

Swarthmore Planning Commission

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: March 15, 2023

Commission Attendees

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

Steve Minton
Douglas Perry
John MacCallum
Chris Kenney

Also in Attendance

Meeting Location

Swarthmore Borough Hall

- Doug Harnsberger called the meeting to order at approximately 7:35 PM
- **Agenda Item 1: Approval of February 15, 2023, meeting minutes.** So moved, seconded, and passed.
- **Agenda Item 2: Centennial Foundation Presentation – Public Realm Concepts**
 - **Presentation**
 - Foundation member Beth Murray is seeking the Planning Commission’s advice with respect to the Foundation’s goal of making TC more vibrant and pedestrian friendly. This project has been ongoing for 6 years including the 2017 Visioning Session with PC and creation of the 2030 Task Force. Accomplishments include liquor ordinance passed, parklets installed on Park Avenue, PAC Center opened, and the Ship Bottom restaurant. Focus now on Park Avenue traffic calming and parklets including completion of a traffic study.
 - Foundation member Sharon Mester discussed traffic study performed by Pennoni. With respect to the goal of traffic calming, conclusion that one-way going north on Park Avenue would work best, allowing for an easier clockwise route and necessary for emergency vehicles leaving TC. The parking study indicates that proposed plan would cause loss of 15 spots. Would encourage visitors to park on Meyers Avenue. The Foundation will be making a public presentation regarding the proposed plan on April 25, 2023.
 - **Discussion**
 - Whether the proposed plan allows for access to Park Avenue buildings by fire trucks, which require 18-20 feet for outriggers. Access would require clearing “flexible spaces” along east side of Park Avenue. Concern about delivery trucks having to back into parking space in front of Hobbs. Concern that Meyers Avenue is not an attractive place for visitors to park.

- Don Jones is not in favor of making Park Avenue one-way. Can close Park Avenue for special events.
 - Chris Kenney stated the importance of maintaining connection between TC and the train station. Public events held on Meyers Avenue would interfere with proposed circulation.
 - Doug Perry believes that adding public spaces in the Borough would be beneficial.
 - John MacCallum mentioned that parklets generally are successful when acting as extensions of the businesses fronting onto them. Here, the building frontage along this side of Park Avenue is fundamentally flawed. It lacks continuity and transparency needed for an active streetscape. The same issue exists on Meyers Avenue. While parklets were a creative solution during the pandemic, a more lasting, impactful solution will involve the buildings themselves. Additionally, the changes to the street width and traffic patterns are not warranted.
 - Discussion about a two-way alternative for Park Avenue which would include two 9' lanes with parklets along the west side of the street and 7' of flexible space on the east side.

- **Agenda Item 3: Rezoning Technical Advisory Committee Recap**
 - Nancy Templeton reported on the first meeting of the Advisory Committee and the April 11, 2023 Open House presentation. There will be 2 more Committee meetings before completion of proposed ordinance amendments.
 - Chris Kenney commented that the funding for this project only allows for review and consideration of a few discrete issues, rather than a comprehensive review of TC. The end product likely will illustrate the need for a TC master plan. Three principal issues concern the transit-oriented nature of TC, historic preservation, and retail, not all of which can be addressed by zoning changes.

- **Agenda Item 4: Development and Affordability Task Force**
 - Task Force Chair, Rachel Pastan provided a status report. Likely will recommend ADU's, density bonuses for set asides, and inclusionary zoning as means to obtain goals. Reports that BC liaisons are positive about ADU's

- **Agenda Item 5: Committee Notes**

Committee	Meeting info (time is PM unless noted.)	Planning Commission Liaison
Borough Council		No report.
Environmental Advisory Council (EAC)	4 th Tuesday @ 7:30	No liaison assigned.
Traffic Advisory Committee	Meetings as needed.	Liaison not present.
Tree Committee	David Page – Meets as needed.	Liaison not present.
UCC Board of Appeals	Meets as needed.	No meeting to report.
Zoning Hearing Board	Meets as needed, 4 th Tuesday.	No meeting to report.
Borough Council – Environment	4 th Wednesday 7:30	PECO project update – has slowed down due to Borough protest. Also discussed solid waste strategies

		including proposed ordinance re: single use plastic bags. Reported on 3/25/23 Little Crum Creek cleanup day.
Borough Council – General Government & Hum. Services (Library, town center)	Sarah Graden – 3 rd Monday @ 7:30	Liaison not present.
Borough Council - Planning & Zoning	Kristen Seymore – 2 nd Wednesday 7:30	Discussed presentation by the Development and Affordability Task Force.
Borough Council - Public Safety	Jill Gaieski – 3 rd Tuesday	No meeting to report.
Borough Council - Public Works/Parks & Rec.	Francie Halderman – 3 rd Thursday 8:30 AM	No meeting to report.
Development and Affordability Task force	1 st Thursday 7:00	Presentation by the Development and Affordability Task Force discussed above.
Borough Council – Finance	TBD – 4 th Monday @ 7:30	Meeting discussed capital projects including a new roof for Borough Hall.

The meeting adjourned, upon motion, at approximately 9:20 PM.

NEXT MEETING:

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

End of Meeting Minutes