

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
MINUTES – JULY 19, 2022**

The meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, July 19, 2022, in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

The meeting was called to order by Planning Commission Chairman Kayla Saxon at 7:00 PM. Also, Borough Manager Lauren Egleston was present at this meeting

**Members Present:** Kayla Saxon-Chairman, Kevin Doupe'-Vice Chairman, Mark Christini, William Kovalcin, Erin Groves, Roger Hatch, & Shane Mize

**Members Absent:** Diane Siegmund & Jim Lacek

**Citizens to be Heard or Guests:** Erica Locke, our summer intern was present to observe our meeting.

**Minutes (Approval):**

A motion to approve June 21, 2022, meeting minutes was made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mr. Christini. Motion passed.

**New Business:**

**A. New Ordinance for Parking in Residential Districts – state purpose, distribute samples.**

Mr. Christini stated that a resident on William Street was present for 2 meetings explaining how tough it is to park in front of her home. We don't have an ordinance in effect for R-1 parking and Council wanted the Planning Commission to look at possible solutions or at least investigate it to go forward or not. There are samples from Wellsboro and Sayre included and they both have a sticker-based system.

Ms. Egleston stated that it is a tricky area due to the County renting a group home to Allied Services and an eye doctor's office (on the edge of C-2) that needs parking spots. Mrs. Groves stated that if you have 2 commercial businesses that are not being polite to the residents in the area then it would be proper for us (a borough official) to talk to them about the issue and this would be easier than going to the extent of proposing another parking ordinance.

Mr. Mize stated that a direct approach would be the thing to do right now but this (ordinance) may be something we should look into for the future. Mr. Kovalcin stated that a direct approach is a good idea but it doesn't always work. Mrs. Groves stated that when you move into a residence that doesn't have off-street parking or limited parking and you come to the borough because you want a place to park, why does it have to be the borough's problem? Ms. Saxon said that sometimes homeowners cannot have a driveway on their property because of limitations within the property. Mrs. Groves feels that when you purchase a home you know what have. Mr. Doupe' feels that this is not a borough council or planning commission issue. The street in front of a house is public property other than if there was a handicapped parking spot (exception). When you buy a house, you don't buy the street in front of your house.

Mr. Christini stated that this neighborhood is a little different because of the Allied Services home on Mix Avenue. Mr. Doupe' stated that he recalls the use of this business that we (Planning) were told there would be 3 employees with just 1 car on the street. That was one of the reasons it was allowed to function as a group home. If this is not true then we need to address Allied about the employees parking on the street. Mr. Christini stated that there is also the eye doctor where they normally park on North Main Street (where the eye doctor's office is located). Also, he stated that people park at the end of Mix Avenue to walk on the parkway. That makes 3 things causing competition for those residential parking spots in addition to the people who reside there. This makes this area a little sensitive right now, as Mr. Christini sees that when he walks his dog. There is no parking on the right (south) side of Mix Avenue, but there is parking on the left (north) side.

Mr. Christini stated that the position council took is that "we hear you", "we want to show you that we are listening", and "we will give it a serious look." That is why it went to us (Planning). He talked to Sayre borough manager Dave Jarrett where they use residential permit parking stickers and he said it was a good idea in the beginning, but it was difficult to implement. He said the visitor passes are shared illegally and enforcement is difficult, but it has helped as there are open spaces, but it has been painful. They have 6 zones, and therefore fewer complaints. The Planning Commission's consensus was to not get into permitted parking stickers.

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***Mr. Doupe' made the motion seconded by Mr. Mize to table proposing an ordinance for parking in the R-1 residential district and return it to Council. Motion passed.*** Mr. Christini added that we should have Mr. Sluyter revisit the Mix Avenue Allied Services property and send them a letter that they should be following the parking rules that were established for them.

