

DATE: April 7, 2021

TO: North Wales Borough Council

FROM: Greta Martin Washington, Chair – North Wales Borough Planning Commission

RE: North Wales Borough Planning Commission - 2020 Annual Report of Activities

This memorandum will serve as the North Wales Borough Planning Commission 2020 Annual Report of Activities.

The members of the Commission were: Gregory J. D'Angelo, Lillian Higgins, Greta Martin Washington, Linda McAdoo, and Mark Tarlecki.

Eight official meetings were held during 2020: January 13, February 5, March 4, May 6, June 3, July 1, August 5, and December 2, 2020. There were no meetings in April, September, October and November since there were no agenda items. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and health restrictions, the meetings from May through December 2020 were conducted virtually by the use of telecommunications devices via a Zoom conference accessed by either telephone using the dial in number or entering the URL on an internet browser, both of which were provided on the North Wales Borough website www.northwalesborouh.org at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

January 13, 2020

Margaret Dobbs, MCPC, reviewed the North Wales Borough 2040 Comprehensive Plan 2019 Annual Review and 2020 priority projects and implementation timeline in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

After discussion, the Planning Commission voted to seek authorization from Borough Council to work on ordinance amendments, specifically:

- Conduct an audit of the Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances to identify necessary updates for clarification of intent, appropriateness of districts, and preservation or protection of existing community character.
- Adopt renewable energy ordinances regulating alternative energy.

February 5, 2020

The 2020 Work Items list was reviewed, and it was decided that the list should be revised to specifically focus on the work items the Planning Commission would like to see the designated Borough agencies accomplish in 2020. The Planning Commission tasks for 2020 will be the

Borough-wide walkability audit and the audit of permit parking in the Borough; MCPC will be the lead on both these projects with assistance from the Planning Commission where feasible.

March 4, 2020

- a. Margaret Dobbs reported on the proposed Planning Commission projects for 2020:
- Zoning Ordinance Review – Ms. Dobbs and Mr. Guzzardo will work on this and provide periodic updates to the Planning Commission.
 - SALDO update will be done in 2021.
 - Walkability Audit – Evaluate status of sidewalks, crosswalks, and other pedestrian infrastructure and make recommendations for future improvements. Ms. Dobbs reviewed the steps of this audit and how to inform residents.
 - Permit Parking Audit – Conduct a permit parking audit for the Borough to evaluate the effectiveness of its current permit parking program and make recommendations to improve the administration of the program. Ms. Dobbs distributed a memo outlining the scope of work, project outcomes, and estimated timeline.
- b. TOD Zoning Text Amendment – After reviewing the latest draft, dated February 26, 2020, the Planning Commission voted 5-0 to recommend that Council authorize the Borough Solicitor to prepare the TOD zoning amendment for consideration by Council. Ms. Dobbs will present an overview of the proposed changes to the existing TOD and a summary of the goals of the ordinance amendment at the March 10th Council meeting.

May 6, 2020

Ms. Dobbs presented updates to the Planning Commission 2020 Work Items:

- Walkability Audit - MCPC is working on the interactive map, which will be used in compiling the visual data collection from the field work.
- Permit Parking Audit – It was determined that accurate data or parking counts would not be possible due to the current stay-at-home conditions. The possibility that Planning Commission members could do the preliminary work and calculate on and off-street capacity during the summer of 2020 was discussed. Data on parking permits and citations issued from the Police Department needs to be obtained.
- Zoning Ordinance Update. Proposed TOD amendment draft is being reviewed by the Solicitor's office. Ms. Dobbs and Mr. Guzzardo have been reviewing the residential districts and preparing a spreadsheet to compare the different dimensional standards in each of the residential districts and this should be available in the near future.

June 3, 2020

Planning Commission 2020 Work Items were discussed:

- Walkability Audit – Borough Solicitor has approved the text of the digital flyer which will be posted on various social media sites.
- Walkability Survey – Interactive map was reviewed, and comments received from various members of the Planning Commission. MCPC will make further revisions to the survey.

