Jim Thorpe Planning Commission
August 20, 2024
Meeting Minutes

The Planning Commission Meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. by Louis Hall. The meeting was held in the Borough Office, 101 East 10th Street, Jim Thorpe, PA.

Roll Call of Members

Sean McFadden-absent	Louis Hall	Nancy Porambo
Joanne Klitsch	James Dougher-left @ 7:44	
John McGuire-arrived @ 6:40	Secretary Brooke Klotz	

Visitor's Present & Hearing of Visitors

Jennifer Murphy – Jennifer was in attendance to introduce herself to Planning Commission. She was one of three residents who submitted a letter of interest. She explained she is currently a teacher. While she was in college, she was part of the Planning Commission in the Philadelphia area. She explained she always is willing to learn new things, and believes with her background, she would be an asset to the Planning Commission. She said when you are part of a municipal committee, you should take the time to do the required research. She stated she wants to get more involved in the community. Louis Hall asked if Jennifer was a full-time resident. She explained she currently is. Nancy Porambo asked what about planning interests her. Jennifer explained the current affordable housing issues and working with Borough Council to find a balance. James Dougher asked about her thoughts on short-term rentals and does she currently have any around where she lives. She said she has a few around her and they currently don't affect her. She said she understands the concerns and realizes the importance of being a good neighbor, whether you're the visitor of the short-term rental or the actual resident. John McGuire discussed the concerns about the limited parking in the Borough, as well as short-term rentals. James Dougher asked what she did on the planning commission while she lived in the Philadelphia area. She said it was similar to a Zoning Hearing Board, where items were presented and they made decisions on budgeting and zoning issues. Planning Commission then thanked her for coming to introduce herself and briefly discuss her background.

Louis Hall spoke about the three letters of interest that were received. Brian Evans, who attended the July meeting to introduce himself and his ideas, Jennifer Murphy, who attended the current meeting, and Ted LaRizzio from Borough Council. Joanne Klitsch said she liked Jennifer Murphy and felt she has a place somewhere in helping the community, but because Planning Commission was adamant about having someone for Borough Council be a part of Planning Commission, she would like to see Ted LaRizzio be appointed. John McGuire said he'd like to see Ted LaRizzio on Planning Commission, but feels that Ted might still be reluctant in joining. Louis Hall said it's not as much of an issue now that there is better communication between Planning Commission and Borough Council. Planning Commission next discussed their thoughts on Brian Evans. Their concerns about Brian's ideas to expand the commercial district to the jail would take away the housing in the area between the current Zoning District line and the jail. It would bring more businesses and restaurants. Louis Hall asked if anyone from Planning Commission would like to make a motion to recommend one of the three candidates. Joanne Klitsch said she recommends Ted LaRizzio. There were no other recommendations or motions from Planning Commission for Ted LaRizzio. **MOTION** by Nancy Porambo, second by John McGuire to **recommend Borough Council appoint Jennifer Murphy to the Planning Commission.** There was a roll call vote:

James Dougher – yes
Joanne Klitsch – no
Nancy Porambo – yes
John McGuire – yes
Louis Hall – yes

Motion carries 4-1, with Joanne Klitsch voting no.

Minutes and Motions

MOTION by James Dougher, second by Nancy Porambo to **approve the July 16, 2024 meeting minutes conditioned upon corrections.** John McGuire said there was a spelling mistake in the Vacant Planning Commission Seat section. Nancy Porambo said there should be a coma in a sentence in the same section. Louis Hall asked to put under the Suggestions and Recommendation section, review the Short-Term Rental Ordinance for any items Planning Commission would like added or amended. Motion carries 6-0.

Subdivision and Land Development (SALDO)

