

PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 16, 2024

A Regular meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, January 16, 2024, in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

The meeting was called to order by Planning Commission Chairman Shane Mize at 7:01 PM.

Members Present: Chairman Shane Mize, Co-Chairman Kevin Doupe, Mark Christini, William Kovalcin, Erin Groves, Roger Hatch–via conference call, & Scott Hauser

Members Absent: Diane Siegmund

Citizens to be Heard or Guests: Manager Hotaling participated via conference call.

Minutes:

A motion was made by Mr. Doupe' and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin to approve the Regular meeting minutes for October 17, 2023, with a spelling correction on page 2. Motion passed.

New Business:

The Commission reviewed a letter of interest from 2 residents who would like to be considered for the open Planning Commission seat.

The two interested candidates were Brianna Fischetti and Rachel Stahle.

Chairperson Mize stated that he met both candidates and he was impressed with Ms. Fischetti who he met through mutual friends. He feels she will bring a lot to the table. Also, she has lived in Nashville, TN where downtown revitalization has been big.

Manager Hotaling stated that Ms. Fischetti came to the office and talked to her about different business ideas she had in mind for our downtown area and seemed very excited. Manager Hotaling gave her information to get in touch with the University of Scranton Small Business Development Center. She has attended our events and is very interested in the town and the community.

Mr. Doupe' related that he has a couple of recommendations for Ms. Fischetti. Chairperson Mize stated that she has reached out to him and wants to be part of Porch Fest and she is looking at events in the future for our community, which is now.

Reverand Stahle is interested in contributing to the community where her abilities and interests are the best fit. Reverand Stahle came to a Planning Commission meeting back in the summer of 2022 and spoke to us about her interest back then, which was appreciated.

Mr. Doupe' and Chairperson Mize recommended Ms. Fischetti. Mr. Christini stated that he feels both would be good for the position.

Mrs. Groves made the motion to recommend to Council, Ms. Fischetti to fill the open seat on the Planning Commission. This was seconded by Mr. Doupe, motion passed.

Old Business:

Mr. Christini stated that Solicitor Smith is working on the definitions of "guest" and tightening up grandfathering for non-conforming use.

FUTURE Business:

A. Update Regional Comprehensive Plan – Regional Comprehensive Plan that was last adopted in 2008.

Central Bradford Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary

Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan

Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan Appendix

Manager Hotaling stated that we currently do have the grant (it will expire this year) and it will involve Towanda Township, North Towanda Township, and Towanda Borough. We need the get their approval. Also, she sent the CD and an email to make sure all the municipalities were on board. Then we will get the RFP in the paper.

- B. DCED Grant Approved – Point committee for bundled projects.
1. Tommy Fairchild Memorial Park (formerly Riverfront Park)
 2. YMCA (SCI) Complex Master Plan (including the Memorial Park playground).
 3. Third Ward Park.
 4. The TRAIL project with the possibility of connecting all Towanda Borough Parks and municipal grounds with the trail.

DCED awarded the Parks Master Plan grant through the Greenways, Trails & Recreation. Stifler-McGraw is the consultant.

Manager Hotaling talked about the following:

