

## **PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JANUARY 21, 2020**

The meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, January 21, 2020, in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Lacek at 7:00 PM.

**Members Present:** Jim Lacek-Chairman, Mark Christini, Kevin Doupe, Erin Groves, Karen Johnson-Vice-Chairman, Jimmy Lacek

**Members Absent:** Keith Long & Diane Siegmund

**Others:** None present

**Visitors:** None present

**Minutes:**

A motion was made by Erin Groves and seconded by Karen Johnson to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2019 meeting. Motion passed.

**New Business:** Potential Code Revisions to Towanda Borough Code as sent down from Council at Jan 6, 2020 meeting.

A. Discussion of definition of “family” (Ch 221, 325).

It was discussed if the Planning Commission would make a recommendation reducing the number of unrelated persons under Towanda Borough Code Sections §221-2 and §325-81 “definition of family”. Data was shared showing that some other municipalities limit the number of unrelated persons to 2-4. The existing definition is:

FAMILY - An individual or two or more persons related by blood or marriage or a group of not more than five persons, excluding servants, who are not related by blood or marriage, living together as a single housekeeping unit in a dwelling unit.

In 2018, Council amended Chapter 325, §325-81, Definitions of “Dwelling Structure” and “Single Housekeeping Unit”. (This was due to an issue at the 104 York Avenue (R-4 district) which was being used as step housing for county probationers. The persons staying there were not related but shared a space and were not bound together by choice to form a “single housekeeping unit”.)

Also, there was discussion by the Planning Commission concerning the square footage areas for 2 family and multi-family dwellings, including apartments; and if the rental inspections included the Towanda Borough Code (Chapter 325) square footage requirements.

In addition, Mr. Christini stated in the 2010 Census, 42% of housing in the Borough was renter-occupied housing units. Data collected in 2015 by the Borough showed that (52) single family homes were being rented out as rental units in Single Family R1 and R4 districts. Council feels the need to encourage and promote families in order to preserve and enhance the quality of life in Towanda Borough. It was also noted that the presence of families (as opposed to a temporary-transient population) results in a more stable, vibrant and engaged community.

**At this time, a motion was made by Karen Johnson and seconded by Jimmy Lacek to make a recommendation to Borough Council to amend Code §221-2 Definition of Family as: An individual or two (2) or more persons related by blood or marriage, or a group of not more than **THREE (3)** persons, *excluding servants (??)*, who are not related by blood or marriage, living together as a single housekeeping unit in a dwelling unit. Motion passed.**

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
MINUTES – JANUARY 21, 2020**

It was also discussed that the existing Towanda Borough Code does not currently have a definition for “servants” as mentioned in the definition of family.

**B. Discussion of Special Exceptions in R1 & R4 Residential Districts (Ch 325).**

§325-13 R-1 One-Family Residential District. C. Special Exceptions. (7) Two-family and multi-family dwellings, including apartments....

Plus;

§325-16 R-4 Special One-Family Residential District. C. Special Exceptions. (1) Two-family and multi-family dwellings, including apartments....

**It was agreed among the Planning Commission members present to take no action at this time on the Special Exceptions in R1 & R4 Residential Districts (Ch 325).**

**Other New Business:**

**Old Business:**

**A. Update Regional Comprehensive Plan – Regional Comprehensive Plan 2007 links:**

[Central Bradford Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary](#)

[Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan](#)

[Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan Appendix](#)

Towanda Township is on board, but we haven’t heard from North Towanda Township yet. As stated last month, Manager Lane will be applying for DCED grant money for funding which could take 8 to 9 months.

**B. Update SCI Master Plan – As stated last month, the plan is to incorporate the YMCA with the trail project that is in the planning process.**

**C. Pocket Park on Park Street (see attached) – Everyone was asked to think about ideas to utilize this space.**

**Adjournment:**

Motion was made by Karen Johnson and seconded by Jimmy Lacek to adjourn at 8:30 PM. Motion passed.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 18th at 7 PM.

  
Recording Secretary  
Planning Commission

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
MINUTES – JUNE 16, 2020**

The meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, June 16, 2020, in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Lacek at 7:05 PM.

**Members Present:** Jim Lacek-Chairman; Karen Johnson-Vice-Chairman; Mark Christini; Kevin Doupe'; Jimmy Lacek

**Members Absent:** Erin Groves & Diane Siegmund

**Others:** None present

**Visitors:** None present

**Minutes:**

A motion was made by Mark Christini and seconded by Jimmy Lacek to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2020 meeting. Motion passed.

