

**Borough of Kutztown  
Planning Commission  
Minutes of June 10, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission was held on Monday, June 10, 2024, in the Kutztown Borough Municipal Building Multi-Purpose Room.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Mr. Robert Weller, Chairperson. Members present were Mr. Steve Fenstermacher, Mr. Joel Seidel, Ms. Pat Snyder, and Mr. Randy Marsteller, and Ms. Amy Hubler. Also present were Ms. Shelly Grim and Mr. Josh Young both from the Community Development Office (CDO), Mr. Gabriel Khalife (Borough Manager) and Lisa-Ladd Kidder (Borough Council). Residents in attendance for observation were Mr. Todd Greiss Jr. and Mr. Lucas Fegely.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

No comments.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioners reviewed the minutes from the Planning Commission meeting on May 13, 2024.

Motion to approve by Ms. Snyder & seconded by Ms. Hubler. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

**REPORTS**

The Commissioners discussed the CDO report from Shelly Grim (see email dated 5 June 2024). Topics included a zoning application approval for 60 Bieber Alley (change of use from electrical supply shop to cabinet sales, pack and ship). The report also noted enforcement of code violations (noise) for 325 W. Walnut, 315 W. Main and 85 Noble. Finally, the report noted that zoning applications were denied for 213 W. Main and 45 Constitution at the Zoning Hearing Board on 30 May 2024. The variance decision for 601 E. Main St. (McDonalds signage) was tabled until the next Zoning Hearing Board scheduled for 25 June 2024.

**ACTION ITEMS - none**

**OLD BUSINESS/UPDATES**

**Hailstone action items – none**

**Updates from Hailstone/KPC meeting on 15 May 2024 – by Ms. Snyder**

- KPC attendees included Ms. Snyder.
- Kutztown Community Partnership (KCP) attendees included Barbara Vogelgesang (Executive Director of KCP), Mr. Nick Timpe, Amanda Garcia, and Ellan Overcast.
- The group reviewed all strategic action items in the Hailstone Plan.

- The group asked the Planning Commission consider recommendations related to parking previously discussed to include (but not limited to) monetizing private parking lots, metering Main Street and adding 15-minute pick-up zones on each block of Main Street.
- Another follow-up meeting will be scheduled.

#### **Updates on Northeastern Berks Joint Comprehensive Plan – by Ms. Snyder**

- Laura Mursch of the Berks County Planning Commission held a meeting via ZOOM with representatives of the townships participating in the Northeastern Berks Joint Comp Plan. Highlights follow:
  - Expect the plan to take 3 years to complete.
  - 1 meeting per month with the first 10 meetings to address new content.
  - Do we need the plan translated into a second language? Executive summary only?
  - Consider outreach to the Mennonites.
  - Discussion also included joint zoning which could include adopting a Joint Zoning Board. This would be considered and voted on after the completion of the Comp plan. (Note: In Berks County, there are 19 joint comp plans and 5 joint zoning boards.)
- Action items:
  - Provide current zoning map. (see online)
  - Provide list of 3 names and alternates by 28 June to participate in the monthly comp plan meetings. Ms. Mursch suggested a member of the Borough Council, a member of the Borough staff and a member of the Planning Commission. Pat Snyder will represent the KPC and Fred Engelhardt has volunteered to represent the Borough Council.

#### **Updates/Discussion on the Villas @ Maxatawny**

- Ms. Lisa-Ladd Kidder noted that the DRAFT letter she provided at the last meeting was in error when it stated that the Borough had received a Traffic Impact Study. She suggested that Mr. Weller send a correction to the Maxatawny Zoning Officer. Mr. Weller agreed.
- Mr. Weller provided an update on the discussions at the Maxatawny Planning Commission meeting regarding concerns that the design drawings did not adequately address (1) sufficient retention areas for water runoff AND (2) sufficient off-street parking to prevent roadway bottlenecks caused by excessive on-street parking.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### **Discussion of Short-Term Rentals (STRs) and the need for an ordinance**

- Mr. Young reminded the Commissioners that Kutztown does not have an ordinance covering AIRBNBs. He suggests using a Monroe County ordinance as a sample/template for Kutztown.
- Mr. Young suggests adding STRs in a new chapter (i.e., 137) of the Kutztown Borough Ordinance.
- Suggested features include:

- Covering rentals of 30 days or less.
  - The property owner must have a residence or an office within 15 miles of the rental property.
  - The landlord should be responsible for utilities.
- Mr. Khalife noted that monitoring and enforcement will be the keys to success.
- Ms. Hubler provided insights on a cautionary lesson learned by Bar Harbor, Maine where Airbnb's took over the town and made long term rentals hard to find thereby forcing the local population to seek rentals outside of the city.

**Workshop scheduled for 24 June 2024 -**

- The agenda will focus on further developing an ordinance to address Short-Term Rentals.

**OFF AGENDA** - none

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Seidel and seconded by Ms. Hubler to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen M. Fenstermacher  
Secretary