

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

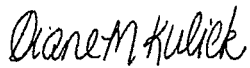
- B. DCED Grant Approved – Point committee for bundled projects.
 - 1. Tommy Fairchild Memorial Park (formerly Riverfront Park)
 - 2. YMCA (SCI) Complex Master Plan (including the Memorial Park playground).
 - 3. Third Ward Park.
 - 4. The TRAIL project with the possibility of connecting all Towanda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