July 1, 2020

a. Planning Commission 2020 Work Items were discussed:

- Walkability Audit – MCPC is working on updates to the interactive map. Data collection has begun to document current sidewalk conditions and take photos. It was decided that this audit should be the primary focus for now.
- Parking Audit – MCPC is doing the base mapping work.
- Zoning Ordinance Update – This is currently on hold due to the challenges of working during this pandemic crisis and the inability to meet in person.

b. Zoning Application Z-20-02

Application filed by Lisa Cole for property located at 623 East Walnut Street. The Planning Commission voted 4-0 to recommend that the Zoning Hearing Board approve the subject application for a variance from the North Wales Borough Zoning Ordinance, Article VII, R-C Residential District, Section 208-55, Accessory buildings, to permit a third accessory structure, a 12' x 24' oval above ground swimming pool in the back yard.

c. Zoning Application Z-20-03

Application filed by Jean-Paul Vincent for property is located at 304 West Walnut Street. The Planning Commission voted 4-0 to recommend that the Zoning Hearing Board approve the subject application for a special exception from the North Wales Borough Zoning Ordinance, Article VII, R-C Residential District, Section 208-47.F.(1), Permitted Uses, to permit a minor home occupation, a mortgage company. The motion passed 4-0.

The Planning Commission decided to make no recommendation on the two variances:

- (1) A variance from the North Wales Borough Zoning Ordinance, Article VII, R-C Residential District, Section 208-47.F.(1), Permitted Uses, to allow the occupation in a single-family semidetached dwelling.

- (2) A variance from the North Wales Borough Zoning Ordinance, Article XVII, General Provisions, Section 208-139.A, Home occupations, to not add an additional two paved off-street parking spaces.

August 5, 2020

a. Zoning Application Z-20-04

Application by TBG Health TBG Health to operate a Structured Habilitation Day program for brain injury rehabilitation on the first floor and business offices on the second and third floors at the property located at 136/138 South Main Street. The Planning Commission voted 4-0 to remain neutral on the application for a variance from the North Wales Borough Zoning Ordinance, Article X, OR Office-Residential District, Section 208-82.C, Permitted uses, but recommend that if granted the applicant will be held accountable to the scope of use – brain injury rehabilitation - and hours of operation - Monday-Friday, 9 AM to 3 PM - as stipulated in the application submitted to the Borough.

b. Zoning Application Z-20-05

Application filed by Nate and Tina Rice for property located at 401 West Walnut Street. The Planning Commission voted 4-0 to recommend that the Zoning Hearing Board approve the subject application for a special exception from Article VI, R-B Residential District, Section 208-36.D.(3) and two variances from Article XVII, General Provisions, Section 208-147, Special requirements for separate living areas when approved by special exception, subject to consideration of a deed restriction that would allow family members to include immediate and extended family - aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews - to reside in the separate living area.

December 2, 2020

Planning Commission 2021 Work Items:

- Ms. Dobbs presented a preliminary introduction, via PowerPoint, of the Walkability Study and what data will be included. One more trip is planned through the Borough and it is estimated that February is the earliest date that the study will be completed. The study will be a tool that enables the Borough to set realistic goals/expectations.
- Parking Audit – It was agreed that this should be postponed until the pandemic restrictions have been lifted and there is a return to a normal work commute (if ever).
- Zoning Ordinance Update – This work will continue in 2021 but is not expected to be completed by year-end.

In 2021, the Planning Commission plans to focus on several key points as follows:

- Complete the Walkability Study. The key findings and data will be utilized for future sidewalk projects.
- Implement the TOD Zoning Text Amendment that had been prepared in 2020.
- Continue audit of the Zoning Code to identify necessary updates for clarification of intent, appropriateness of districts, and preservation or protection of existing community character.
- Continue to provide recommendations to Borough Council for Land Development reviews, by providing an emphasis on the importance of:
 - Intelligent methods of rezoning or zoning code modifications, as opposed to granting numerous variances.
 - Conditions to project approval which will improve the quality of the finished project.
- Work with the Montgomery County Planning Commission to make use of their planning resources, especially GIS and graphics-based planning/exhibit tools.

In 2021, Planning Commission meetings will continue to be held on the first Wednesday of the month at 7 PM, with a workshop meeting from 6-7 PM before the regularly scheduled meeting to work on the 2020/2021 Planning Commission work items.

Respectfully submitted,

Greta Martin Washington, Chair

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