- They did a community survey for all three parks but did not get much feedback. It was less than 10 responses. We plan on moving the little league field that is at the YMCA over towards the other little league fields near the pavilion so we will have all three fields right in the same area. Also, in the plan is a new pavilion where the current little league field is, and the survey responders asked for several different pickleball courts. We discussed expanding the YMCA where the old basketball asphalt area is out back, expanding the building to accommodate another gymnasium or different growth opportunities for that building.
- The swimming pool needs to be redone, but unfortunately, we must do a feasibility study according to DCNR. Manager Hotaling has done the master plan, but they are going to require another study before they would release any other type of funding to do those pool improvements.
- The Tom Fairchild Park kind of winds around a back area that is underutilized, and we talked about improvements to the boat launch and soft launch areas.
- Third Ward is a great playground with new playground equipment. It would have a rubber turf and different games to play, security systems, pavilions, plus restrooms. She stated that she did submit a grant this year for around \$560,000 (phase one), and she hopes that it does not require a match. We did have some match funds and we had some additional funding that was given to us from the BC Commissioners.
- DCNR is back open for its different recreational improvement grants. So, we could potentially apply for that which is due in April. In the Parks Master Plan, we only have actual costs for the Third Ward Playground, and that exceeds \$1,000,000 (includes playground equipment). Stifler McGraw's, Chris Foster, the landscape architect is putting the plan together. He should have more updates for us within the next couple of weeks plus finalize the master plans giving us the cost estimates for all these different improvements and laying out phase one, phase two, and phase three of the different parks and how we go about getting the funding.

C. Downtown Revitalization – To date we have received over \$80,000 in funds towards this plan.

Misc:

Mr. Mize asked about how the Quality-of-Life ticketing is working. Mr. Christini stated that it has been going on and Mr. Thrush has sent letters out and a few fines have been issued.

Mr. Thrush is also following the Vacant Store Front Ordinance, but we have found out that two of the vacant stores are vacant. They went to the district magistrate recently and he dismissed the tickets for both properties because the property owners said that they are not vacant because they go in there once a month. Mr. Christini said that we might have to tighten up the definition of vacant. There was a lot of back and forth and they had seven samples and it's not super clear about vacant. He thought some of the ordinances said that you had to have an existing license-recognized business from the state of Pennsylvania, and our current ordinance doesn't say that now.

As far as the arts part of the ordinance, Manager Hotaling has lined up people for the Arts Committee.

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Hatch at 7:48 PM.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 20, 2024, at 7 PM.

Diane M Kulick

Recording Secretary, Planning Commission

PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 19, 2024

A Regular meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, March 19, 2024, in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

The meeting was called to order by Planning Commission Chairman Shane Mize at 7:01 PM.

Members Present: Chairman Shane Mize, Co-Chairman Kevin Doupe, Mark Christini, Brianna Fischetti, William Kovalcin, Roger Hatch, & Scott Hauser

Members Absent: Erin Groves, Diane Siegmund

Citizens to be Heard or Guests:

Minutes:

A motion was made by Mr. Doupe' and seconded by Mr. Mize to approve the Regular meeting minutes for January 16, 2024. Motion passed.

New Business:

New Planning Commission Board member Brianna Fishchetti introduced herself and talked about her interests and excitement to be on the commission. In turn, everyone on the board introduced themselves to her.

Old Business:

Mrs. Kulick displayed the 3 Parks plans that Stiffler-McGraw did for us, as they are the accepted consultant firm on these projects.

The Vacant Store Front Ordinance was discussed but we have found out that two of the vacant stores were vacant (according to the ordinance). However, both property owners went to the district magistrate recently and he dismissed the tickets for both properties because the property owners said that they are not vacant, as they go in there at least once a month. Mr. Christini said that we may have to tighten up the definition of "vacant." There was some discussion, and Mr. Christini stated that he has seven samples of "vacant" to possibly review. He thought some of the ordinances said that you had to have an existing license-recognized business from the state of Pennsylvania, and our current ordinance doesn't say that. The commission agreed we need a better definition for the VSFOrdinance, and we will review these at the next meeting.

As far as the Arts part of the ordinance, Manager Hotaling has lined up people for an Arts Committee to help decorate these storefronts.

FUTURE Business:

A. Update Regional Comprehensive Plan – Regional Comprehensive Plan that was last adopted in 2008.

Central Bradford Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary
Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan
Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan Appendix

We discussed the grant funding and contributions that may be needed for the next Regional Comprehensive Plan that will include the municipalities of North Towanda, Towanda Borough, and Towanda Township. Their approval and contribution will be around 5 or 6 thousand each. Once that is approved by each, Manager Hotaling will get the RFP advertised.

