

DOYLESTOWN BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION
MARCH 26, 2024
MEETING MINUTES

The meeting of the Doylestown Borough Planning Commission was held at Borough Hall at 7:00 pm on March 26, 2024. Members present were as follows:

James Lannon, Chairman
Gus Perea
Heather Mahaley
Nicholas Caramenico
Lynn Bush

Doylestown Borough Council members Amy Popkin and Jennifer Jarret, Public Works Director Phil Ehlinger, and Director of Building and Zoning Karyn Hyland also attended the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Lannon called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance in honor of Martin Corr.

MEETING MINUTES: The February 27, 2024 meeting minutes were approved.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE: The Commissioners present at the meeting discussed the plan and how they see it being implemented in the future. They thought of how these ideas can come to fruition in the Borough. They discussed the big ideas and how they would work with the concepts presented by the public during the workshops.

It was agreed that the Borough needs to remain a mixed-use community, and the value of maintaining this sort of community can help with growth. The “why” behind the importance of a mixed-use community must be shared with the public so they can see and understand how this drives other plan goals.

Mr. Ehlinger is happy with the formatting of the borough's draft from the consultants but noted we are nowhere near where we should be. Comp Plans deal with land use, requiring maps as a visual to represent the story we are trying to tell. The various zoning districts can be depicted on maps, showing how various land-use conflicts can be fixed. He is for mixed-use, but he wants responsible mixed-use. Are we looking at a limit on the CC district, or can an organic line be set for the commercial corridor? Mr. Ehlinger reminded the commissioners that when discussing a comprehensive plan, you are discussing land use first and foremost. He challenged them to determine the takeaway from the existing land use plan.

One topic that could be discussed with the Comp Plan would be creating a cultural zoning district and providing specific institutional-friendly land uses. It is consistent with the theme of the Comp Plan and shows the existing museums that they are going to be taken care of by the Borough. Mr. Lannon questioned whether this would be better suited under the Comp Plan's Historical Character or Recreation portion.

Mr. Ehlinger noted an issue with the residential sections of the zoning map, in that it is very restrictive of the lot coverage allowed for new construction but does not consider the existing homes that people would like to expand on to allow for multi-generational living. It is also a challenge that many existing residential lots are non-conforming, adding another layer of hardship to existing property owners who wish to expand their residences while remaining compliant with their zoning district.

Ms. Hyland noted that the most fundamental portion of the zoning ordinance includes a zoning map, table of dimensional requirements, and table of use requirements. Mr. Perea agreed that all the members should be at least familiar with these documents. Ms. Hyland also showed the members the County's GIS map with various layers that can be turned on and off to show relevant information affecting land use.

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Mr. Lannon and Ms. Mahaley agreed that a land use map with a zoning district overlay should be included in the plan and would benefit residents and business owners. Mr. Ehlinger noted the 1997 Comp Plan has some helpful information that can be replicated in this new plan.

All the members agreed that six ideas or topics relevant to the workshop ideas must be presented at the next public workshop meeting. These ideas should include the strengths of the Borough and things that need to be changed or corrected. Mr. Ehlinger thinks six maps that go along with these topics need to be included to help tell the story of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Perea would like a map of potential new districts discussed during the meeting, i.e., the cultural zoning district.

Mr. Lannon would like to have the six big ideas in place for the next meeting on April 9, 2024. He would also like six things or modifiers relevant to those big ideas and to know which maps or visual aids will best help with those.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT: With no further business, the Commission adjourned at 8:35 pm in honor of Libby White.

Respectfully submitted,
Erika Fellman