

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

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Towanda Borough Administrative Assistant