

January 14, 2020

TO: North Wales Borough Council

FROM: Mark Tarlecki, Chairman – North Wales Borough Planning Commission

RE: North Wales Borough Planning Commission Annual Report 2019

This memorandum will serve as the North Wales Borough Planning Commission 2019 Annual Report of Activities.

The members of the Commission were: Mark Tarlecki Chair, Gregory D'Angelo Vice Chair, Linda McAdoo Recording Secretary, Lillian Higgins Member, Greta Martin Washington Member

In this report, you will find a compilation of what the Planning Commission has accomplished for the past year.

2019: Review and Update of the North Wales Transit Oriented District Ordinance

The Planning Commission established an objective to perform a comprehensive review of the North Wales Transit Oriented District (TOD) ordinance. Under the guidance of Margaret Donnelly, a representative from the Montgomery County Planning Commission, and Alan Guzzardo, North Wales Borough Assistant Manager/Zoning Officer, the Planning Commission held several workshops to review the Borough's TOD ordinance and update certain sections to reflect standards used in TOD planning. While there are aspects of the new TOD ordinance that are similar to Transit Oriented Districts in other municipalities, the Planning Commission has also included standards that it believes reflect the unique qualities of North Wales. As of December 2019, a rough draft of the updated TOD Ordinance has been prepared. Upon final review and approval by the Planning Commission at our January 2020 regular meeting, the ordinance draft will be sent to the Borough Solicitor for review and then submitted to Borough Council for review and hopefully adoption in early 2020. At that time, Margaret Donnelly will give a presentation to Borough Council discussing and highlighting the proposed ordinance.

2019: North Wales Planning Commission Public Meeting Activities and Actions

January 2019

1. Z-18-02 - 707 Church Street, In-Law Suite Addition

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Oretha Berry, property owner of 707 Church St and her builder, Steve Berardi, attended the meeting to review the application for a front and side yard variance in addition to the special exception for building a one-story addition to be used as a in-law suite.

The Planning Commission recommended that the North Wales Borough Zoning Hearing Board approve the subject application for a special exception from the North Wales Borough Zoning Ordinance, Article XVII, General Provisions, Section 208-147, Special requirements for separate living areas when approved by special exception, and variances from Article V, R-A Residential District, Section 208-29, Front yard, and Section 208-30, Side yards, to allow an in-law suite addition with the following stipulations:

- a. A stormwater management plan be prepared.
- b. Install landscape around the proposed in-law suite and planting(s) to replace the removal of two trees in the side yard.
- c. Consider privacy issues when placing windows on the side of the addition facing the property at 711 Church Street.
- d. Communicate with the immediate neighbors at 703 and 711 Church Street during the building process.

February 2019

1. Margaret Donnelly gave an update summarizing the Planning Commission's workshop discussions reviewing the current TOD ordinance.
2. Chair Mark Tarlecki established guidelines for meeting protocols.
3. The Planning Commission voted to accept the 2018 Annual Report and submit to Borough Council.

March 2019

Margaret Donnelly summarized the workshop session, which focused on reviewing existing general goals that are broadly applicable to TOD districts but are non-specific to the conditions in North Wales. A reduction of auto-dependency within the District would be preferable, but due to the size of the District and the Borough's suburban setting, this is an unrealistic goal. Future development under the Borough's TOD should focus more on enhancing pedestrian amenities, creating unifying architectural standards, and encouraging appropriate mixed-uses to build a commercial and residential hub around the train station. Updates to this section will "right-size" the goals to meet the Borough's individual planning context.

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April 2019

There was no public meeting but the Planning Commission met in a workshop session to continue reviewing and updating the Borough's TOD Ordinance.

May 2019

Margaret Donnelly presented a brief summary of the work done since the last workshop meeting, which included updates to the permitted land uses. 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; e.g. brewery/distillery use. The Planning Commission agreed to prioritize strengthening the existing language covering properties within the current boundaries of the TOD. In addition, she summarized the defining of setbacks, lot width, buffers, building height, and strengthening of architectural standards in the TOD.

