

**TOWN OF BROOKLYN
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
Special Meeting
Tuesday, October 16, 2018
Clifford B. Green Meeting Center
69 South Main Street
6:30 p.m.**

MINUTES

- I. Call to Order** - M. Sigfridson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:47 p.m.
- II. Roll Call** - Michelle Sigfridson, Aaron Kerouac, Jules D'Agostino, Earl Starks, Austin Tanner. Carleen Kelleher was absent with notice.
- III. Seating of Alternates** – None.
- IV. Public Commentary**

Heather Ethier, small business owner in Plainfield (Ella Mae's Boutique and Consignment), asked about re-zoning an area on Wauregan Road (Sacred Heart Church property) that is now R-30 to RB. She would like to move her business from its current location and she would like to extend her business to include party planning and events for children's birthday parties. She would like to clear the inside of the Church common area to house things like bouncy houses and other kid-related activities and to have her business in the lower part of the Church.

Ms. Ethier stated that this would also require a text change because the RB allows the retail, but not the recreation or party planning.

J. Roberson explained that there is a 50-foot right-of-way to a rear lot in-between the edge of the RB Zone and the R-30. She commented that the property is for sale (4 acrs) and that the building would be difficult to re-purpose and that the timing is right as the Commission is updating the Zoning Regulations. She said that having an interested business is relevant to the Commission's consideration of Zone boundaries. Retail is a permitted use. Ms. Ethier would also like to use the outdoor area. Children's parties is not explicitly mentioned in the Regulations.

There was discussion regarding event facility which could be considered as an option.

M. Sigfridson commented that she would be open to considering the proposal as the property is not of residential character. She suggested re-zoning to include that parcel in the RB (which would allow the retail) and, then, Ms. Ethier could apply for an event facility permit (which would allow the parties). Ms. Roberson agreed that this may be the best solution, but she will need to research Event Facility (for the party-related uses) to be sure that it would work. She will provide the Event Facility Regulations to the Commission Members for review.

- V. New Business:**
 - a. **None.**

VI. Unfinished Business:

a. Discussion of Zoning Regulations Rewrite (Review of comments from Public Information Session, Inclusionary Zoning, etc.)

J. D'Agostino had initiated informal discussion regarding affordable housing before the start of the meeting while waiting for A. Tanner to arrive:

J. Roberson stated that she had spoken with Joe Voccio earlier in the day and that he provided a lot of good ideas. She will research what she has learned to make a recommendation to the Commission. Mr. Voccio has offered to research draft regulations to see how they may impact developers and their decision of whether or not to move forward with a particular project. Ms. Roberson stated that deed restriction on accessory apartments (as previously discussed) would not be a good option. There was discussion regarding the importance of being certain that affordable housing units are being created for people who need them. Ms. Roberson will reach out to local developers to see if they would get involved in a case study.

Mr. Tanner arrived (at 6:47 p.m.) and the meeting was called to order (see above).

There was discussion regarding how to attract people to want to live in Brooklyn. Schools are important to ages 35 and younger. Questions: Why do we want to attract people to live in Brooklyn? Is it a goal from a planning perspective? Ms. Roberson explained that it is normal for communities to change, but communities can suffer when change is very rapid and not planned for. She said that the goal should be improving the community and to acknowledge changes in your population composition and try to anticipate trends and try to make sure you are meeting the needs of your community members whoever they are. The median age is growing everywhere. Brooklyn has an abundance of single-family homes, but not enough housing diversity like many other towns.

There was discussion regarding property taxes and keeping property values up. It was suggested that there is not a need for apartment buildings (6+ units) in Brooklyn and that multi-families meet the need here. Ms. Roberson will make a map showing all of the multi-family and duplexes in Town. There was discussion regarding lot size. There was discussion regarding the age of Brooklyn's population. There was reference made to an article (published in 2018) which states that the 65+ population in Brooklyn is projected to increase by 19 percent. It was suggested that maybe, walking/sitting parks should be added instead of playground.

A. Tanner had spoken with some people who said that they moved to Brooklyn because of the rural character, lower taxes and the good school. There was discussion regarding young people not being able to afford to buy the large houses in Brooklyn. There was discussion regarding reducing lot size to create affordable housing. A. Tanner is in favor reducing lot size to one acre as land is a restricted resource and has nothing to do with economics. Ms. Roberson explained that dimensional requirements can sometimes lead to bad design and some towns like Mansfield have a buildable area envelope which is more flexible when laying out lot boundaries. There had been other suggestions to reduce lot size from 90,000 s.f. to 80,000 s.f. and also a suggestion for 2.09 acres. The Commission will further discuss this when C. Kelleher is present.