- B. DCED Grant Approved – Point committee for bundled projects.
 - 1. Tommy Fairchild Memorial Park (formerly Riverfront Park)
 - 2. YMCA (SCI) Complex Master Plan (including the Memorial Park playground).
 - 3. Third Ward Park.
 - 4. The TRAIL project with the possibility of connecting all Towanda Borough Parks and municipal grounds with the trail.

- C. Downtown Revitalization – Mr. Christini stated that there have been several projects funded throughout the years such as the Merrill Parkway, the senior apartments, and the parking garage. We are continuing this by concentrating on the Parks Master Plan. We received \$3.2 million from the state (Governor Rendell) years ago after a major fire in the 200 block of town. It was what was left over from a new stadium bill for Philly and Pittsburg, who received around 200 million. This money covered Towanda Terrace and the Parking Garage. It was a political handout that we were able to get. Also, Sylvania (factory) received grant money for equipment and they paid it back to the Borough. Grant money for the Merrill Parkway at around 16 million was received over 20 years ago. He stated that it takes time to get these projects to completion.

Misc:

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Doupe at 7:38 PM.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at 7 PM.



Recording Secretary, Planning Commission

PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 16, 2024

A Regular meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

The meeting was called to order by Planning Commission Co-Chairman Kevin Doupe' at 7:03 PM.

Members Present: Co-Chairman Kevin Doupe, Mark Christini, Brianna Fischetti, Erin Groves, Diane Siegmund, William Kovalcin, Roger Hatch, & Scott Hauser

Members Absent: Chairman Shane Mize

Citizens to be Heard or Guests:

Minutes:

A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Doupe' and seconded by Mr. Christini to approve the Regular meeting minutes for March 19, 2024. Motion passed.

New Business:

Mr. Doupe' stated that the new business is to work with Solicitor Smith to tighten up the definition of "Vacant." Mr. Christini provided a few examples that included Towanda Borough, York, PA, Abington Twp PA, Hanover Borough, PA, Ocean City, NJ, Tacoma Park, MD and Sidney, OH.

These examples were discussed and Solicitor Smith said that he would have to look these examples over and see what we can tweak. He stated that it is difficult to write something that is going to allow a judge to say that it doesn't meet the definition of what we are doing. It's vacant but it is used. Solicitor Smith feels you can go after someone who is an absentee owner who doesn't do anything with a storefront but let it sit there empty with dirty windows. That may be a code situation that we could go after. However, we are limited in what we can tell people to do. Mr. Christini said he would talk to Manager Hotaling about a list of people who may be available to do artwork on the storefronts.

Solicitor Smith talked about the definition of "Guest". This came about when a building on the north end of town (Dr. Haines's former dental office), was purchased and the new owner wanted to have a tax preparation business and "retail sales with guests permitted as a special exception." They came to the Zoning Hearing Board with this and produced evidence that they met the criteria, and now they can do what they want with that building. Solicitor Smith stated that the word guest from a legal standpoint, if it is not defined specifically towards statute, gets a plain ordinary dictionary definition. He proposed the following definition: **GUEST: A business invitee admitted to a place of business by prearranged appointment or reservation, or by the express advance invitation or permission of the business owner or agent of such owner, extended personally to such business invitee and not to the public at large.** Solicitor Smith will check on the word "guest" in other ordinance(s) contexts to ensure that it does not affect them negatively.