NONE

Ordinances

Short-Term Rental Ordinance – Amendment Recommendations – Louis Hall sent Planning Commission a copy of the New Hope Short-Term Rental Ordinance. He explained if you compare their STR Ordinance to the Borough's, there are a lot of items that need to be readdressed. Nancy Porambo asked if Alexis is still working on Code Enforcement. Secretary Klotz explained she is still doing that and Zoning, along with Dominic, who is sharing the duties of Code Enforcement and Parking Enforcement. Nancy Porambo would like to see someone working on Code Enforcement more. James Dougher said things seem to be lacking in both Zoning and Code Enforcement. He explained he still has not gotten his renewal permit for his Short-Term Rental. Secretary Klotz said he should have received it already because the list she currently has shown it was issued. She also explained the third-party company who does Zoning and Code Enforcement for the Borough, Bureau Veritas, is only contracted for about 15 hours a week. She explained Alexis only comes to the Borough one day a week and is currently still training the new Zoning Officer, Sandy. Louis Hall said he would like to see someone specifically designated to Code Enforcement. Nancy Porambo asked if there is something on Borough Council's agenda to further discuss the needs for Code Enforcement. Secretary Klotz said currently there is not. She explained right now the Code Enforcement duties are shared between Dominic, Alexis, and Sandy, but they also have other responsibilities besides Code Enforcement. She explained that Dominic is also only temporarily full-time, as he will be leaving in a few months to go into the Academy to become a Police Officer. Louis Hall asked when next year's budget is being planned and discussed. Secretary Klotz said the Borough Manager and Treasurer are currently working on budget numbers and the meetings would be scheduled sometime in late October and early November. Louis Hall said now is a good time for Planning Commission to get more involved and to make a recommendation to have more Code Enforcement. Nancy Porambo said she thinks the Short-term Rental Ordinance was prematurely adopted because there are many items needing to be addressed in it, such as requiring annual inspections. Louis Hall said it should be figured out how much time is actually needed for Code Enforcement, whether it be full-time or 20 hours a week. Nancy Porambo asked if there is a current list of Short-Term Rentals in the Borough. Secretary Klotz explained James Dougher has a current copy. Louis Hall asked if there really is only 58 Short-Term Rentals in the Borough. Secretary Klotz explained they are the ones that are legally operating and the ones that are operating illegally are being investigated. John McGuire said he thinks the ones that are operating illegally should be shut down. Secretary Klotz explained when an illegally operated Short-Term Rental is caught advertising online, they are issued a notice of violation to cease operating. Nancy Porambo asked if there are any illegally operating short-term rentals that are currently being addressed. Secretary Klotz explained there are and these property owners are being dealt with either with notices of violation or taking them to court. Louis Hall said Air B&B and VRBO should be providing municipalities with a list of short-term rentals that are advertising and operating within the Borough. James Dougher explained legally they cannot provide that list. When the County receives the Hotel Tax, there is no list of where the money is specifically coming from, they are just cut a check. He explained there is no way of knowing either if Short-Term Rentals are paying their hotel tax. James Dougher also explained when looking online for a Short-Term Rental, if one that is illegally operating is rented out, it won't show up on the listing, therefore one wouldn't know if searching for illegally operating ones. James Dougher agreed that it needs to be determined how many hours a week is needed for Code Enforcement. Louis Hall asked how much does the Borough pay an hour for Code Enforcement. Secretary Klotz said she wasn't sure off the top of her head and she would have to pull a bill that Bureau

Veritas submitted. It was then asked how much does the Borough spend processing the paperwork, etc. for Zoning, Short-Term Rentals, and such. Secretary Klotz explained the Borough does not make any money on the administrative portion. The Borough only charges what it costs to do the administrative work. It is illegal to charge more to make a profit. Joanne Klitsch asked how much the Borough charges for permits. Secretary Klotz explained the Borough charges $60.00 for residents and $120.00 for commercial. If someone gets caught without a permit and one was needed, that person is charged double. Joanne Klitsch asked if the Borough send out an invoice to all legally operating Short-Term Rentals to pay their fees. Secretary Klotz explained they are sent a reminder letter to submit their renewal applications and payment. It starts in April and generally goes through June. Afterwards, the fee is doubled, and come August if not renewed, that Short-Term Rental is considered out of compliance and illegally operating. Nancy Porambo asked if Borough Council was aware that Planning Commission is looking into amending the Short-Term Rental Ordinance. Secretary Klotz said they were aware. Nancy Porambo asked if they would be opposed if Planning Commission meet outside of the normal meeting to discuss possible changes to the Short-Term Rental Ordinance. Secretary Klotz said she doesn't believe they would have a problem with it and they should be doing their due diligence in reviewing all Ordinances. Secretary Klotz reminded Planning Commission to let her know when they want to meet as it would have to be advertised if more than three of the members would meet. Louis Hall said they would put together a three-person committee to review and discuss the changes.

Borough Council Items

Vacant Planning Commission Seat-recommendation to Borough Council – This was discussed during Visitor's Presen & Hearing of Visitors.

Banning Final Minor Subdivision dated August 25, 2022 (revised July 12, 2024) – This was approved at their August 8th meeting without any conditions.

Old Business

NONE

Suggestions or Recommendations

NONE

Adjournment

MOTION by Nancy Porambo, second by McGuire to **adjourn the meeting.** There were no comments. Motion carries 4-0. The meeting ended at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brooke Klotz
Borough Secretary