J. Roberson asked the Commission if she should incorporate, into the Draft of the Zoning Map, the change to the RB Zone Boundary that was discussed earlier (under Item IV. Public Commentary). J. D'Agostino was opposed because he feels that it should be presented to the Community at a Regular Meeting so that the people in the neighborhood would know about it. There was discussion. M. Sigfridson was in favor. A. Kerouac was in favor and explained that it is Planning for the neighborhood. A. Tanner was in favor and suggested that it could be added to the List of Changes. There was disagreement.

The Commission will consider Heather Ethier's request to change the RB Zone Boundary at the November 7, 2018, Regular Meeting.

The Commission reviewed comments from the Public Information Session:

- Discussion regarding the 500-foot view shed on Route 169 (from the centerline) or visible from Route 169. There was discussion regarding whether to change language to: ... "and" visible from Route 169. J. D'Agostino was opposed as he prefers to stay with "or." Removing the 500-foot language was also considered. A. Kerouac commented that having a visual overly (visible from the road) is a step toward protecting the scenic by-way. There was a suggestion for a hard boundary of 500 feet. J. D'Agostino feels it would be a little too restrictive. He said the 500 feet is a minimum (whatever is visible from the road). He feels that people will try to get around the 500 feet (because they can) and he stated that he feels the "or" will prevent that. M. Sigfridson indicated on the map the area that would be in the Overlay Zone and asked if the Commission Members would be okay with that. J. D'Agostino stated "yes." He, again, stated that he is in favor of 500 feet "or" visible from the road. J. Roberson referred to the authorizing statute: It can be within 500 feet and not be visible from the road and not be subject to design review. Mr. D'Agostino stated "that's correct." Ms. Roberson stated that the Commission probably should figure out a border. She can depict it in a way that is accurate and encompassing.

There was a suggestion for visible from the road or 500 feet whichever is smaller or whichever is larger.

Concern was expressed regarding uses. Ms. Roberson explained that it is not a no-build zone and that it is a design-review zone, so the Commission would have a chance to review the design.

5.A.2 – For an alternative for the draft, J. Roberson will make up a map removing the 500' and go parcel-based using hatch. She will send it via e-mail to the Commission Members. Split-parcel zones are problems for developers.

- Discussion regarding asphalt driveway grade increase from 12 percent maximum to 15 percent maximum. It was decided that 15 percent maximum grade is okay for paved driveways.
- It was decided that two signs are okay for properties with two frontages.
- There was discussion regarding Air B&B. It was decided that Bed & Breakfast/Inn is a use that is currently in the Regulations, therefore, at this time,

Air B&B need not be addressed in the re-write. It can be addressed at some time in the future when/if necessary.

- There was discussion regarding the possibility of green housing regulations and “branding” Brooklyn as “green.” Suggestions discussed as incentives: density bonus; reduced fee (Ordinance would need to be changed); taxing differently would not be something PZC could do. J. Roberson will research what other towns do regarding a mandatory requirement.
- There was discussion regarding minimum dwelling unit and it was decided to change the minimum dwelling unit from 600 s.f. to 484 s.f.
- There was discussion regarding Paradise Lake. Changes that have already been made in the Draft: Minimum lot size was lowered from to to just meet the public health code; smaller set backs; cut down many barriers to re-development. There was opposition expressed regarding it becoming a mobile home park (as had been suggested by Don Francis) especially with the reduced minimum dwelling unit to 484 s.f.. J. Roberson will research regarding allowing mobile homes in just a limited area vs. all residential zones.
- There was discussion regarding changing building height from 35 feet. There were suggestions to both lower and to higher.
- There was discussion regarding open space. There was disagreement expressed regarding Paul Lehto’s suggestion that there not be an open space requirement for conservation subdivisions and to have increased density as he feels that decreasing the required lot size would lead to open space. There was discussion regarding how more creativity could be required in subdivisions. Ms. Roberson explained that the Commission can decide the open space is to be, but it is not a design review. There was a suggestion to change the size of the buildable square. J. Roberson explained that the Zoning Regulations and the Subdivision Regulations are the cookie cutter and that some towns have a buildable area envelope which allows more flexibility in terms of lot shape (could have smaller frontage if it works). Mr. D’Agostino offered to present language allowing PZCs true design review/more flexibility to a State Legislator. J. Roberson will consult with Glenn Chalder.

There was a suggestion to allow dirt roads in subdivisions because of the expense to developers and also because it is more rural. Flows, sheeting and directing water on the streets are due to pavement. There was discussion. Dirt roads require different maintenance. No changes to the Regulations were mentioned.

- There was discussion regarding a suggestion to have flower beds in the road between the two lanes, before the turning lane, near Job Lot. J. Roberson explained that the State has jurisdiction over that area and is usually opposed to putting anything in the travel way. It was decided to request whether the Town would advocate for a landscape median in Route 6.

VII. Public Commentary – None.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Perreault
Recording Secretary