Lastly, Solicitor Smith brought up the subject of non-conforming use concerning the definition and interpretation of zoning laws that are crucial in decision-making. We are concerned about "grandfathered" under the law and changing use. He stated this is tough because of the way our ordinance reads, it's got a specific provision that says the intent of the owner. He said this is contrary to what the Pennsylvania Supreme Court says because it does say that intent matters. He stated when variances get by in places they shouldn't be given, it sets a precedence for the next person that comes along and feels they are allowed to have what they want. Once you switch to a conforming use then you are not talking about nonconforming use anymore. So it is grandfathered in that way. You can't just cut somebody out and stop it there because that would be a condemnation and you will end up paying that person for loss of their property. It's a fine line between how much you can restrict the expansion of the nonconforming or what uses are compatible with the nonconforming use. We need our ordinances to be a little tighter. Solicitor Smith will get the information together to tighten up the language in a particular change order form to avoid vague language and ensure compliance with existing zoning regulations.

Old Business:

FUTURE Business:

A. Update Regional Comprehensive Plan – Regional Comprehensive Plan that was last adopted in 2008.

Central Bradford Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary
Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan
Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan Appendix

B. DCED Grant Approved – Point committee for bundled projects.

1. Tommy Fairchild Memorial Park (formerly Riverfront Park)
2. YMCA (SCI) Complex Master Plan (including the Memorial Park playground).
3. Third Ward Park.
4. The TRAIL project with the possibility of connecting all Towanda Borough Parks and municipal grounds with the trail.

C. Downtown Revitalization

Misc:

Adjournment:

Mr. Hatch made a motion to adjourn at 8:02 PM.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 21, 2024, at 7 PM.



Recording Secretary, Planning Commission

PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 18, 2024

A Regular meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, June 18, 2024, in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

The meeting was called to order by Planning Commission Chairman Shane Mize at 7:03 PM.

Members Present: Chairman Shane Mize, Co-Chairman Kevin Doupe, Erin Groves, Diane Siegmund, Roger Hatch, & Scott Hauser

Members Absent: Mark Christini, Brianna Fischetti, William Kovalcin

Citizens to be Heard or Guests: None present.

Minutes:

A motion was made by Erin Groves and seconded by Chairman Mize to approve the Regular meeting minutes for April 16, 2024. Motion passed.

New Business:

The definition of "Guest" was discussed. Mr. Hatch made the motion to send Solicitor Smith's definition to Borough Council. Mr. Mize seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Concerning the "Vacant Store Front" ordinance, Mr. Thrush stated that he does not want to target people. It was discussed how a couple of storefront owners already went the legal way and the magistrate dismissed their cases. This type of thing makes it hard to get everyone to comply. Mr. Thrush has the list of registered storefront owners. It was decided that we need to move forward and the artwork needs to happen. Some ideas were discussed for potential local artists who may want to be part of an arts committee, and Mr. Hatch stated that he would attend the next council meeting to talk to council as a planning committee member and citizen as well, and tell them we would like to move forward with the art for these storefronts. Maybe they could have someone on council (in the absence of a Borough Manager) take these ideas and move forward with this because the planning committee has worked hard with ideas on how to go about making the storefront window art happen.

Old Business:

There was no old business at this time.

FUTURE Business: No Updates at this time.

A. Update Regional Comprehensive Plan – Regional Comprehensive Plan that was last adopted in 2008.

Central Bradford Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary

Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan

Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan Appendix

B. DCED Grant Approved – Point committee for bundled projects.

1. Tommy Fairchild Memorial Park (formerly Riverfront Park)
2. YMCA (SCI) Complex Master Plan (including the Memorial Park playground).
3. Third Ward Park.
4. The TRAIL project with the possibility of connecting all Towanda Borough Parks and municipal grounds with the trail.

C. Downtown Revitalization.

Adjournment:

Mr. Mize made a motion to adjourn at 7:56 PM.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 16, 2024, 7 PM.



Recording Secretary, Planning Commission

PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 20, 2024

A Regular meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, August 20, 2024, in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

The meeting was called to order by Planning Commission Chairman, Shane Mize at 7:05 PM.