**New Business:** Potential Code Revisions to Towanda Borough Code.

- A. Discussion of a possible Vacant Property Registration Ordinance with examples included in the meeting packet (Per Borough Council's motion for Planning to pursue this at the June 1st Council Meeting).

Manager Lane was present and provided a list of homes in Towanda Borough that are in vacant, foreclosure and/or abandoned status.

Mr. Doupe' offered his comments of originally wanting to have this type of ordinance for Business- es. However, consensus is that we need to do the same for residential properties.

Mr. (Jimmy) Lacek stated that the Borough of Hanover (York County), PA, vacant property ordinance is very well thought out and it is a borough in Pennsylvania. He feels that this ordinance seems to hit on everything that he could think of. Discussion was that we would not want to offer any waivers/warnings to the vacant property owner.

Manager Lane stated that if people are in violation and ignore notices, then the borough can put a lien on the property which includes lawyer fees. However, it would be a fee first, and he stated that code avoidance, where someone pays a fee over and over is very serious as a person could go to jail, and the Magistrate does not wish to put people in jail. He also stated that they are looking at digression authority. He noted too that we do not have a legal right to make money off fines, as the fees cover costs associated with registering, processing and monitoring the vacant building site.

Mr. Christini stated that he likes the definition of "vacant property" in the Sidney, Ohio; ordinance better than the Hanover, PA definition. Mr. (Jim)Lacek directed the Planning Commission to read over the Hanover, PA and the Sidney, OH; and perhaps any other ordinances they may come across on registering vacant property, until next meeting on July 21st to discuss this agenda item again.

**Other New Business:** None reported.

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
MINUTES – JUNE 16, 2020**

**Old Business:**

- A. Update Regional Comprehensive Plan – Regional Comprehensive Plan 2007 links:

This will have to wait until after the CENSUS is complete, Manager Lane to apply for DCED grant money.

[Central Bradford Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary](#)

[Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan](#)

[Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan Appendix](#)

- B. Update SCI Master Plan – As stated last month, the plan is to incorporate the YMCA with the trail project that is in the planning process.

This money is on hold for now – includes the “Trail” project.

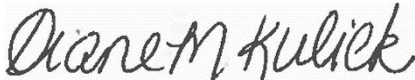
- C. Pocket Park on Park Street (see attached) – Everyone was asked to think about ideas to utilize this space.

Gazebo idea on hold due to financial for now.

**Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Kevin Doupe’ and seconded by Karen Johnson to adjourn at 8:15 PM.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 21st at 7 PM.



Recording Secretary  
Planning Commission

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
MINUTES – JULY 21, 2020**

The meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, July 21, 2020, in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Lacek at 7:05 PM.

**Members Present:** Jim Lacek-Chairman; Erin Groves, Karen Johnson-Vice-Chairman; Mark Christini; Kevin Doupe'; Jimmy Lacek, Kayla Saxon, Diane Siegmund

**Members Absent:**

**Others:** None present

**Visitors:** None present

**Minutes:**

A motion was made by Kevin Doupe' and seconded by Jimmy Lacek to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2020 meeting. Motion passed.

**New Business:** Continuing to work on drafting the Vacant Property Ordinance for Towanda Borough Code.

- A. The Commission continued with discussions and viewing examples from other Borough's Vacant Property Registration Ordinances.

Among the previous samples, the group discussed the Abington, PA (suggested by Mr. Christini) vacant properties ordinance which had good definitions for vacant, tiered fee structuring, waiver for active demo or rehab plans, right for inspection clause, duty to amend, and more.

All were in agreement to begin the ordinance with the "Title and Purpose", and the commission felt that they needed to read the various other borough's structures and meet in a couple weeks informally (August 4th at 6 PM) to discuss this before the next Planning Meeting on August 18, 2020.

**Other New Business:** None reported.

**Old Business:**

- A. Update Regional Comprehensive Plan – Regional Comprehensive Plan 2007 links:  
This will have to wait until after the CENSUS is complete, Manager Lane to apply for DCED grant money.

[Central Bradford Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary](#)

[Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan](#)

[Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan Appendix](#)

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
MINUTES – JULY 21, 2020**

- B. Update SCI Master Plan – As stated last month, the plan is to incorporate the YMCA with the trail project that is in the planning process.

This money is on hold for now – includes the “Trail” project.