- B.** New Quality of Life Ordinance – overview, discuss Danville PA presentation (Mark reviewed) Mr. Christini stated that Council has been discussing this for about 3 years and the way it works now is inefficient for things like grass, snow, and/or garbage, Mr. Sluyter writes the property owner a letter. If the person does nothing after 10 days (the snow melts and/or the grass continues to grow higher and the garbage stinks). After contacting the owner, a 2nd time, he eventually will write a citation that goes to the local magistrate. This process takes approximately 2 months. Therefore, the main focus of the QLO is on time-sensitive issues and the existing system isn't timely. Our code enforcement reports every month show half of the complaints are time-sensitive. We looked at other QLOs, particularly Danville's for an example. The city of Scranton has a checklist of violations and Danville has a ticketing type violation tool. A courtesy notice is sent first to the property owner (not to the tenant). It basically says they have 2 days to get the grass mowed and if it isn't mowed, the owner is ticketed for \$25.00. If Mr. Sluyter goes back again and it is not mowed yet, the owner gets a second violation ticket for \$50.00. The way this works is immediate and more efficient.

In the discussion it was asked what the top few issues Mr. Sluyter has to deal with. Manager Egleston stated that they are garbage, rubbish, high grass, and snow & ice. After discussion, ***Mr. Mize made a motion to go forward with working on the Quality of Life Ordinance, 2nd by Mr. Doupe'. Motion passed.***

**Old Business:**

**A. Status of the Vacant Store Front Ordinance**

Solicitor Smith could not attend tonight's meeting and is working on the ordinance.

**FUTURE Business:**

**A. Update Regional Comprehensive Plan – Regional Comprehensive Plan 2008 links:**

[Central Bradford Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary](#)

[Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan](#)

[Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan Appendix](#)

- Manager Egleston stated that there is nothing new and she doesn't anticipate getting an RFP until the fall as we are pretty busy with all our current projects.

**B. Site Master Plan**

- Manager Egleston stated that she met with an official from DCNR today about the Parks Master Plan and also the YMCA passed the final inspection from the grant we got for the new gym floor and renovations. Therefore, we can get the final payment from the grant now. In addition, she discussed with Lauren how the new RFP will go for the Parks Master Plan and they talked about potentially considering adding the components of the Towanda School District's piece (Memorial Park).

**Projects:**

1. Tommy Fairchild Memorial Park (formerly Riverfront Park)
2. Riverside Cemetery (not in the original grant request).
3. YMCA (SCI) Complex Master Plan (including the Memorial Park playground)
4. Third Ward Park.
5. The TRAIL project with the possibility of connecting all Towanda Borough Parks and municipal grounds with the trail.
6. Memorial Park – The Towanda Area School District would like this to be part of the Site Master Plan (not in the original grant request).

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Manager Egleston also spoke with Chris Brown about a Keystone Communities Program Grant and he offered to come to an evening meeting to discuss some strategies and initiatives that Sayre started with and bring some stakeholders together. The date she is looking at is August 4th and she invited the Planning Commission. The meeting place will probably be at the Flying Taco probably between 5:30 and 6:00 PM. She will send out an email. Lauren stated that she would like to focus on a plan for just our central business district. Manager Egleston handed out a copy of Sayre's Master Plan that was put together by Derck & Edson, LLC.

- Below is an explanation of the grant program:

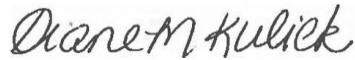
The Keystone Communities Grant program, which encourages partnerships between public and private sectors to support local revitalization initiatives for the growth and stability of the community, is accepting applications **until August 31** for a variety of grant opportunities. These include planning grants, revitalization, public improvements, and more.

Mrs. Kulick informed Planning Commission that Mr. Sluyter told her that Allied Services purchased 712-714 Second Street. They plan on having a 6-person group home. This is in the R-1 One family Residential 7,200 square feet. Therefore, the August 16th Planning Meeting will be a hearing.

Manager Egleston told the Commission that Mark Gannon of Gannon's Insurance will sponsor the "Towanda Believe and Belong" mural that will be painted on the back of the Main Link building on Main Street (the Mural will face the Merrill Parkway).

**Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Groves and seconded by Mr. Doupe' at 8:01 PM.



Recording Secretary  
Planning Commission