Members Present: Chairman Shane Mize, Co-Chairman Kevin Doupe, William Kovalcin, Roger Hatch, & Scott Hauser

Members Absent: Mark Christini, Brianna Fischetti, Erin Groves, Diane Siegmund,

Citizens to be Heard or Guests: There was a guest who was present, but wanted to wait until the Solicitor and Mr. Christini were present before he addressed the Commission.

Minutes:

A motion was made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mr. Hatch to approve the Regular meeting minutes for June 18, 2024. Motion passed.

Old Business:

The definition of "Guest" was one thing Solicitor Smith was working on. Mr. Mize will reach out to him on it.

FUTURE Business: No updates at this time. Without a Borough Manager, some things are at a standstill until Council hires someone.

A. Update Regional Comprehensive Plan – Regional Comprehensive Plan that was last adopted in 2008.

Central Bradford Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary

Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan

Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan Appendix

B. DCED Grant Approved – Point committee for bundled projects.

1. Tommy Fairchild Memorial Park (formerly Riverfront Park)
2. YMCA (SCI) Complex Master Plan (including the Memorial Park playground).
3. Third Ward Park.
4. The TRAIL project with the possibility of connecting all Towanda Borough Parks and municipal grounds with the trail.

C. Downtown Revitalization.

Adjournment:

Mr. Doupe made a motion to adjourn at 7:13 PM, 2nd by Mr. Mize.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 17, 2024, at 7 PM.



Recording Secretary, Planning Commission

PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 17, 2024

A Regular meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, September 17, 2024, in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

The meeting was called to order by Planning Commission Co-Chairman, Kevin Doupe' at 7:00 PM.

Members Present: Co-Chairman Kevin Doupe, Mark Christini, Erin Groves, Roger Hatch, & Diane Siegmund & Scott Hauser

Members Absent: Chairman Shane Mize, Brianna Fischetti & William Kovalcin

Minutes:

A motion was made by Mr. Christini and seconded by Mr. Hatch to approve the Regular meeting minutes for August 20, 2024. Motion passed.

Citizens to be Heard or Guests: Mr. Thomas Bradford of 103 Means Street wanted to know if the meeting of October 2, 2023, was the first time he met Mr. Doupe'. Mr. Doupe' said that he was unaware. Mr. Bradford stated that Mr. Hatch indicated in the July 1 meeting that we were going to redo the definition section of the storefront vacancy registration line. He also stated that he heard Mr. Doupe' say that he wanted to make the law to be more inclusive and comprehensive. He questioned the catalyst for changing the vacant storefront ordinance. Mr. Doupe' stated that the citizens to be heard moment of this meeting is for a person to be heard but he does not feel like it's an important situation for them to have back-and-forth conversations. Concerns can be expressed and the commission can consider them and move forward with maybe some possible changes if we see fit based on what the concerns and comments are. Mr. Bradford stated that he disagrees with the law (Vacant Storefront Ordinance), and intends to fight it, and the commission is overstepping its authority.

New Business:

The Sunshine Act – Mr. Doupe' was asked by Chairman Mize to distribute the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act which ensures citizens' right to have notice of and the right to attend all meetings of agencies at which any agency business is discussed or acted upon. The Commission acknowledges the importance of the information and notes that they already adhere to these rules. It also provides a reasonable opportunity for public comment at each advertised meeting.

Old Business:

Solicitor Smith explained the need for a definition of "guest" in the zoning code, proposing a definition that includes invited patrons.

He recommends the following:

GUEST: A business invitee admitted to a place of business by prearranged appointment or reservation, or by the express advance invitation or permission of the business owner or agent of such owner, extended personally to such business invitee and not to the public at large.

Solicitor Smith asked for a motion to send this definition back to council for inclusion in the zoning code. A motion was made by Mrs. Grove and seconded by Mr. Doupe' to do this. Motion passed.

Solicitor Smith discussed the vacant storefront ordinance, explaining the need to address buildings that are not being used and present potential hazards.

