

The meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Wednesday, January 23, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. in the council room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda PA.

The meeting was called to order by James Lacek.

Members Present: James Lacek, Keith Long, Evelyn Sherburne, Erin Groves, Mark Christini

Members Absent: Larry Kacyon, Shannon Clark, Ed Ulatowski, Jimmy Lacek

Visitors: James Haight, Thomas Fairchild, Leonard Frawley, Kevin Tama, Dennis Phelps

Public Hearing

A public hearing is being held to review the request of Trehab, Inc. for a Special Exception for apartments on the second floor and above in the C-2 Zoning District at the 400 block of Main Street. This project is a partnership with Towanda Borough.

Mr. Fairchild noted that as a result of the February 2006 fire that destroyed buildings in the 400 block, the borough applied to DCED for a \$500,000 grant to purchase and demolish buildings involved. This involved two property owners, lawyers and insurance companies. In 2009 proposals for this area were requested and three were received. Trehab was the proposal selected. The proposed project is on a lesser scale than the original and will be a 5 story multi-use building with 39 one-bedroom apartments on the upper floors and a community room and commercial areas on the first floor. It will also include a parking area for 200 cars although the preliminary design is not completed yet.

Under the Borough Zoning Code – Section 325-17C, apartments on the second and higher floors in C-2 zoning is allowed through a special exception. According to Section 325-42A - special exceptions, as enumerated in §§ 325-12 through 325-19, shall be permitted only upon authorization by the Zoning Hearing Board pursuant to review by the Planning Commission in accordance with §73-71D, provided that such uses shall be found to comply with the following requirement as other applicable requirements as set forth in this chapter: the use is a permitted special exception as set forth in §§ 325-12 through 325-19. The definition of “special exception as noted in §325-81 of the Towanda Borough Zoning Code: 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 IX before it may be permitted in the districts enumerated in Article III, §§ 325-12 through 315-19 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.

Mr. Haight noted that this is not considered a large scale development as it is one building. The parking regulations require one space per unit. It is a permitted use and will be built in accordance with the International Building Code.

After further discussion regarding ownership, taxes, income levels for residents etc. a motion was made by Mrs. Groves and seconded by Mrs. Sherburne to approve the request for a special exception for the proposed 400 Block development by Trehab and Towanda Borough beginning and ending with the dates of the grant period. The motion was passed unanimously.

The public hearing was adjourned.

Planning Commission Meeting

A motion was made by Mrs. Groves and seconded by Mr. Christini to approve the minutes from February 21, 2012. The motion was passed.

As there was no further business, this meeting was adjourned at 6:18 p.m. on a motion made by Mr. Christini and seconded by Mrs. Groves.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Wilcox
Recording Secretary