

MINUTES

AMBLER BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION

August 28, 2007

The August Meeting of the Ambler Borough Planning Commission was held on August 28, 2007 at 7:30 P.M. in Borough Council Chambers located at 122 E. Butler Avenue, Ambler. Chairman Ware presided.

Roll Call. Present: Mr. Ware, Mr. LaGreca, Mr. Mulroy, Mr. Benigno, Mrs. Baigis, Mr. Amento, Ms. Andrews, Mr. Narcowich, County Planner and Mr. Dougherty, Borough Engineer.

Mr. LaGreca moved the July 31 2007 Minutes be approved with the following wording additions and corrections of typos: ROLL CALL: 4th sentence of paragraph “Mr. Dougherty”, not him. OLD BUSINESS: No. 4 3^d sentence “relates”, not regulates. Item 2 under 4 missing “)” at apartment; Item 4 under 4 missing “)” at apartment; Item 4 under 4 “buffering”, not buffing; Item 4 under 4 “abuts”, not “abates.” NEW BUSINESS: Item 5 under 1 “converted”, not connected; ITEM 3 under 2 “322”, not 332; No. 3 Sentence 14 add “Council president.” Seconded, carried.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Due to lack of time no further discussion was held on criteria for home professional office.
2. Due to lack of time no further discussion was held on development of lighting standards for development.
3. Due to lack of time no further discussion was held on regulation of POD's.
4. The Planning Commission was advised that Borough Council is amending the proposed Zoning Map Change by leaving 281 E. Butler Avenue as O Office Use. Mr. John Luskin, owner of and resident at 281 E. Butler Avenue for 25 years spoke. He is sending a letter to Council wherein he states that he wants the same rezoning of his property of O Office to DC Downtown Commercial as will be for the rest of his block. The property cannot be sold as a single family residence due to the constant noise day or night coming from the ACME and Laundromat. Any change other than that would cost him loss of value to his property. Several residents from Hendricks Street spoke. They said they understood his concern for financial loss. Members of the Planning Commission explained that Mr. Luskin

could sell the property and have it used for any use permitted under Section 1042 1 A,B and 2 A,B. Residents also commented about a possible driveway into Hendricks Street. Mrs. Dougherty, Main Street Manager, felt that those houses with storefronts could be converted back to houses.

The Planning Commission and County Planner continued their discussion on the matter. Mr. LaGreca moved that a letter be sent to Finance and Planning Committee endorsing the proposed changes to the DC standard that if a DC abuts R-1 certain permitted uses are not allowed. The Commission suggests a 15 foot rear landscape buffer; that if there is a corner lot that abuts a secondary residential street that no ingress/egress be permitted; and, that an F-2 landscape buffer standard be used at the property line that abuts the secondary residential street. Seconded. 6-Ayes; 1-Nay (Mrs. Baigis). Mr. Luskin stated he could live with a DC zoning of his property with the buffer requirements and ingress/egress restrictions.

5. The Planning Commission briefly discussed the revision to the Comprehensive Plan. We need to decide what the proper zoning is for 30 S. Bethlehem Pike. The property has been a service station since 1940. It was rezoned institutional in 1977. It is a pre-existing non-conforming use which can continue if it is of the same nature. We will review at some future date.
6. The Planning Commission reviewed the Draft Zoning Ordinance Change to Section 27-802 of the zoning ordinance to permit administrative and professional offices in the R-3 zoning district as a conditional use. Mr. LaGreca moves we send a letter to Council Finance and Planning Committee stating that we agree with the proposed changes to Section 27-802 of the Zoning Ordinance. Seconded, carried. 7-Ayes; 0-Nays.

NEW BUSINESS

1. The Planning Commission reviewed the DEP Sewer Module Form 4A for 237 Trinity Avenue. We answered all questions and directed Mr. Ware to sign the form. Mr. LaGreca was not involved in this discussion and abstained.
2. Mr. Winkler, representing the owner of 50 E. Butler Avenue, presented the outside façade work and modification to the green area to convert the building to a Paul Mitchell Partner School. Mr. Winkler was given a copy of the Alley of the Arts proposal, a project of which he was not aware. He agreed to work with Mr. Kenney from Act II Playhouse to improve the streetscape in the area. The Commission advised that the area where he wants to place a stairway to the basement is a public right-of-way and he must go through many legal steps. Mr. Winkler advised they will put a stairway inside the building and only have the door opening to the sidewalk at grade. He asked to remove two trees up against the building and make planter pits smaller and trim two street trees. He also

advised they will be placing benches with a smoking container in these areas. They agreed to work with Act II and do some down lighting from the side of the building to bring more light to the streetscape plaza. Mr. LaGreca moved to send a letter to Council endorsing the streetscape plan for the Cavalier Drive side of 50 E. Butler Avenue, the removal of two trees, trimming of two trees, and making planter pits smaller. Mr. Winkler agreed to add downlighting and place benches with smoking containers. Seconded, carried. 7Ayes; 0-Nays. We suggest Council let Ambler EAC work out the types of new plants for the landscape pits and review the method of trimming two street trees.

Mr. Kenney gave a brief presentation on the Alley of the Arts. He asked permission to remove two Hawthorn trees from the side of the Act II Theatre building at 56 E. Butler Avenue. A period of discussion followed. Susan Curry of EAC expressed concern about the loss of the two trees. Mrs. Dougherty expressed concern about the mural and who will design and paint it. A further period of discussion followed. Ms. Andrews moved that the two Hawthorne trees be removed from the planter areas and a letter be sent to Council. Seconded, carried. 6-Ayes; 1-Nay (Mrs. Baigis). The Commission asked Ms. Curry and Mr. Kenney to go and make an on-sight inspection to see if there was any room for compromise.

Mr. Kenney and Ms. Curry returned just after the meeting was adjourned. The Planning Commission began the meeting again to hear the compromise and see if it would be necessary to modify its letter. Six members were present, as Ms. Andrews had left. Mr. Kenney explained that only the center Hawthorn tree had to be removed and he agreed to connect the two planter areas with a new planter area. The two existing Hawthorn trees will act to frame the mural along with the low landscape pit. Mr. Ware moved that we rescind our first letter and send a second letter to Council agreeing to the removal of the center Hawthorn tree and extending the planter pit. Seconded, carried. 6-Ayes; 0-Nays; 1-Absent (Ms. Andrews). Again, we suggest Council use the services of the Ambler EAC in the planting of the landscape pits.

3. Mr. Benigno advised as relates to 200 S. Main Street Project of Station Square that the Fire Department needs access to the buildings, so the green area cannot be created, as suggested. He also shared a letter from Fox Rothschild concerning sewer main replacement of S. Main Street as part of the project.

Mr. LaGreca moved the meeting be adjourned. Seconded, carried.

Very truly yours,

George W. Benigno, Secretary
Ambler Borough Planning Commission