He recommends the following amendment to Section 217-3, Definition of "**Vacant Building**"

B. Is not legally occupied, is abandoned, or is not actively used for a period of at least thirty (30) consecutive days for a use allowed in the zoning district in which the property is located, whether such use is a permitted principal use, a use permitted by a granted special exception, or a registered nonconforming use.

Solicitor Smith asked for a motion to send this definition back to council for inclusion in the zoning code. A motion was made by Mr. Hatch and seconded by Mrs. Groves to do this. Motion passed with 5 ayes, 1 abstention, 3 absent.

FUTURE Business:

Stacy Schoonover, the new Borough Manager introduced herself. She has been with the borough for 11 years in various roles and has supervisory experience. In the future, she will be working with the following projects:

- A. Update Regional Comprehensive Plan – Regional Comprehensive Plan that was last adopted in 2008.
 - Central Bradford Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary
 - Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan
 - Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan Appendix

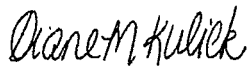
- B. DCED Grant Approved – Point committee for bundled projects.
 - 1. Tommy Fairchild Memorial Park (formerly Riverfront Park)
 - 2. YMCA (SCI) Complex Master Plan (including the Memorial Park playground).
 - 3. Third Ward Park.
 - 4. The TRAIL project with the possibility of connecting all Towanda Borough Parks and municipal grounds with the trail.

- C. Downtown Revitalization.

Adjournment:

Mrs. Groves made a motion to adjourn at 7:30 PM, 2nd by Mr. Christini.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 15, 2024, at 7 PM.



Recording Secretary, Planning Commission

PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 15, 2024

A Regular meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, October 15, 2024, in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

The meeting was called to order by Planning Commission Chairman, Shane Mize at 7:00 PM.

Members Present: Shane Mize – Chairman, Co-Chairman Kevin Doupe, Mark Christini, Erin Groves, Roger Hatch

Members Absent: Brianna Fischetti, William Kovalcin, Diane Siegmund & Scott Hauser

Minutes:

A motion was made by Mr. Doupe' and seconded by Mr. Mize to approve the September 17, 2024 regular meeting minutes. Motion passed.

Citizens to be Heard or Guests:

There were no citizens or guests to be heard tonight.

New Business:

Included was a letter from Stiffler McGraw on behalf of TMA (Towanda Municipal Authority), as they are submitting an application to the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PENNVEST) for funding to upgrade the Authority's Wastewater Treatment Plant, which was originally built in the 1950s. Mr. Christini called Eric Casanave (of Stiffler McGraw & Associates) to address this letter. Mr. Casanave stated that it's essentially asking the Towanda Borough Planning Commission, since the project is in Towanda borough, to issue a letter consistent with the comprehensive plans that are recognized as being development plans for Towanda borough, which would be the overarching one with the adjoining municipality. On top of that, the Wastewater Treatment Plant work is in the floodplain. Because it is, they already got DEP clearance to do this work in the floodplain. So if you were to have a recommendation in your comprehensive plan that you should not do any work in the flood plain, then your letter may want to reflect that you're aware that the consulting engineer or the authority has secured the development approvals from the DEP (So the work could proceed in the floodplain, which we have done). Also, it is in an area already zoned for utilities, since there's a plant there now. He stated that are not picking up the old plant, and replacing it with a chicken factory, we're renovating an existing use. Mr. Casanave thinks you could consider that it is consistent with what's already there, but the letter needs to just recognize in a formal fashion that, as the Planning Commission, you understand what the project is and that it's consistent with the planning goals you set that have been part of any comprehensive plan that you recognize. Roger Hatch made the motion to send the letter to the PENNVEST office and Erin Groves seconded the motion. Motion passed.
The Code Enforcement Officer, Barry Thrush will write the letter, and the Chairman of the Planning Commission, Mr. Mize will sign as Chairman.