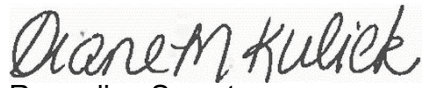
- C. Pocket Park on Park Street (see attached) – Everyone was asked to think about ideas to utilize this space.

Gazebo idea on hold due to financial for now.

**Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Diane Siegmund and seconded by Mark Christini to adjourn at 8:05 PM.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 18, at 7 PM.



Recording Secretary  
Planning Commission

## **PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – AUGUST 18, 2020**

The meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, August 18, 2020, in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Karen Johnson at 7:05 PM.

**Members Present:** Karen Johnson-Vice-Chairman; Mark Christini; Kevin Doupe', Diane Siegmund

**Members Absent:** Jim Lacek-Chairman; Erin Groves, Jimmy Lacek, Kayla Saxon

**Others:** None present

**Visitors:** None present

### **Minutes:**

A motion was made by Mark Christini and seconded by Kevin Doupe' to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2020 meeting. Motion passed.

### **New Business:**

Concerning the establishment of an ordinance for Vacant Property, Kevin set up a Google Doc link to transcribe located at:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/10Ewr9TGcsmdUMju18rOkL798PBUpyHLWcJQ383YdKeE/edit>

The Commission previously worked on Purpose, Intent & Scope work items. The following was worked on in this meeting: Definitions of – Vacant, Abandoned & Blighted Property, Structures, Real Property, Improved Property, and Occupied Property.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a vacant/abandoned/blighted property registration and enforcement program as a mechanism to identify, assess, regulate, limit and reduce the number of vacant/abandoned/blighted and unsafe property located in the borough.

#### **Intent**

The intent is to require a registration of all vacant/abandoned/blighted structures and properties in the Borough in order to address and hold those responsible who would contribute to the deterioration and blight in the Borough. In doing so, through regular inspections, monitoring, and imposing of fees; an enforcement program will be instituted that protects, preserves and promotes the public health, safety, welfare and commerce of this Borough.

#### **Scope**

The provisions of this chapter shall apply to all existing residential, commercial, and industrial structures and properties. This chapter does not relieve those responsible from compliance with all other Borough ordinances, codes, rules, regulations and state and federal laws.

### **Definitions**

#### **Vacant**

Vacant as applied to a building or structures to the provisions of this Ordinance means no person or persons actually, currently conduct a lawfully licensed business, or lawfully reside or live in any part of the building as the legal or equitable owner(s) or tenants, occupants, or owner-occupants, or tenants on a permanent non-transient basis at which substantially all lawful construction operations or occupancy has ceased, and which is in such condition that it cannot legally be reoccupied repair or rehabilitation, including but not limited to any property meeting the definition of abandoned property.

#### **Abandoned**

Any property that has not been legally occupied for a period of six months and which meets any one of the following additional criteria may be deemed to be abandoned property upon a determination by the Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) or other public official:  
(1) The property is in need of rehabilitation and no rehabilitation has taken place during that six-month period;  
(2) Construction was initiated on the property and was discontinued prior to completion, leaving the building unsuitable for occupancy, and no construction has taken place for at least six months; or

## PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – AUGUST 18, 2020

- (3) At least one installment of property tax remains unpaid and delinquent on that property; or
- (4) The property has been determined to be a nuisance by Towanda Borough.

### **Blighted Property**

A blighted property can be any or all of the following:

- A. Properties that have broken or severely damaged windows, doors, walls, or roofs which create hazardous conditions and encourage trespassing; or
- B. Properties whose maintenance is not in conformance with the maintenance of other neighboring properties causing a decrease in value of the neighborhood properties; or
- C. Properties cited for a public nuisance pursuant to the applicable codes; or
- D. Properties that endanger the public's health, safety, or welfare because the properties are vacant and abandoned or improvements thereon are dilapidated, deteriorated, or violate minimum health and safety standards or lack maintenance as required by the applicable codes.

### **Structures** - Article XI - Terminology - ss325-81 - Definitions

Anything constructed or erected, the use of which requires location on the ground or attachment to something having a fixed location on the ground. Among other things, "structure" includes buildings, mobile homes, walls, fences and billboards.

### **Real Property**

The term "real property" means the land plus anything growing on it, attached to it or erected on it, including man-made objects, such as buildings, structures, roads, sewers, and fences, but excluding anything that may be removed from the land without injury to the land.

### **Improved Property** - Article II - Privies - ss239-15 - Definitions

Any property within the Borough upon which there is erected a structure intended for continuous or periodic habitation, occupancy or use by human beings or animals and from which structure sewage shall or may be discharged.

