

## Jeannette Planning Commission | Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: September 6, 2017

### Attendance:

- Alec Italiano, Chairman: **Absent**
- William Pacelli, Co-Chairman: Present
- Joseph Carle: Present
- Donald Deguffroy: Present
- Jonathan Gibbon: Present
- Laura Smith: Present
- Jude Soles: Present
- Chuck Highlands, Council Representative
- Richard R. Jacobelli, Mayor
- Brian Lawrence, Westmoreland County Planning
- Seth Koons, Westmoreland County Planning



### Call to Order:

- Meeting called to order at 5:30 PM. Due to the absence of Chairman Alec Italiano, William Pacelli served as acting chairman for the meeting.

### Previous Meeting's Minutes:

- Motion to approve, as presented, made by Joseph Carle, seconded by Laura Smith. Unanimously approved.

### Staff Report:

- Brian Lawrence stated that there was nothing new to discuss and would discuss the agenda items individually.

### Old Business:

- Zoning: Brian Lawrence stated no update has been given from council. Council to have the 1<sup>st</sup> reading of the zoning ordinance at the September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017 meeting; the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading will be held at the October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017 meeting with time for public comment and an official adoption afterwards.

### Agenda Item #1: **Comprehensive Plan Implementation**

- Brian Lawrence stated that he had a conversation with City Manager, Michael Nestico, before the meeting regarding the role of the Planning Commission during the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Lawrence stated that the Planning Commission's responsibility is to study

issues and opportunities designated in the Comprehensive Plan and present potential solutions to City Council.

- Lawrence discussed the importance of the “Welcoming Gateways” and “Downtown” initiatives and how they present a good starting point for the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Lawrence stated that one of the initiatives – “Public Relations” – falls on each member of the commission and the City’s staff to consistently represent the city in a positive manner.
- Lawrence also stated that the City Council seems to have a “good hand” on the initiative for “Blight Elimination”.
- In response to a question from Lawrence, Laura Smith stated that there has been no further communication between the City, the Pennsylvania Department of Economic Development (DCED) and the Pennsylvania Downtown Center regarding the “Downtowns” initiative. Lawrence wanted to look into having the Jeannette Business Association (JBA) be a representative for that initiative.
- Lawrence discussed the options for the Planning Commission moving forward with the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan in the form of gathering public input and allowing the Westmoreland County Planning Staff to develop design alternatives and provide assistance. Laura Smith discussed the alternative for a gazebo or amphitheater at one of the parks and how gathering public input would be beneficial in determining what option would be best moving forward.
- Joseph Carle discussed the duties of the Planning Commission as outlined in the city’s ordinance. Carle wanted to emphasize that he feels the commission should act as a mediator between the public and the City Council as it pertains to certain zoning or building issues in the town. The point was seconded by Mayor Jacobelli, who inquired about it to Brian Lawrence. Lawrence and Donald Deguffroy made the point that the Planning Commission has no role in the interpretation or enforcement of the City’s Zoning Ordinance. An ongoing discussion was held about the issue and the legal authority of the city’s Planning Commission and Zoning Hearing Board.
- Brian Lawrence brought the discussion back to the Comprehensive Plan initiative of “Welcoming Gateways”; the commission came to the conclusion that Jeanette does not currently have attractive or welcoming entry points, albeit the conditions *have* improved.
- Mayor Jacobelli brought up the county’s plan to demolish the Jeannette Glass Plant and how that site has an impact on those entering the city.
- The conversation of “Welcoming Gateways” then focused on the action steps listed in the comprehensive plan. Brian Lawrence stated that the Westmoreland County planning staff is available to do the bulk of the work; staff is just looking for guidance from the Planning Commission.
- Donald Deguffroy brought up the state of the city’s street signs and overall street condition. Deguffroy had written a list of 15 items he feels need to be address that he would distribute later in the meeting.
- Brian Lawrence suggested that the commission reread the section of the comprehensive plan on corridors and gateways and come to the next meeting ready to prioritize initiatives moving forward.