Old Business:

Solicitor Smith – Update of Chapter 325-57 – Change to another non-conforming use. He will get the information together to tighten the language in a particular change order form to avoid vague language and ensure compliance with existing zoning regulations.

FUTURE Business:

Stacy Schoonover, the Borough Manager is gathering information for these projects.

- A. Update Regional Comprehensive Plan – Regional Comprehensive Plan that was last adopted in 2008.
 - Central Bradford Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary
 - Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan
 - Central Bradford Region Comprehensive Plan Appendix

B. DCED Grant Approved – Point committee for bundled projects.


1. Tommy Fairchild Memorial Park (formerly Riverfront Park)
2. YMCA (SCI) Complex Master Plan (including the Memorial Park playground).
3. Third Ward Park.
4. The TRAIL project with the possibility of connecting all Towanda Borough Parks and municipal grounds with the trail.

C. Downtown Revitalization.

Adjournment:

Mr. Mize motioned to adjourn at 7:43 PM, 2nd by Mr. Doupe’.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 7 PM (note: this was canceled).
The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 17, 2024 at 7 PM



Recording Secretary, Planning Commission

PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 17, 2024

A Regular meeting of the Towanda Borough Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, December 17, 2024 in the Council Room of the Towanda Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

The meeting was called to order by Planning Commission Chairman Shane Mize at 7:01 PM.

Members Present: Co-Chairman Kevin Doupe, Mark Christini, Diane Siegmund, and Roger Hatch

Members Absent: Brianna Fischetti, Erin Groves, Scott Hauser, and William Kovalcin

Citizens to be Heard or Guests: Thomas Bradford was present recording the meeting for future reference.

Minutes:

A motion was made by K. Doupe' and seconded by S. Mize to approve the regular meeting minutes from October 15, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

There was no new business to discuss.

Old Business:

Solicitor Smith briefed the members on the Non-Conforming Ordinance that is currently adopted into the Towanda Borough Code. This states that if a building becomes a business labeled as commercial, it can not return back to non-commercial since it was already labeled as such. Due to various zoning codes, the building itself can not be added onto or changed in any way that would change its use. If a take-out restaurant adds tables and becomes a full-on sit-down restaurant, the government does not see it as a change of use, even if the foot traffic increases and the residents around the seated restaurant are bothered by it. When a municipality informs a property owner that they can not change the use of the building that is currently there, that building may become vacant and the value of the abandoned property declines and becomes an eye-sore. Municipalities don't want that, so many zoning committees in municipalities will change the Non-Conforming Ordinance to allow the property owner a change to another non-conforming use, which can make the property useful and profitable again. Solicitor Smith advises reviewing the Non-Conforming Ordinance to allow that leeway for property owners to make money and keep a building up to code and aesthetically pleasing. The members agreed to review the information provided and discuss further at the next meeting.

Future Business:

1. Update Regional Comprehensive Plan

Borough Manager Schoonover informed the committee members that she spoke with Chris Chapman from DCED (Dept.of Community and Economic Development) about the Borough's Comprehensive Plan that had not been updated since 2008. They are typically updated every ten years, so DCED would like the Borough to keep moving on this. This involves Towanda Borough and North Towanda township, and Towanda township. They had their own plan conducted about five years ago, so they are not included. This plan will not pre-empt Bradford County's plan because the borough's goals are different than the county's goals. Once the members approve, Schoonover will notify C. Chapman and then he will reach out to the township supervisors and they will move forward from there.

2. Park Master Plans and Downtown Revitalization

This is still an ongoing issue that ties into the Comprehensive Plan. The Borough did receive a grant to have the Third Ward playground updated, and once the Comprehensive Plan is complete, more grants will become available for both upgrades once the Plan is submitted.

Adjournment:

K. Doupe made a motion to adjourn at 8:19, R. Hatch seconded the motion.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 21, 2025 at 7:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Angela L. Oliver

Angela L. Oliver
Towanda Borough Administrative Assistant