### **Occupied**

Occupied as applied to a building or structure subject to the provisions of this section means where one or more persons actually conducts a lawful business or resides in all or any part of the building as the licensed business-occupant, or as the legal or equitable owner/occupant(s) or tenant(s) on a permanent, non-transient basis, or any combination of the same. For purposes of this section, evidence offered to prove that a building is so occupied may include, but shall not be limited to, the regular receipt of delivery of regular mail through the U.S. Postal Service; proof of continual telephone, electric, gas, heating, water and sewer services; a valid City business license, or the most recent, federal, state, or City income tax statements indicating that the subject property is the official business or residence address of the person or business claiming occupancy; or proof of tenant occupied property license inspection.

**Other New Business:** None reported.

### **FUTURE Business** (on hold for now):

- A. Update Regional Comprehensive Plan – Regional Comprehensive Plan 2007 links:

This will have to wait until after the CENSUS is complete, Manager Lane to apply for DCED grant money.

[Central Bradford Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary](#)

[Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan](#)

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- B. Update SCI Master Plan – As stated last month, the plan is to incorporate the YMCA with the trail project that is in the planning process.

This money is on hold for now – includes the "Trail" project.

- C. Pocket Park on Park Street (see attached) – Gazebo idea on hold due to financial for now.

### **Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Diane Siegmund and seconded by Mark Christini to adjourn at 8:30 PM.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 15th at 7 PM.





**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
MINUTES – AUGUST 18, 2020**

Recording Secretary  
Planning Commission

## **PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 15, 2020**

The meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, September 15, 2020, in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Lacek at 7:05 PM.

**Members Present:** Jim Lacek-Chairman; Karen Johnson-Vice Chairman; Mark Christini; Kevin Doupe', Jimmy Lacek, Kayla Saxon

**Members Absent:** Erin Groves, Diane Siegmund

**Visitors:** Borough Manager Kyle Lane; and Council President Pro Tempore William Kovalcin were present.

### **Minutes:**

A motion was made by Mark Christini and seconded by Jimmy Lacek to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2020 meeting with a change. Motion passed.

### **New Business:**

Concerning the establishment of an ordinance for Vacant Property, Kevin set up a Google Doc link to transcribe located at:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/10Ewr9TGcsmdUMju18rOkL798PBUpyHLWcJQ383YdKeE/edit>

[Below is the Commission's DRAFT of the code \(as of this meeting\) as it appears on the link.](#)

**8/18/2020:**

## **Vacant Property Ordinance**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a vacant/abandoned/blighted property registration and enforcement program as a mechanism to identify, assess, regulate, limit and reduce the number of vacant/abandoned/blighted and unsafe property located in the borough.

### **Intent**

The intent is to require a registration of all vacant/abandoned/blighted structures and properties in the Borough in order to address and hold those responsible who would contribute to the deterioration and blight in the Borough. In doing so, through regular inspections, monitoring, and imposing of fees; an enforcement program will be instituted that protects, preserves and promotes the public health, safety, welfare and commerce of this Borough.

### **Scope**

The provisions of this chapter shall apply to all existing residential, commercial, and industrial structures and properties. This chapter does not relieve those responsible from compliance with all other Borough ordinances, codes, rules, regulations and state and federal laws.

## **Definitions**

### **Vacant**

Vacant as applied to a building or structure s to the provisions of this Ordinance means no person or persons actually, currently conduct a lawfully licensed business, or lawfully reside or live in any part of the building as the legal or equitable owner(s) or tenants, occupants, or owner-occupants, or tenants on a permanent non-transient basis at which substantially all lawful construction operations or occupancy has ceased, and which is in such condition that it cannot legally be reoccupied repair or rehabilitation, including but not limited to any property meeting the definition of abandoned property.

### **Abandoned**

Any property that has not been legally occupied for a period of six months and which meets any one of the following additional criteria may be deemed to be abandoned property upon a determination by the Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) or other public official:

- (1) The property is in need of rehabilitation and no rehabilitation has taken place during that six-month period;
- (2) Construction was initiated on the property and was discontinued prior to completion, leaving the building unsuitable for occupancy, and no construction has taken place for at least six months; or
- (3) At least one installment of property tax remains unpaid and delinquent on that property; or
- (4) The property has been determined to be a nuisance by Towanda Borough.

# PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 15, 2020

## **Blighted Property**

A blighted property can be any or all of the following:

- A. Properties that have broken or severely damaged windows, doors, walls, or roofs which create hazardous conditions and encourage trespassing; or
- B. Properties whose maintenance is not in conformance with the maintenance of other neighboring properties causing a decrease in value of the neighborhood properties; or
- C. Properties cited for a public nuisance pursuant to the applicable codes; or
- D. Properties that endanger the public's health, safety, or welfare because the properties are vacant and abandoned or improvements thereon are dilapidated, deteriorated, or violate minimum health and safety standards or lack maintenance as required by the applicable codes.

## **Structures** - Article XI - Terminology - ss325-81 - Definitions

Anything constructed or erected, the use of which requires location on the ground or attachment to something having a fixed location on the ground. Among other things, "structure" includes buildings, mobile homes, walls, fences and billboards.

## **Real Property**

The term "real property" means the land plus anything growing on it, attached to it or erected on it, including man-made objects, such as buildings, structures, roads, sewers, and fences, but excluding anything that may be removed from the land without injury to the land.

## **Improved Property** - Article II - Privies - ss239-15 - Definitions

Any property within the Borough upon which there is erected a structure intended for continuous or periodic habitation, occupancy or use by human beings or animals and from which structure sewage shall or may be discharged.

## **Occupied**

Occupied as applied to a building or structure subject to the provisions of this section means where one or more persons actually conducts a lawful business or resides in all or any part of the building as the licensed business-occupant, or as the legal or equitable owner/occupant(s) or tenant(s) on a permanent, non-transient basis, or any combination of the same. For purposes of this section, evidence offered to prove that a building is so occupied may include, but shall not be limited to, the regular receipt of delivery of regular mail through the U.S. Postal Service; proof of continual telephone, electric, gas, heating, water and sewer services; a valid City business license, or the most recent, federal, state, or City income tax statements indicating that the subject property is the official business or residence address of the person or business claiming occupancy; or proof of tenant occupied property license inspection.

## **Owner**

Any person, agent, operator, firm or corporation having a legal or equitable interest in the property; or recorded in the official records of the State, County, or Municipality as holding title to the Property; or otherwise having control of the property, including the guardian of the estate of any such person, and the executor or administrator of the estate of such person if order to take possession of real property by a court.

**9/15/2020:**

## **Applicability**

These sections shall be considered cumulative and not superseding or subject to any other law or provision for same, but rather be an additional remedy available to the Borough above and beyond any state, county or local provisions for same.

## **Establishment of registry**

Borough of Towanda or designee shall establish a registry cataloging each abandoned property and vacant property within the Borough, containing the information required by this chapter.

## **Registration of Abandoned and/or Vacant Improved Property**

1. Upon vacancy of improved property located within the Borough of Towanda, owner of said improved property, shall inform the Borough to perform an inspection of the property to determine vacancy. The owner shall, within 30 days of dwelling becoming vacant, register the unit and pay registration fee in accordance with this Vacancy Registry.
2. Registration pursuant to this section shall contain the name of the property owner, the direct mailing address of the owner, a direct contact name and telephone number for the owner, and e-mail ~~address~~address, the tax number. If the owner of the property is located out of the borough of Towanda, the name and twenty-four-hour contact phone number of the property management company or individual responsible for the immediate security and maintenance responsibility of the property must also be submitted.
3. All registration fees must be paid directly from the property owner. Third-party registration fees are not allowed.
4. This section shall also apply to properties that have been the subject of a foreclosure sale where the title was transferred to the beneficiary of a mortgage involved in the foreclosure and any properties transferred under a deed in lieu of foreclosure/sale.
5. Properties subject to this section shall remain under an annual registration requirement, and the inspection, security and maintenance standards of this section as long as they remain vacant or abandoned.

## PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 15, 2020

6. Any person or legal entity that has registered a property under this section must report any change of information contained in the registration within 10 days of the change.
7. Failure of the property owner to properly register or to modify the registration form to reflect any changes of circumstances as required by this chapter is a violation of the chapter and shall be subject to enforcement.
8. Pursuant to any administrative or judicial finding and determination that any property is in violation of this chapter, the Borough may take the necessary action to ensure compliance with and place a lien on the property for the cost of the work performed to benefit the property and bring it into compliance.

**Other New Business:** None reported.

### **FUTURE Business "UPDATED"**

- A.** Update Regional Comprehensive Plan – Regional Comprehensive Plan 2007 links:

This will have to wait until after the CENSUS is complete, Manager Lane to apply for DCED grant money.