- Another discussion was held about the condition of the city's street signs and different design alternatives for new signage and the costs that would be associated with them.

#### Agenda Item #2: **Monsour Site**

- William Pacelli started the conversation about the proposed development for the "Monsour Site". Brian Lawrence stated that the purchase contract is still under negotiations, despite what has been reported in the papers. Lawrence stated that the development needs to conform to the City's zoning ordinance, and the importance of the design criteria that is included in the zoning ordinance. Lawrence stated that the "approved" design was the best presented and was the best price for the city.
- Pacelli inquired about the proposed use of the site; he had heard that the use was to be a "strip mall". Lawrence stated that a "strip mall" is not a use, but a design type. The commission stated that they do not want a large parking lot that is easily visible; Lawrence stated that to solve that you move the parking to the rear or the side of the site.
- Jonathan Gibbon inquired into which business type the board would want if not a "strip mall". The group discussed that the business type isn't the key issue, but the design of the development.
- Chuck asked Lawrence about the county withholding 50% of the taxes on the site for 5 years. Lawrence clarified that the county's Land Bank would be the recipient of 50% of the property taxes for that 5 year period.
- Mayor Jacobelli talked about his vision for a professional type business to enter the space, i.e. medical office or something similar.
- Lawrence ultimately clarified to the commission that the market will drive the building use and that the commission has no role with approving the design or use of the site. Lawrence informed the council that despite the fact that the land development would be reviewed and approved by the county, that the Jeanette Zoning Ordinance would take precedence over the county's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.
- The conversation was concluded by William Pacelli with the statement that the commission has no action to make on it and will just have to wait and see how the situation comes to pass.

#### Agenda Item #3: **NPP – Tay Waltenbaugh**

- Brian Lawrence stated that he had asked Tay Waltenbaugh of the Neighborhood Partnership Program (NPP) to attend the meeting but was informed after making the agenda that Tay would not be able to attend.
- William Pacelli tabled the topic for the next meeting.

#### Agenda Item #4: **Street Improvement Program**

- Donald Deguffroy distributed the aforementioned list he had written of 15 items to address for the city's street had how he wanted to schedule a meeting to formally discuss them.
- Joseph Carle brought up the idea that the city foreman should be brought into the discussion.
- Deguffroy brought up one of the main points of the list, to develop a crack sealing contract with a third party contractor as part of the city's streets paving program. Mayor Jacobelli stated that city council will be moving forward with discussing that.
- William Pacelli wanted to know if there was a way to enforce a utility company to upgrade their utilities while the city is also repaving the same street. Mayor Jacobelli stated that the utility company is required to bond out the work to replace any pavement that they dig out. Mayor Jacobelli also stated that the city has redefined what a lane is, and that the utility company has to pay a fee to open up the city's streets.
- William Pacelli stated that the commission would review the items and come to the next meeting ready to discuss them.

\*At 59 minutes into the meeting multiple discussion were going on at the same time, making it difficult to scribe into minutes.\*

#### Agenda Item #5: **Water Line**

- William Pacelli brought up the issue of a water line replacement that was brought up by Joseph Carle at the previous meeting.
- The Mayor stated that the water line in questions would be kept in the Lincoln Avenue right-of-way.
- Pacelli wanted to know if the issue was something that should be investigated by the commission.
- Mayor Jacobelli stated the city hopes the line will stay in the Lincoln Avenue right-of-way as to not negatively affect Chambers Street. Mayor Jacobelli informed the commission that in 2018 they should have more information.

#### Other Business:

- Mayor Jacobelli brought up the flood control channel that will be brought into Jeannette. Mayor Jacobelli wanted to keep the commission informed and wanted them to look into the potential design of the channel moving forward. Mayor Jacobelli envisions sidewalks, lighting and fencing to help make the site more visually appealing.

#### Public Comment:

- No public comment.

#### Adjournment:

- Meeting was adjourned around 6:40.