

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
DECEMBER 19, 2017**

The meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, December 19, 2017 at 7:00 PM, in the council room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda PA.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Kacyon at 7:00 PM.

Members Present: Larry Kacyon, Karen Johnson, Mark Christini, Kevin Doupe, Erin Groves, Keith Long

Members Absent: Jim Lacek, Jimmy Lacek, & Diane Siegmund

Others:

Solicitor Smith, Jim Haight, Public Works Code Enforcement Supervisor and Kyle Lane, Borough Manager

Citizens to be Heard:

Mr. Tom Neilson, an Elder of the First Presbyterian Church in Towanda Borough was present to request on behalf of the church, they be allowed to internally illuminate (LED) their recently approved sign along the Merrill Parkway, where it would be more likely to be seen. He stated the sign would not be flashing or have moving letters. (Note: The Church's Court Street sign is a "grandfathered" sign, and it can be the only illuminated sign.) After discussion and comments, Mr. Neilson asked the Planning Commission to at least discuss further the church's request to internally illuminate the sign. Chairman Kacyon stated that this had been discussed previously at the June 20, 2017, Planning Commission Meeting. At that meeting, a motion was made and passed to keep 325-47 B (2) Illuminated Signs as is written which prohibits internal illumination.

Note: Council approved having Solicitor Smith amend Chapter 325-47 Signs ordinance, restating regulations pertaining to signs permitted in residential, commercial and manufacturing zoning districts on lots "fronting on more than one street". This was done at the regular Borough Council meeting on August 7, 2017, therefore this issue is considered complete.

Minutes:

A motion was made by Mrs. Groves, and seconded by Ms. Johnson to approve the meeting minutes of October 19, 2017, as written. Motion passed.

New Business

Re: Definition of Single Housekeeping Unit - Zoning Ordinance 325-81- definitions of "dwelling structure" and "single housekeeping unit".

Solicitor Smith was present to offer legal assistance regarding these definitions. The current definitions are wide open to interpretation, and that is what we are dealing with now.

Solicitor Smith stated that the borough has been told that it has been proposed by the county commissioners to use a home in the R-4 district located at 104 York Avenue as step housing for county probationers.

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He said it is stated in our borough code Section 325-9. A., the R-4 district is the most restrictive. The principal use in this district is “single family residence”, and the county’s plan may not comport with this definition or whether that use is included within another type of use or uses permitted in other districts.

The 104 York Avenue address may not meet the probability of “living together as a single housekeeping unit.” These individuals are “together” not voluntarily, with one another in a changing number of other individuals whose admissions or expulsions from the “group” is not determined by their own choice but by the probation department. These people just share a space and are not bound together by choice to form a “single housekeeping unit”. This type of use is more like a “rooming house”, “hotel” or “other housing accommodations”. Those uses are provided for in less restrictive districts, under Section 325-9. C., such uses are not permitted in the most restrictive R-4 district.

After going over several definitions that included dwellings, family, hotel, rooming house, Solicitor Smith proposed to include additional text in the definition of “Dwelling Structure” (underlined as follows):

Dwelling Structure: Any structure which shall contain one or more dwelling units, not including a hotel, hospital, nursing home, dormitory, fraternity or sorority house, rooming house, boarding house or other group housing accommodations. Such other group housing accommodations include but are not limited to these where each adult occupant is charged, directly or indirectly, a specific single or recurrent separate rental, occupancy fee or monetary assessment predetermined in amount by the owner, or tenant leasing from the owner, the nonpayment of which permits such owner or tenant to evict the occupant.

Also, it was suggested that a new definition for “Single Housekeeping Unit” be added to section 325-81 Definitions. This term is used in the definition of “Family” but is currently not defined:

Single Housekeeping Unit: Any household whose members are an interactive group of persons jointly occupying a dwelling unit, including joint access to and use of all common areas including living, kitchen, and eating areas within the dwelling unit, and sharing household activities and responsibilities such as meals, chores, expenses and maintenance, and whose makeup is determined by the members of the unit rather than by the landlord, property manager, or other third party. This does not include a Boarding or Rooming House.

At this time, Mr. Long made the motion to present Solicitor Smith’s recommendations for adding/amending the borough code section 325-81 definitions “dwelling structure” and “single housekeeping unit” at the next Borough Council meeting on January 2nd, 2018. The motion was seconded by Mr. Christini. Motion passed.

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Other Business:

Also, Manager Lane was present and stated that he would like to see “campers & trailers parking versus storage on the streets”, addressed by the Planning Commission. This was discussed and the Planning Commission will revisit this topic also in the upcoming meeting(s).

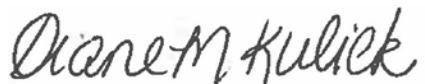
Old Business:

LED usage (internally illuminated) for the Presbyterian Church – Zoning Ordinance 325-47 – Signs.

This issue was addressed at the beginning of this meeting. Plus, Mr. Haight reminded the board that the internal illumination of a new sign on Merrill Parkway would go against the ordinance that is already in place. The church can only illuminate the Court Street sign that is “grandfathered”, and it would have to fit the current configuration of the borough code.

Adjournment:

Mr. Christini made a motion to adjourn, Mrs. Groves seconded it at 8:45 PM.



Diane M. Kulick
Recording Secretary
Planning Commission