[Central Bradford Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary](#)

[Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan](#)

[Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan Appendix](#)

- B.** Manager Lane updated the Committee on the SCI Master Plan. He submitted for an update of that plan to the DCED for funding to hire a consultant to do it for us. He stated that he would like the Planning Commission to be the point Committee for part of the planning process if we receive the DCED grant.

The following projects he identified for improvements will be bundled together:

1. Tommy Fairchild Memorial Park (formerly Riverfront Park)
2. YMCA (SCI) Complex Master Plan (including the Memorial Park playground)
3. Third Ward Park, the Pocket Park
4. The TRAIL project with the possibility of connecting all Towanda Borough Parks and municipal grounds with the trail.

Manager Lane also stated that this grant if approved will probably not happen until sometime in 2021 (depending on when it gets addressed by DCED).

### **Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Jimmy Lacek and seconded by Karen Johnson to adjourn at 8:30 PM.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 20th at 7 PM.



Recording Secretary  
Planning Commission

**PLANNING COMMISSION  
SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING**

**MINUTES – NOVEMBER 4, 2020**

The Special Public meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Wednesday, November 4, 2020, in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Lacek at 7:00 PM.

**Members Present:** Jim Lacek-Chairman; Mark Christini; Kevin Doupe'; Erin Groves; Jimmy Lacek and Diane Siegmund

**Members Absent:** Karen Johnson-Vice Chairman and Kayla Saxon

**Visitors:** Code Enforcement Officer – Jeremy Sluyter; Mason & Laura Monahan - Applicant; and  
Evan Barnes - Realtor

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

A public hearing was held to review the request of Mason & Laura Monahan for the use of the property at 200 Wilmot Drive, Towanda, PA 18848. Applicant is asking for use of Special consideration for a "Home Occupation". This property is located in the R-1 District. The Home Occupation will be for use of a Hair Salon located within the residence.

Mr. and Mrs. Monahan are in the process of purchasing the property (closing to occur soon). This can be approved without the home being in their ownership. Pictures and EK Architectural prints show construction design floor plans of ADA compliant bathroom, signage, existing parking with extra gravel parking area, and assessable route into salon.

Under the Borough Zoning Code:

Chapter 325. Zoning. Article III. District Regulations. §325-13. R-1 One-Family Residential District. B. Accessory uses. (1) Home occupations is allowed.

Chapter 325. Zoning. Article V. Special Exceptions and Uses. §325-34. Off-street parking. No traffic will be generated by such home occupation in greater volumes than would normally be expected. The applicant stated they will have no more than 1 to 2 extra vehicles in their driveway at a time.

Chapter 325. Zoning. Article V. Special Exceptions and Uses. §325-45. Home Occupations. A. Intent. B. Conditions. D. Permitted home occupations: (3) Hairdresser.

Chapter 325. Zoning. Article XI. Terminology. §325-81. Definitions. Special Exceptions  
As noted a use which because of its unique characteristics requires individual consideration in each case by the Planning Commission and the Zoning Hearing Board as specified in Article ~~X~~ before it may be permitted in the districts enumerated in Article III, §§ 325-12 through 325-19 and the Zoning Schedule. In accordance with the provisions of this chapter, the Planning Commission and the Zoning Hearing Board may require certain conditions and safeguards before such a use is permitted.

Those present on the Planning Commission reviewed the material and prints. The salon is a permitted use and will be constructed in accordance with the International Building Code. As part of their application, Mr. and Mrs. Monahan provided a document stating that all (11) conditions specified under 325-45 would be met.

**PLANNING COMMISSION  
SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING**

**MINUTES – NOVEMBER 4, 2020**

A motion was made by Mr. Doupe' and seconded by Mr. (Jimmy) Lacek for the Planning Commission to approve the Monahan's request and pass this on to the Zoning Hearing Board applicable to Chapter 325. Zoning, with the relevant provisions.

**The Special Public Meeting Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Christini and seconded by Mrs. Groves to adjourn at 7:10 PM.

The next Regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 17th at 7 PM.



Recording Secretary  
Planning Commission

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
MINUTES – NOVEMBER 17, 2020**

The meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, November 17, 2020, in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Lacek at 7:05 PM.