June 2019

Margaret Donnelly summarized results of the Planning Commission workshop, during which the latest TOD draft was reviewed.

1. The Planning Commission members focused on proposed changes to the ordinance language, which included updates to the general goals and objectives, residential and non-residential use regulations, architectural and dimensional standards. It was agreed that parking calculations need to be reviewed and verified for applicability. Parking requirements will be amended to ensure suitable parking for development can be provided given the site constraints of properties within the district.
2. Next, development design standards, architectural standards, and landscape standards will be amended to protect community character and enhance the streetscape.
3. Ms. Donnelly stated that MCPC would further edit and refine the draft TOD. Using the proposed changes to the TOD, MCPC will also prepare an illustrated series of draft site layouts illustrating how development/redevelopment would look. This exercise will test the viability and appropriateness of the proposed dimensional standards and create realistic photo renderings to better enable the Planning Commission to visualize development potential. These materials will be the basis of the August workshop meeting.

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July 2019

No workshop or public meeting was held.

August 2019

The Planning Commission met in a workshop session to continue reviewing and updating the TOD ordinance. No public meeting was held

September 2019

1. Margaret Donnelly summarized the workshop session discussion, continuing to review and update the TOD ordinance. The Planning Commission, under advisement from MCPC, discussed including in the TOD draft development schemes to include building limits, architectural standard that reflects the historical nature of the Borough, building density, parking requirements, and site circulations.
2. LD #19-02 – Final Land Development Review for North Wales Area Library, 233 South Swartley Street

The Planning Commission recommended that Borough Council approve the proposed land development plan by the North Wales Area Library to add six (6) parking spaces to extend the existing parking lot on the east side of the Library property. The approval was made contingent upon receipt and review of stormwater management plans by the Borough Engineer and a letter listing the requested waivers to ensure that the revised plans comply with the Borough's Zoning, SALDO, and Stormwater Management Ordinances.

3. LD #19-01 – Preliminary/Final Land Development Review for 690 East Walnut Street

The Planning Commission reviewed the preliminary land development plan to add a second story and convert an existing one-story non-residential structure of 3,300 square feet into a six-unit apartment building. The property is located in the TOD District. The requested variances were granted by the Zoning Hearing Board on September 3, 2019 and a written decision submitted 45 days later.

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There is a shared access driveway with the adjacent property. No change was made to the building footprint. Plans include a curb cut, apron, and driveway for the dumpster on North 6th Street. The Borough Engineer, Margaret Donnelly, Alan Guzzardo, and various members of the Planning Commission commented on the requested waivers. The applicants were invited back to present their revisions at a future meeting.

October 2019

A workshop session was held for continued review and updating of the latest draft of the proposed TOD ordinance. No public meeting was held.

November 2019

1. Mrs. Donnelly, MCPC, reported that the update to the TOD ordinance continues and the workshop meeting focused on reviewing architectural design and site design standards. A final draft will be reviewed at the next Planning Commission meeting; if approved, this will then be submitted to the Borough Solicitor for review and then early in 2020 to Borough Council for consideration.
2. LD #19-01 Preliminary/Final Land Development Review for 690 East Walnut Street

The applicants for 690 East Walnut Street reviewed the revised plans to renovate the existing one-story building by adding a second story and creating six residential apartments, three on each floor. The applicants stated they would comply with most of the items requested by the Borough Engineer.

After a full review, the Planning Commission voted to recommend that Borough Council approve the Preliminary/Final Land Development plans subject to the Borough Engineer resolving any outstanding issues.

December 2019

No workshop or public meeting was held.

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The next scheduled meeting of the North Wales Planning Commission is scheduled for Monday January 13, 2020 at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Tarlecki, Chair

cc: Alan Guzzardo, Assistant Borough Manager/Borough Zoning Officer
Christine Hart, Borough Manager
North Wales Borough Planning Commission