

**BOROUGH OF SEWICKLEY
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, February 5, 2020

The Planning Commission Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Nathan St. Germain. In attendance were Shea Murtaugh, Jeff Tyson, Nathan St. Germain, Thomas Rostek, and Borough Manager, Marla Marcinko.

Mr. St. Germain led the commission in the pledge of allegiance.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Minutes approved with alteration to the closing vote. The January 2, 2020 meeting minutes should read that the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Ms. Murtaugh and seconded by Mr. Green. The closing time of the meeting was not recorded.

The minutes were approved by a vote of 2-0-2 with Mr. St. Germain and Mr. Tyson abstaining.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Mr. Rostek suggested that reorganization of the commission should be postponed due to two empty seats and one absence. A motion to postpone reorganization was accepted by a vote of 4-0.
- B. **Pre-application review process**
The planning commission discussed when a pre-application meeting should occur. The commission decided that a pre-application hearing will always be voluntary and is recommended if the applicant wishes to have any items required in the SALDO checklist waived. If an applicant requests approval from the commission with incomplete items, approval may be delayed.
- C. **Public Hearings for Land Development**
The planning commission discussed the common practice of conducting a public hearing for all application recommendations. Borough Manager Marcinko pointed out to the commission that a public hearing is optional and is not common practice among Pennsylvania municipalities. The commission expressed concern that a proper vetting of an application would not happen without a public hearing. The public hearing has long served as an opportunity for the public to give their input. Ms. Marcinko proposed the advertising of the approvals to take place at the meetings instead. The planning commission found this acceptable. The commission can call for a public hearing for any application. This will be reserved for major land development and other applications with significant public implications.
- D. **Definition of "Application for Development"**
The current definition for Application for Development in the SALDO is very broad and can easily be interpreted to include any application, including a building permit. Ms. Marcinko volunteered to review this definition with the Borough solicitor to see if a change should be made.

E. **New Member Applications**

The commission was in the possession of two written applications as well as a request from Christine Allen (member of council) to fill two open seats.

Ms. Murtaugh suggested that having a second member of council on the commission is desired right now as the commission is low on experience after the loss of several long-standing members.

Mr. Rostek suggested that this is a reasonable rationale for having two council members on the commission but may not be optimal as the commission gains experience. He suggested that the presence of two officials on the commission should be revisited in two years to determine if it should return to six citizen members.

Ms. Murtaugh made a motion to recommend Christine Allen for appointment to the planning commission. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rostek. The motion passed on a vote of 4-0.

The applications of Mr. Douglas Upton of 664 Maple Lane and Mr. Thomas Wingers of 13 Thorn St. Both applicants were qualified for service. Ms. Murtaugh suggested that it would be best if both applicants could present themselves to the commission at the March meeting as well as any additional candidates that may apply. Ms. Marcinko volunteered to invite both candidates to the March meeting for review.

Adjournment

Ms. Murtaugh made the motion to adjourn which was seconded by Mr. Tyson. The motion passed 4-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom Rostek
Council Member