**Members Present:** Jim Lacek-Chairman; Karen Johnson-Vice Chairman; Mark Christini; Kevin Doupe', Diane Siegmund

**Members Absent:** Erin Groves, Jimmy Lacek, Kayla Saxon (Dr. appt)

**Visitors:** Ms. Vicki Wells, 24 Mechanic Street, on behalf of the Recreation Committee asked about having digital signage in Roger Madigan Gateway Park that would be used for events that will take place around the borough, local emergencies or paid local business advertisements. There would be no scrolling or animation on it, and you can control the brightness. She said that she talked it over with several businesses and they are all for it. She has also applied for grant money for such things.

Ms. Siegmund stated that she personally likes the idea as she used to view Channel 17 on Comcast as a resource for community announcements, and now that channel is gone. She has seen this in other communities and it would be perfect at that corner.

Mr. Doupe' thinks it's a good idea for generating some income. He feels we need to change some things to help the town be more than what it is now.

Mr. Christini stated that you can't do a variance for non-allowed use, and if the ordinance is changed it could open up a can of worms. Ms. Wells suggested that there may not be anyone in town who would want an illuminated sign. She said there are a lot of non-profit happenings and sports in this town that could be advertised. Chairman Lacek asked Ms. Wells to work with Code Enforcement (Jeremy Sluyter) on the design of the sign and particulars and come back to the Planning Commission with more information on the sign. There was no motion made to continue with this idea. Manager Lane does not feel it should be an allowed use in a historical town, and Mr. Christini stated that he would vote against it. Manager Lane stated that they have turned down many who wanted to have one of these types of signs but did not get approval.

**Minutes:**

A motion was made by Mark Christini to approve the minutes of the November 4, 2020, Special Public Meeting with a modification. Mr. Christini stated an additional sentence should be added after, "The salon is a permitted use and will be constructed in accordance with the International Building Code". The sentence is: "As part of their application, Mr. and Mrs. Monahan provided a document stating that all (11) conditions specified under §325-45 would be met". He said he feels this is important for future reference to show the applicants met the conditions of the ordinance. Mr. Doupe' seconded the motion. Motion passed.

For the minutes of the regular Planning Commission meeting on November 15th, Mr. Christini made the motion to approve as written and Mr. Doupe' seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**Old Business:** Diane Siegmund stated that she feels that "Registration" should be defined in the Vacant Property Ordinance. Mr. Doupe' will look through the other codes to see if there is a definition for registration elsewhere in the code and if it fits with the ordinance they are working on. Diane also provided a definition for the term.

**New Business:**

- A. Mr. Christini reviewed the procedures to follow at Special Exception Hearings.
- B. Possible modifications to Special Exceptions in Chapter 325 Zoning were discussed.

It was decided to recommend/suggest to Council the following:

To remove reference for multi-family dwellings in R1 and R4 (attached items with Mr. Christini's numbering: 2 & 8)

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
MINUTES – NOVEMBER 17, 2020**

Chapter 325-Zoning §325-13 R-1 One family Residential District C. Special exceptions. (7) Two-family and multifamily dwellings, including garden apartments... and;

Chapter 325 – Zoning §325-16 R-4 Special One-Family Residential District. C. Special exceptions. (1) Two-family and multifamily dwellings, including apartments...

A motion to recommend these exceptions and uses in R-1 and R-4 above be removed in Chapter 325 Zoning was made by Karen Johnson and seconded by Diane Siegmund. Motion passed.

C. Possible modifications to Principal Permitted Uses in Chapter 325 – Zoning - (2013-4).

Remove reference to gas wells. (See attached items with Mr. Christini’s numbering of: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, & 18).

A motion was also made to rescind all of Ordinance 2013-4 (passed 7-18-2013), plus Editors notes found within them was made by Mr. Doupe’ and seconded by Diane Siegmund. Motion passed.

**All of the above changes would be under the guidance/advisement of Solicitor Smith to Borough Council before being rescinded and/or enacted.**

**Old Business – cont’d from above**

**GOING FORWARD ON THE PROPERTY MAINTENANCE ORDINANCE:** Google Doc link located at: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/10Ewr9TGcsmdUMju18rOkL798PBUpyHLWcJQ383YdKeE/edit>

**RE: MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS: Review #1 through #4**

Mr. Christini suggested that at the end of #4 we should add “**sidewalks should remain clear of grass, leaves, snow, brush and other obstructions**” referring to the Borough of Baldwin, PA’s current Vacant & Abandoned Property Ordinance.

Continued to review the above through #8.

**RE: SECURITY REQUIREMENTS: Reviewed #1 through #3**

#2 Add - “or animals” after “allow a child”.

