

The regular meeting of the Souderton Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 pm on the above date by Chairman Edward Huber. Other Commission members present included Jeffrey Gross, Calvin Munden, Laurie Reynolds and Andrew Schlosser. The meeting was attended by Borough Manager P. Michael Coll, Borough Engineer Geoffrey Attanasio, P. E., with Gilmore Associates and Chloe Mohr, AICP, Montgomery County Planning Commission. The meeting was also attended by Borough Councillors Daryl Littlefield, Julie Munden and Donna Rogers.

Prior to beginning the meeting Borough Manager Michael Coll introduced Geoffrey Attanasio, P. E. with the firm of Gilmore and Associates who was recently appointed by Souderton Borough Council to serve as our new Borough Engineer. Also joining the Planning Commission is Chloe Mohr, AICP who will be replacing Danielle Baer, as our community planner from the Montgomery County Planning Commission. Chloe Mohr previously served in this capacity and is no stranger to Souderton Borough.

Chairman Huber noted that the minutes from the November 2, 2022, meeting have been prepared for review. A motion was made by Andrew Schlosser and seconded by Laurie Reynolds, to approve the minutes of the November 2, 2022, meeting of the Planning Commission as presented. The motion was approved.

Borough Manager Michael Coll presented revised development plans from owner Nate Clemmer concerning the proposed Branch Creek Brewery Taproom at 30 W. Chestnut Street. The project involves the renovation of a former automotive repair shop into a taproom with the conversion of the fully paved front yard into a landscaped seating area. The project was previously reviewed and supported by the Planning Commission. The revised development plans provided more detail concerning storm water improvements, proposed landscaping and grading of the lot, elevations of the building renovations and the negotiation of a shared parking agreement with Univest Bank to use the adjacent parking lot. Planning Commission members discussed the following concerns:

- The plans include a seepage bed to help control storm water runoff from the building and lot. The seepage bed directs overflows over the sidewalk. It would be more desirable to have the overflow piped under the sidewalk and through the curb to the street.
- The parking calculations on the plan do not take into account the outdoor seating area. The Planning Commission supports the shared parking arrangement but feels that the table should accurately project the required amount of parking to support this use. The adjacent Univest Bank parking lot has more than sufficient space to support this proposed use. A concern was expressed that the Univest Bank lot does not have an easily recognizable pathway to the sidewalk on W Chestnut Street. The Planning Commission requested the owner to evaluate a way to improve or provide a pathway from the lot to Chestnut Street, perhaps utilizing the adjoining alley.

- The plans provide details for the construction of new retaining walls to address the sharp grade changes into the subject parcel. Temporary construction easements may be required from Univest Bank to accommodate the construction of the footings for the new retaining walls.

Chloe Mohr, AICP, noted that Danielle Baer has informed her on the status of the recommendations concerning the sign ordinance. Chloe Mohr will finalize and distribute the recommended “Signage Design Guidelines.” The Planning Commission discussed the status of the proposed revisions to the sign ordinance concerning murals, permitting of murals and text changes to define box signs. Both the Planning Commission and Borough Council are sharply divided over size limitations concerning murals. The current limitation under consideration is to limit the size of a mural to 25% of the front façade with no limitation on the sides and rear facades.

Borough Engineer Geoffrey Attanasio presented and discussed a sketch plan that was created by Gilmore and Associates for the completion of the plaza space connecting to the Freight Building. Borough Manager Michael Coll noted that Borough Council finalized a lease agreement with Brass Collar Brewing to locate a brewery inside the freight building which was the original intent of the project when the exterior of the building was renovated as part of the overall Train Station renovation project.

Chloe Mohr provided a brief update on the progress of the Souderton Borough Revitalization and Economic Development Plan. A public open house is scheduled at the Broad Theater on Monday, December 12, 2022 between 6:00 and 8:00pm. Chloe Mohr further noted that the Indian Valley Regional Planning Commission will begin a review and update to the Indian Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Michael Coll
Recording Secretary