

Swarthmore Planning Commission

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: June 21, 2023

Commission Attendees

James Levine -- Chair
Doug Harnsberger -- Vice Chair
Rex Brien -- Secretary
Don Jones
Nancy Templeton

Douglas Perry
Chris Kenney
David Virgil

Also in Attendance

Meeting Location

Borough Hall

- James Levine called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.
- **Agenda Item 1:** Motion to approve May 2023 meeting minutes; seconded and approved.
- **Agenda Item 2:** Little Crum Creek Stream Restoration
 - **Motion to approve; sign letter of support**
 - Motion is seconded and passed.
- **Agenda Item 3:** Comprehensive Plan Scoping Update
 - **Discussion**
 - James Levine agrees with Chris DeBruyn's comment that the proposed steering subcommittee is too unwieldy and proposes that it include only 5 members. He proposed 1 member from Borough Council, 3 members from the Planning Commission, and 1 member from the Environmental Advisory Council. He anticipated that members from the Planning Commission would report back to PC in public meetings. James thought that if a reasonable scope outline was presented to Borough Council, funding would be provided. With respect to whether Borough Council will seek bids for professional planners to assist in preparing the comprehensive plan, James anticipated that the Planning Commission likely would recommend that the Borough do so.
 - Nancy Templeton mentioned a proposal to include a transportation expert and an economic development expert on the subcommittee. She said the Borough Engineer will review the plan but not until the end of the process. Nancy noted that the historic preservation task force has yet to prepare a report and, thus, a member of that group should be on the steering subcommittee. She noted that

steering committees typically have wide representation, and that their meetings usually are not public, but could be. She thought that the size of the Borough warrants a smaller steering committee, as long as the process includes robust involvement of all stakeholders. She believes the steering subcommittee should be able to resolve competing interests. She noted that the steering subcommittee would serve as a “filter”, making decisions about the direction of the comprehensive plan and what is submitted to the public. She stated that a smaller group might dictate a greater role for the Planning Commission.

Nancy commented on the prior work of FHI for the Borough, noting that FHI will be providing draft ordinances for the Borough’s review and consideration.

- Chris Kenney proposed including a member to the historic preservation task force and the development and affordability task force on the subcommittee, to utilize their respective expertise. He noted that a smaller subcommittee would be more efficient but could be viewed as insular and unrepresentative.
- David Virgil suggested that Town Center could be a stakeholder in the process. He noted that the process should provide oversight with input from all interest groups. David expressed his expectation that Borough Council would fund the comprehensive plan. He noted that the goals identified by the Development and Affordability Task Force represent one view, while there may be other competing views.
- Don Jones agrees that those members should be involved but not on the steering subcommittee. He noted that we have access to a completed report from the development and affordability task force. He stated that the steering subcommittee should advocate for all interest groups. He agrees that the steering subcommittee should advocate for all interest groups. He referenced the work of FHI in utilizing a process that identified and presented the views of all interested parties.
- Doug Harnsberger agreed with James L’s. proposed makeup of the steering subcommittee and suggested that it should not include a Town Center representative.
- Rex Brien expressed concern about how the steering subcommittee would resolve competing interests and emphasized the importance of transparency of process.
- Doug Perry said the intended role of the steering subcommittee is not clear. If it is just administrative, a smaller group may be appropriate.
- Virginia Thompson offered comment about the prior use of FHI as a consultant. She noted that Borough Council did not seek bids for that work because it involved professional services. She mentioned that FHI proposed the process and Borough Council agreed with it.
- Rachel Pastan noted that the Development and Affordability Task Force has recommended a comprehensive plan that advances the goals identified by the Task Force.

- **Agenda Item 7: - Committee Notes**

Committee	Meeting info (time is PM unless noted.)	Planning Commission Liaison
Borough Council		BC liaison not present
Environmental Advisory Council (EAC)	4 th Tuesday @ 7:30	Liaison not present
Traffic Advisory Committee	Meetings as needed.	No meeting to report
Tree Committee	David Page – Meets as needed.	No meeting to report
UCC Board of Appeals	Meets as needed.	Liaison not present
Zoning Hearing Board	Meets as needed, 4 th Tuesday.	Hearing scheduled for 6/22/23
Borough Council – Environment	4 th Wednesday 7:30	Liaison reported that a single use container ban was sent to Borough Council for review, including a 10-cent fee to be effective April 2024.
Borough Council – General Government & Hum. Services (Library, town center,)	Sarah Graden – 3 rd Monday @ 7:30	No meeting to report
Borough Council - Planning & Zoning	Kristen Seymore – 2 nd Wednesday 7:30	Discussion re: inclusionary zoning; anticipating study from DVRCP re: affordability; proposed application for variance as non-conforming use re: vacant historic building on Baltimore Pike and Riverview.
Borough Council - Public Safety	Jill Gieski – 3 rd Tuesday	Liaison did not report
Borough Council - Public Works/Parks & Rec.	Francie Halderman – 3 rd Thursday 8:30 AM	Liaison not present
Borough Council – Finance	TBD – 4 th Monday @ 7:30	No report

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

NEXT MEETING:

The next scheduled meeting is scheduled for July 19, 2023 at Swarthmore Borough Hall.