#3 Mr. Christini is concerned about out of state landlords who don’t take care of their properties.

**RE: PUBLIC NUISANCE:**

Mr. Christini stated that maybe “public nuisance” should be a definition. Concerning Occupancy permits, we will have this checked by Mr. Sluyter. The next 2 sections (in **BLUE**) should be checked by Mr. Sluyter.

**Other New Business:** No changes as stated below.

**FUTURE Business – No changes to the last update from Manager Lane**

**A. Update Regional Comprehensive Plan – Regional Comprehensive Plan 2007 links:**

This will have to wait until after the CENSUS is complete, Manager Lane to apply for DCED grant money.

[Central Bradford Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary](#)

[Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan](#)

[Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan Appendix](#)



**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
MINUTES – NOVEMBER 17, 2020**

- B. Manager Lane updated the Committee on the SCI Master Plan. He submitted for an update of that plan to the DCED for funding to hire a consultant to do it for us. He stated that he would like the Planning Commission to be the point Committee for part of the planning process if we receive the DCED grant.**

The following projects he identified for improvements will be bundled together:

1. Tommy Fairchild Memorial Park (formerly Riverfront Park)
2. YMCA (SCI) Complex Master Plan (including the Memorial Park playground)
3. Third Ward Park, the Pocket Park
4. The TRAIL project with the possibility of connecting all Towanda Borough Parks and municipal grounds with the trail.

Manager Lane also stated that this grant if approved will probably not happen until sometime in 2021 (depending on when it gets addressed by DCED).

**Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Kevin Doupe' seconded by Diane Siegmund at 8:30 PM.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 15th at 7 PM.



Recording Secretary  
Planning Commission

## PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 15, 2020

The meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, December 15, 2020 in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Lacek at 7:00 PM.

**Members Present:** Jim Lacek-Chairman; Mark Christini; Kevin Doupe', Kayla Saxon, Diane Siegmund, Jimmy Lacek

**Members Absent:** Erin Groves, Karen Johnson

**Visitors:** None, however, Vicki Wells asked Mr. Doupe' to let Planning know that she looked up pricing for the signage. It is about \$1,500 to start.

### **Minutes:**

A motion was made by Mark Christini to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2020, Planning Commission Meeting which was seconded by Diane Siegmund. Motion passed.

### **Old Business:**

Mr. Christini stated that Council did act on the modifications recommended by Planning and have asked Solicitor Smith to modify and advertise Council's intension to remove reference for the following:

Chapter 325-Zoning §325-13 R-1 One family Residential District C. Special exceptions.

(7) Two-family and multifamily dwellings, including garden apartments...

and;

Chapter 325 – Zoning §325-16 R-4 Special One-Family Residential District. C. Special exceptions. (1)

Two-family and multifamily dwellings, including apartments...

Plus:

Modifications to Principal Permitted Uses in Chapter 325 – Zoning - (2013-4). Removing references to gas wells and rescind all of Ordinance 2013-4 (passed 7-18-2013), plus editors notes found within them.

In conclusion, Mr. Christini stated that "What we are doing here is being followed through on" (by Council).

### **New Business:**

#### **Old Business**

**From the GOOGLE DOC link:**

**Moving forward on the PROPERTY MAINTENANCE ORDINANCE:** Google Doc link located at:  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/10Ewr9TGcsmdUMju18rOkL798PBUpyHLWcJQ383YdKeE/edit>

#### **Continuing work on:**

Property Registration (Definition)

Public Nuisance – Moved item #10 – to "Definitions"

Inspections for Violations – Mr. Christini checked with Jeremy Sluyter – We don't do occupancy permits, only for new houses. Take out last sentence in section #11 (new #10)

#12 - Additional Authority (new #11)

#13 - Opposing, obstructing enforcement office; penalty (new #12)

#14 - Immunity of enforcement officer (new #13)

#15 - Fees and penalties (new #14)

#16 – Amendments (new #15)

#17 – Severability (new #16)

#18 – Repealer (new #17)

#19 - When effective (new #18)

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
MINUTES – DECEMBER 15, 2020**

**FUTURE Business – No changes to the last update from Manager Lane**

**A. Update Regional Comprehensive Plan – Regional Comprehensive Plan 2007 links:**

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This grant, if approved, will probably not happen until sometime in 2021 (depending on when it gets addressed by DCED).

**Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Kevin Doupe' seconded by Mark Christini at 8:20 PM.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 19th at 7 PM.



Recording Secretary  
Planning Commission