

Swarthmore Planning Commission

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: May 17, 2023

Commission Attendees

James Levine -- Chair
Rex Brien -- Secretary
Don Jones
Nancy Templeton
Chris DeBruyn

Steve Minton
Douglas Perry
John MacCallum
Chris Kenney
David Virgil

Also in Attendance

Kristen Seymore

Borough Council Liaison

Meeting Location

Borough Hall

- James Levine called the meeting to order at approximately 7:30 PM
- **Agenda Item 1:** Approval of April 19, 2023, meeting minutes. Motion to accept minutes, as revised, and seconded.
- **Agenda Item 2: Status Report Re: FHI Studio's Updating of TC Zoning Code**
 - **Presentation**
 - Nancy Templeton reported on second advisory meeting to discuss changes to draft report before presenting to BC. Discussion included feedback from public meetings and surveys. Discussed recommendation of 35' / 2 ½ story building height limit in TC with 2 overlay districts including one north of SEPTA tracks allowing up to 5 stories.
 - **Discussion**
 - Chris Kenney noted that the proposed overlays totaled over ½ of the entire TC. He noted that the report's findings are responsive to the community's interests and comments re: preserving character, scale, and walkability of TC. Chris noted that there will be draft zoning changes for discussion before they go to BC for review. Query: how does the FHI project interact with ongoing work on the comprehensive plan? Chris noted that the Borough Ordinance sets forth the required components of a comprehensive plan.
 - James Levine discussed schedule going forward including FHI office hours in the Fall for meetings with residents, followed by submission of report to BC and review by PC thereafter. BC has not asked for PC's comments at this time. James believes consensus of PC is that the FHI project should be part of updating the comprehensive plan, which would evaluate all recommendations. He also reported on preparation of the comprehensive plan scoping document and a meeting of the PC subcommittee including Nancy Templeton's preparation of the scoping document outline. The outline will be circulated to PC members, with comments to be submitted to the subcommittee chair, Don Jones, by May 24. James advised that BC decided

not to do a comprehensive plan with Rutledge. In discussing a comprehensive plan steering committee, James thought that perhaps the committee could be pared down.

- Chris DeBruyn suggested that the FHI report should include an explanation for the proposed changes to building height limitations.
- David Virgil suggested that the comprehensive plan should incorporate a vision for the Borough.
- Don Jones agrees that the findings of the FHI report are responsive to the community’s interests and comments. He will circulate a copy of a Penn State document on comprehensive plans.
- Nancy Templeton identified components of the comprehensive plan that she can assist with including demographics and mapping. She also recommended a steering committee to assist the process, which should include at least BC Planning & Zoning.
- There was also a brief discussion regarding passive housing standards including, *inter alia*, energy efficient construction. The consensus was that such standards are expensive to achieve.

• **Agenda Item 3: - Committee Notes**

Committee	Meeting info (time is PM unless noted.)	Planning Commission Liaison
Borough Council		BC looking forward to reviewing comprehensive plan scope outline
Environmental Advisory Council (EAC)	4 th Tuesday @ 7:30	Speaker from ‘passive house’ organization re: energy code suggestions. Expected to be costly
Traffic Advisory Committee	Meetings as needed.	No meeting
Tree Committee	David Page – Meets as needed.	No meeting
UCC Board of Appeals	Meets as needed.	No meeting
Zoning Hearing Board	Meets as needed, 4 th Tuesday.	No meeting
Borough Council – Environment	4 th Wednesday 7:00	Proposed plastics ban ordinance sent to Borough Council; looking for grant for up to 12 electric vehicle charging stations in Borough.
Borough Council – General Government & Hum. Services (Library, town center)	Sarah Graden – 3 rd Monday @ 7:30	No meeting

Borough Council - Planning & Zoning	Kristen Seymore – 2 nd Wednesday 7:30	No meeting
Borough Council - Public Safety	Jill Gaieski – 3 rd Tuesday	Discussed combining Borough Fire Department with Nether Providence's department. Kristen S. mentioned discussion re: preparing data base of all rental units and requiring inspection whenever turn over, including fee imposed.
Borough Council - Public Works/Parks & Rec.	Francie Halderman – 3 rd Thursday 8:30 AM	No meeting
Development and Affordability Task force	1 st Thursday 7:00	No more meetings scheduled
Borough Council – Finance	TBD – 4 th Monday @ 7:30	Discussion with College re: paying for building permits and whether excessive. Grants available for comprehensive plan; Bill Webb would prepare application.

Motion to adjourn and seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:42 PM.

NEXT MEETING:

The next scheduled meeting is scheduled for June 21, 2023 at Swarthmore Borough Hall.

End of Meeting Minutes