

North Wales Borough Planning Commission
May 1, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Commission members present were Gregory J. D'Angelo, Lillian Higgins, and Linda McAdoo; Alan Guzzardo, Assistant Borough Manager/Zoning Officer, and Maggie Dobbs Donnelly, Senior Planner MCPC, were also in attendance. Commission members Greta Martin-Washington and Mark Tarlecki were absent.

There were no people in the audience.

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair D'Angelo at 7:31 P.M.

Mr. D'Angelo announced that the Planning Commission had met previously this evening from 6:00-7:30 PM in a workshop meeting to continue the review of the Transit-Oriented Development District (TOD).

1. Public comment—There was no public comment.
2. Summary of workshop discussion
 - a. Ms. Dobbs presented a brief summary of the work that was done since the last workshop meeting, which included updates to the permitted land uses. Mr. Guzzardo indicated the only thing that was not added per the previous discussion was the brewery/distillery use. It was noted that there are a number of uses that the Planning Commission would like to include that do not currently have definitions; these would need to be added as part of any ordinance amendment.
 - b. Ms. Dobbs pointed to areas of inconsistency in the code and recommended modifying the language to be more specific to the particular context of the district boundaries in the Borough. A brief discussion was held about the potential to expand the district boundaries to include additional properties adjacent to the train station, but it was decided the priority should be on strengthening the existing language before identifying other eligible properties.
 - c. Setbacks:
 - The TOD District establishes build-to-lines rather than setbacks, but these build-to-lines are based on the location of existing structures. Because the goal is to establish a uniform and pedestrian-friendly district, this standard may result in undesirable or infeasible building placement because existing properties have deeper setbacks than would be appropriate for a TOD. It was decided that a specific build-to-line measurement should be established (12 or 15 feet) to account for pedestrian sidewalks and landscaping/public plaza areas.
 - Reduce the allowable maximum side yard setbacks to 5 feet.
 - Establishing a specific build-to-line will also make it clear how to interpret other provisions of the ordinance.

- Clarify frontage requirements–Since most of the properties in the TOD have frontage on two roadways (Walnut/Beaver or Walnut/Railroad), create standards for which roadway buildings should front. This is especially important for potential redevelopment on the corner properties.
- d. Lot width:
 - Remove different lot width standards based on land use type, and simplify to have one standard for all mixed-use and nonresidential buildings, and one standard for multifamily buildings.
- e. Buffers:
 - Existing TOD language has unclear regulations for landscape buffers for properties. Generally, there is limited area for buffers in the district and it was felt that front landscaping areas are desirable, but limit side yard buffers.
 - Rear yard buffers should be required where appropriate, and stronger parking lot buffering standards should be implemented.
- f. Building height:
 - Retain the maximum height as three stories, but reduce the maximum height from 42 feet to 36 feet.
 - Permit a bonus provision that would allow a 4th story (up to 45 feet) for mixed-use buildings, provided standards are met such as a step-back on the upper floor, required ground-floor nonresidential uses, parking, and stormwater.
- g. Strengthen the architectural standards to ensure that new development will result in building styles that are emblematic of the other commercial areas of the Borough, particularly for those buildings that are not also included in the Historic District.
- h. Next steps: The Planning Commission has asked MCPC to continue making the edits as discussed. A revised draft of the TOD District will be reviewed at the next workshop meeting on June 5, 2019. If the changes to the TOD District are approved by the Planning Commission, a recommendation will then be made to Borough Council to consider the amendments before a public hearing can be held.

3. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. D'Angelo, seconded by Mrs. McAdoo, to approve the minutes of the March 6, 2019 meeting. The motion passed 3-0.

A motion was made by Mrs. McAdoo, seconded by Mrs. Higgins, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:42 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory D'Angelo, Vice-Chair