

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES – JULY 20, 2021

The meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, July 20, 2021, in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

The meeting was called to order by Planning Commission Chairman Lacek at 7:02 PM.

Members Present Mark Christini, Kevin Doupe', Erin Groves, Jim Lacek, Kayla Saxon, Diane Siegmund

Members Absent Jimmy Lacek

Citizens to be Heard or Guests Shane Mize and William Kovalcin were visitors this month to observe the meeting and have shown an interest in being on Planning Commission. Mr. Christini stated this will be addressed at the next council meeting.

Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Saxon and seconded by Mrs. Groves to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2021, Planning Commission Meeting. Motion passed.

New Business

There is an opening for Vice-Chairman of Planning Commission behind Karen Johnson. Mrs. Groves nominated Ms. Saxon. Ms. Saxon stated that she would accept. All were in favor, with Mr. Doupe' abstaining due to his interest in the vice-chairman position. Motion passed for Ms. Saxon to take over as Vice-Chairman.

Mr. Christini stated the 2 openings for Planning Commission will be addressed at the next council meeting in August 2021.

Old Business

A. Signage

Mr. Christini stated that he would like to address Vicki Wells' request to have an electronic sign in the Borough.

Last month, Mr. Christini asked Mr. Doupe' to do some research on the signage ordinance that the town of Vestal has in place. Vestal does not pay a fee for the use or maintenance of the Vestal community electronic information sign which was built and paid for by a company called CEIS (Community Electronic Information Signage). However, this company also has control of allotted times for using the sign as well. It was stated that we should wait for Council to decide if we should continue with a signage ordinance change.

Mrs. Groves stated that she feels that if we allow gateway signage, then we should allow everyone to have electronic signs, as the Presbyterian Church was not allowed to have another digital sign a few years back.

After further discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Doupe' and seconded by Ms. Siegmund to ask Council to consider if they want to direct the Planning Commission to look into a "free-standing electronic information sign" with size to be determined at a later date. Motion passed.

Mr. Christini asked the Commission members to take a look at the Vestal town board public meeting minutes of April 9, 2014, concerning the amendment of their code to permit electronic gateway signs.

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B. Vacant Property Ordinance – Continued/Ongoing

Mr. Doupe' basically took out everything that referred to as "residential". Also, the Commission hashed out parts of the Annual Registration Fee, Failure to Pay, and Applying for a Waiver.

Section 14. Part C. - A waiver would be granted if the storefront owner would exhibit public art in their display window. If not, then the registration fee would possibly be \$200 per year. We may establish a committee or ask local artists or art teachers to be a part of the committee and possibly calling it, "Storefront Revitalization Committee". The Commission decided to not allow an owner to receive a financial hardship waiver for the annual registration fee.

Section 7. Various parts of this section were discussed and edited also, and Mr. Doupe' will make those changes before the next meeting in August.

Mr. Doupe' will work on these changes to the proposed ordinance on the **Google Link** for the Planning Commission members.

FUTURE Business (at a Later Date)

Note: Mr. Christini will discuss the status with 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](#)

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.

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 Ms. Siegmund and seconded by Mrs. Groves at 8:35 PM.

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


Recording Secretary
Planning Commission