

**New Hope Borough Planning Commission**  
**Monday, February 1, 2020, 7:00 PM**  
**MINUTES**

The New Hope Borough Planning Commission February meeting was held virtually. Members in attendance included Jason Apuzzio (JA), Paul Atkinson (PA), Nick Gialias (NG), Peter Meyer (PM), and Keith Voss (KV). Staff members included Tracy Tackett (TT), Zoning Officer and Matthew Walters (MW), Bucks County Planning Commission.

- A. Call to Order at 7:01 PM
- B. Public Comment
- C. Approval of Meeting Minutes
  - 1. Monday, January 4, 2021- KV moved to approve the minutes; seconded by PM subject to adding the work schedule for 2021.
- D. New Business
  - 1. Review of Zoning Articles I, II, & III
    - **Article I**- this section of the zoning ordinance outlines the Borough's objectives and purposes.
      - This chapter should maintain consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, so a sentence was added establishing that the transportation network is consistent with the needs of business in the Borough, while maximizing convenience and accessibility for residents, visitors, and emergency services.
      - It was recommended that Section 275-2.C be amended to replace the term 'provide' with 'ensure.'
    - **Article II**- is the definition chapter. Discussion is summarized as follows:
      - word usage is proposed to be amended to be consistent with Subdivision and Land Development.
      - It was discussed whether the definition of arcade devices should be updated? MW will research updated definitions relating to this.
      - Add new definition of buffer consistent with the SALDO.
      - Condominium Association definition added.
      - Easement amended to include utility or other entity. MW will reorganize terms to have person or other entity together.
      - Revisit the definition of family.
      - Allow Zoning Officer to determine impervious surface.
      - Adding language that lists exclusions from land development per the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC).
      - Revised definition of right-of-way. Discussion occurred relating to what improvements are included/permitted within the right-of-way and whether they should be specifically listed; particularly relating to pedestrian walkways and signage. Suggested the definition could be revised to include more inclusive language. TT will pass this draft by the Borough Solicitor.

- Street- revise definition.
- It as asked how basement and story work together in terms of future development. How do bank buildings come into play with these definitions. It was suggested that these definitions be revisited after the remainder of the code is reviewed to see if the basement. This may be good options for illustrations.
- **Article III- Establishment of Districts.**
  - no changes proposed currently, but after the complete review of the Code occurs the PC may want to circle back to this section if districts change. TT will double-check if there are any concerns about this section.
  - MW will check on Section 275-10.D to see if it can be Borough Council can interpret boundaries, rather than ZHB.

#### E. Old Business

##### 1. Proposed Zoning Updates for Alternative Parking, Valet Parking Area, and Formula Restaurants

- JA presented an overview of subcommittee changes.
  - There were three key changes made. In the lease section language relating to annual permits was added to ensure consistency.
  - Part C included some language amendments.
  - The key change was the separation of joint valet parking versus just valet parking. Two main reasons was so that a joint use utilizing an existing parking area was not subject to redesigning of the existing parking lot to comply with valet lot requirements. The suggestion is that joint use parking lots obtain conditional use approval so the Borough would have the opportunity to require buffering if needed and to ensure that the use and capacity was acceptable.
- NG expressed concern about the smaller businesses that are not be well represented. The alternative standards do not really work for the small businesses. These standards are oriented to the bigger developers. He is concerned this is bad for the small businesses, who cannot afford parking fees or the cost to apply for variances.
- Discussion continued that that when a small existing space changes from one permitted use to another permitted use there is really not much change to the overall parking demand and that if the parking fees are too high, property owners will be less inclined to fill these spaces. The Borough already has a high vacancy rate.
- It was suggested that fees for parking buy-out (fee-in-lieu) should be assessed based on the scale of the project with possibly the first 1-4 required spaces could be free, then the next few spaces could be a discounted fee, and then more spaces could be at the higher rates.
- It was suggested that another way to address the issue is to revisit parking standards and amend them so there is not such a difference between differing uses. Consider moving parking standards up in the schedule to review them. It was agreed that this is another way to help the smaller businesses. The Borough should have standards that encourage small businesses to be successful to keep the town charm/character.
- It was noted that most spaces in town were a variety of uses historically, which means they should already be grandfathered. TT noted that the challenge with this is that Borough historical records are not great in many cases and we may not know the uses

more than one or two previous uses.

- It was noted that just because a business may put a couple tables outside, it does not directly mean that there will be two more cars coming into the downtown. Once people come to town, they often visit multiple businesses throughout the downtown. So, parking should not necessarily be required for such uses. The big projects are causing the problem for parking, it is really not the small businesses that are causing the parking problems. The small businesses have been here for a very long time.
- It was noted that the big projects do not necessarily contribute to the parking problem because they heavily rely on valet parking; but they do contribute to the traffic problem. A challenge relates to how to implement the proposed restructuring of fees for small businesses.
- It was noted that having a sliding fee structure will also minimize the potential of businesses going to request variances for parking.

JA made a motion to send all the proposed ordinance updates to Borough Council. Seconded by PM. Unanimously approved.

#### F. Discussion

- TT will send the zoning ordinance to all members via pdf.
- It was asked if historic standards for more areas of the Borough could be considered in the near future.

#### G. Adjournment at 8:53 PM.