

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES – APRIL 16, 2019**

The meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, April 16, 2019, in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

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

Members Present: Karen Johnson, Vice-Chairman, Kevin Doupe, Erin Groves, Jim Lacek, Jimmy Lacek & Diane Siegmund

Members Absent: Mark Christini, Keith Long

Others: None

Visitors: None

Minutes: Motion was made by Mrs. Groves and seconded by Jimmy Lacek to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2019, meeting. Motion passed.

New Business: PUBLIC MEETING

A. Futures Community Support Services, Ms. Barbara Austin, for Special Exception use for a Community Home for Adolescent Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities in R-2 Two-Family Residential District.

The board heard from Ms. Barbara Austin concerning the plans for the Futures home that is planned for 408 Second Street. The home will hold 3 individuals with intellectual disabilities that will encompass continuous 24-hour care (round the clock), 7 days a week.

There were questions and comments by the planning commission about Futures, and their plans for the home. It is a non-profit agency; therefore, the property would not be taxed. They are licensed through the Department of Public Welfare, and the range is 16 and under, but at times it could be up to 25 years (at their discretion). The clients could be male or female and are referred through Bradford County Human Services and funded through the State.

Mr. Derrick Bailey of 208 Bridge Street, stated that his property is “kiddie corner” to this property and they have no real problem with the usage of this property. He has only one request that the agency will install a privacy fence between their properties. He has 2 children who play in the back yard and he wants to make sure they are safe and secure from seeing anything inappropriate if it were to happen through the windows in the back of the group home.

Mr. Sluyter stated the commission can make recommendations that can be on the table for Zoning Hearing board to review. Mrs. Groves read letter E. of the §325-42, Specials Exceptions. “E. Adequate landscaping and screening is provided as required in § 325-27 and as otherwise provided herein.” This provides conditions for the planning board to forward this on to zoning.

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Also, Mrs. Groves inquired about parking for Future's staff. The belief is that there is sufficient parking. Mr. Sluyter stated that it is a permitted use for "special exception" and does not believe that there will be any conflict with this use of the home. However, he asked that Futures provide 1 spot per staff member. Mr. Doupe' asked Ms. Austin how many cars will be there at one time. Ms. Austin stated that maybe 3 cars at one time. Mr. Sluyter stated that Futures should provide 3 spots whether on the property, or reserve a spot from the borough on Second Street. Also, it was noted that the property may be able accommodate another parking spot off street. Ms. Austin stated that it may be a possibility.

Mrs. Groves made the motion that planning commission approve and provide to Zoning that which grants Special Exception contingent upon following Chapter 325. Zoning, Article V. Special Exceptions and Uses, § 325-42 Special Exceptions, and that they meet the requirements of letter E, that states the requirement of adequate landscaping and screening is provided as required in § 325-27, as their neighbors have said that is their only requirement. Mrs. Groves also stated as required in letter F, that states the requirement that adequate off-street parking and loading provided and ingress and egress is so designed as to cause minimum interference with traffic on abutting streets. Her motion was seconded by Mrs. Johnson. Motion passed.

B. Roger & Michelle Hatch, for Special Exception use of property for a Bed & Breakfast in the R-4 Special One-Family Residential District.

Mr. & Mrs. Hatch were present and Mr. Hatch asked for Special Exception for the use of 101 York Avenue to be a Bed & Breakfast. They recently bought and moved into this home. They moved here from Canton, Ohio and have family living here. They also owned a Bed & Breakfast home in Ohio and are very familiar with the workings of the business. They will have 3 rooms utilized for their business.

Parking was a concern for the board. Mr. Hatch stated that currently there are 4 spots to the side of the house and they would have 5 cars parked at one time if all the rooms are rented. There are options for a 5th spot by the alley way in the back of the property. Mrs. Groves stated that backing onto Route 6 is illegal and they should have the option to make the front into a "K" turn. She said she drove around the house to try to figure parking and feels that parking in front may be next to impossible. Her concern is liability for the Borough if an accident were to happen when someone backs out of the property. She lives on York Avenue and she has to do a "K" turn on her own drive way. She feels more comfortable if parking was in the back of the property.

Julie Larnard of 102 York Avenue (across the street) stated she is in favor of the home becoming a Bed & Breakfast and welcomed the Hatch's.

Mrs. Deneen Lantz lives next door to the Victorian and used to own it. She has some concerns about keeping the history and structure of the home the same. She asked if the 3 rooms have bathrooms. Mr. Hatch stated that the rooms are on the 2nd floor, and 2 have bathrooms attached and 1 is a shared bathroom in the hallway.

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Mr. Sluyter is in agreement with parking concerns on the property. It was his recommendation on the parking that they have room to put the 3 off to the right where the gravel is and they have the screening with the trees that are in the pictures. They should do a minimum of 20x20 in the front yard so they get the 4th spot across the front and also the 5th spot. This way they can back up and turn into that extra spot to pull back out on York Avenue. Also, it was noted that in R4 parking has to be hidden. Mrs. Hatch said they may have parking in the Carriage House and will take a look at it too.

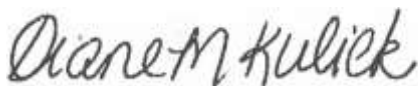
Mr. Lacek said to watch the shrubbery and maybe prune it back because of pedestrian traffic in front of the home. Mrs. Hatch stated that they wanted to look at other options in place of the current ones in front of the house. As far as signage, the Hatch's are looking at ideas and the zoning ordinances guidelines.

At this time Mrs. Groves made the motion that the planning commission pass on to the Zoning Hearing Board their approval which grants Special Exception contingent upon following Chapter 325. Zoning, Article V. Special Exceptions and Uses, § 325-42 Special Exceptions, and that they meet the requirements of letter E, that states the requirement of adequate landscaping and screening is provided as required in § 325-27, as their neighbors have said that is their only requirement. Letter F, states the requirement that adequate off-street parking and loading provided and ingress and egress is so designed as to cause minimum interference with traffic on abutting streets. In addition, Mrs. Groves stated that the Hatch's provide adequate parking following the Code Enforcement (Mr. Sluyter) officer's recommendations to make the 20X20 turnaround to make parking and pulling out safe. Her motion was seconded by Mr. Doupe'. Motion passed.

At this time Mr. Doupe' asked the committee to revisit the vacant store front topic (while Mr. Sluyter is present tonight) and the possibility of having a registration fee. As far as Mr. Sluyter is concerned storefront appearances and complaints are addressed by him. Creating a vacancy registration will be something the borough council would make the decision on. He said they currently send property maintenance citations out and the magistrate decides on the fine and terms of payment. Mr. Sluyter stated that the borough's adopted international property maintenance code covers 95% of the issues. The vacancy fee may be a time-consuming item for him.

After more discussion the vacancy fee was tabled for now and will be discussed again.

A motion was made by Jim Lacek and seconded by Mrs. Groves to adjourn at 8:15 PM.



Recording Secretary
Planning Commission