrian circulation improvements which would include repairing and installing sidewalks, repairing and installing ADA compliant sidewalk ramps, warning surfaces, adding benches, lighting and street trees. This would be in the area of the Brunswick Pike and additionally Lawrence Road beyond the circle up to Route 206 so it would be a great benefit in providing connection up to Princeton Pike and Route 206 obviously.

Some of the benefits that are going to be emphasized in the grant application that this is going to focus on are on the seniors and disabled in this area, it would be a great benefit for people who do not have cars to have walkable sidewalks and the more you can enhance the street the more usable it is. The benefits then that would come out of that the more people that are using the sidewalks have better access to transportation and hopefully would be more inclined to visit more frequently to the businesses. Additional lighting would certainly make it safer.

The Township has received a grant and Clarke Caton & Hintz is starting to work on basic designs for the types of improvements on the Brunswick Pike portion, which is also for the 2020 grant cycle. Mr. Parvesse stated the Township applied for this grant last year and did not get it, so we are trying to improve the application to make it look more appealing to the State. This is the purpose to resubmitting from the feedback from the State. There is a requirement to submit the grant that you have to hold a public hearing, which a display ad was in the paper about the meeting tonight. There was no public in attendance so no feedback; no vote is needed, we filled our obligation and will submit the grant.

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Councilman Kownacki stated we definitely need the sidewalks and curbs in that area because there are certain areas by the circle where there are no sidewalks because this is the gateway to the Township. Mr. Parvesse stated we are working on the design of that walkway and will give it to New Jersey Department of Transportation a head of time to be prepared.

Ms. Connelly stated there is accessible linkage to the redevelopment area, does that mean the study area. Mr. Parvesse commented that there is an area on the Zoning Map that is highlighted called the Redevelopment areas and never had any standards attached to it and has never been classified that way but it is shown on our map. It was outlined as a step towards that but never went through. The DVRPC grant was to do the design for the improvements, not for the planning improvement design. This is actually construction money.

A question was asked about pedestrian flashing beacons because the current ones there are being ignored and not letting pedestrians cross. Mr. Parvesse stated anything can be included and we are going to have public hearings and the Board would have a chance to look at it. Attached is a copy of a letter dated July 8, 2019.

Old Business / New Business / Correspondence:

None

Closed Session Resolution

None

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Digital audio file of this meeting is available upon request.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan J. Snook
Recording Secretary

Minutes approved: Sept. 16, 2019