

**BOROUGH OF GREEN TREE  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
JANUARY 12, 2022**

**CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Green Tree Planning Commission met on Wednesday, January 12, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sycamore Room of the Green Tree Municipal Center, 10 West Manilla Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15220.

**ROLL CALL**

*Members Present:*

Cheryl Bakin, Chair  
Firas Abdelahad  
Al Erwin  
Robert McWilliams  
Christine Short  
Jessica Swiech  
James Turocy

*Also Present:*

Kate Diersen, Esq., Borough Solicitor  
Todd Carter, Code Enforcement Officer  
Kim Beck, Stenographer

**HEARING OF THE CITIZENS**

There was no one present who wished to be heard.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Ms. Bakin**

Ms. Bakin had nothing to report.

**REVIEW OF PROPOSED 2021 ANNUAL REPORT**

**Motion:**

**Mr. Erwin made a motion, seconded by Mr. McWilliams, to approve the Planning Commission 2021 Annual Report.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**REVIEW OF SOLICITOR'S CHANGES TO THE GREEN TREE ZONING CODE**

Mr. Turocy said that he had gone through the Solicitor's changes to the Zoning Code and had the following corrections:

p. 1 – "WHEREAS, Council has further found that it would be appropriate to added "Clinic" as a permitted use..." should be corrected to read "WHEREAS, Council has further found that it would be appropriate to **add** "Clinic" as a permitted use..."

**Article II**

p. 2 – 420-14 (a) "Overnight loading occurs in individual sleeping rooms with no cooking facilities." should be corrected to read "Overnight **lodging** occurs in individual sleeping rooms with no cooking facilities."

**Article V**

p. 4 – 1. F. "The minimum size of any dwelling unit shall be 600 feet." should be corrected to read "The minimum size of any dwelling unit shall be 600 **square** feet."

Ms. Bakin asked if Planning Commission wanted to approve the ordinance with the corrections that had been entered, or if they should see the ordinance one more time before approving it. Ms. Diersen stated that it was Planning Commission's decision regarding how they felt most comfortable moving forward. Mr. Erwin asked if Planning Commission had made all the recommended changes. Ms. Diersen said that it appeared as though they had made all the necessary changes. Once the ordinance is recommended to council, it will be sent to County Planning Review for another 45 days before it would be put forth for a final

vote. If Planning Commission moved to recommend the ordinance this month, it wouldn't be approved until at least March.

**Motion:**

**Ms. Short made a motion, seconded by Mr. Erwin, to recommend to Council the revised Zoning Code.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Bakin stated that she didn't have enough time to go over the Zoning Use Table in its entirety before the meeting, but that she believed there was an issue regarding home-based business. She said that home-based businesses, by state law, should be a permitted use in every zoning district in the borough. It was only listed as permitted in the Neighborhood Commercial and Office Commercial zoning districts in the revised Zoning Code. Ms. Diersen stated that she did not believe that the home-based business zoning had been changed for these revisions. Mr. Turocy said that Home-Based Business was only listed as permitted use in Neighborhood Commercial and Office Commercial in the original zoning code, and it was a specific change that was made by council at that time. Discussion continued regarding the original use table. Ms. Bakin said that she would like to take some extra time to look at the original table before taking a vote.

Ms. Diersen noted that taking some extra time to go over the zoning use table was a good idea. She said that while looking over the table this evening, she noticed that "High Rise Apartment" was listed on the table in two different sections; once with a multi-use dwelling, and once as a standalone item. The standalone item was an error that should be removed from the table.

Mr. Turocy asked Ms. Diersen if she was aware of any law that would require home-based businesses to be permitted in every district. Ms. Diersen said that she wasn't aware of that law but would look into it for Planning Commission. She suggested that Planning Commission look at the current definition of home-based business in the zoning ordinance, to make sure that there were no conflicts between the zoning ordinance and the use table. Mr. Turocy noted that there was currently a definition in the ordinance for home-based business no impact, but not home-based business. Discussion continued regarding the current definitions of home-based business and home-based business no impact.

Mr. Abdelahad asked if the revision date should be updated on the use table to reflect the current revision, as the date listed was from the original. Ms. Diersen suggested that the revision date be removed from the document, as the only important date was the date that the ordinance was adopted.

Ms. Bakin suggested that Planning Commission take more time to scrutinize the table and compare it to the definitions currently listed in the zoning ordinance. Mr. Turocy agreed, adding that it might be necessary to add another definition if a distinction between home-based business and home-based business no impact was found.

Ms. Diersen stated that the zoning ordinance and use table should be recommended together, so Planning Commission would need to wait to recommend the zoning ordinance until after the use table was completed.

**CONTINUED REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE PROPOSED PORTABLE STORAGE CONTAINER ORDINANCE**

Ms. Bakin asked if anyone had any corrections for the portable storage container ordinance. The following corrections were suggested:

p.2 – In Section B, “When the code enforcement officer concludes...” should be corrected to read “**If** the code enforcement officer concludes....”

p. 3 – The last sentence of Number 11 should be corrected from “any revisions of additions required by Green Tree...” to “Any revisions **or** additions required by Green Tree...”

p. 4 – Section A (1) The word “the” should be added to the sentence “Dumpster shall be emptied...” so it reads “**The** dumpster shall be emptied...”.

Ms. Bakin asked if Planning Commission needed to create a fee schedule, or if it would be created by council. Mr. Turocy stated that Planning Commission would determine the fee, and then it would be added to the borough’s fee schedule. Mr. Carter noted that council would be voting on a fee schedule. Ms. Bakin asked Mr. Carter if Planning Commission should make a recommendation on a fee schedule. Mr. Carter responded that it would be a good idea.

Planning Commission agreed to recommend the following fees:

- Large Dumpster on a residential lot - \$50
- Large Dumpster on a borough street - \$100
- Portable Storage Container on a residential lot - \$50

**Motion:**

**Mr. McWilliams made a motion, seconded by Mr. Erwin, to recommend to Council the Portable Storage Container ordinance, along with the proposed fee schedule.**

**Motion was carried unanimously.**

**CONTINUED REVIEW OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Ms. Bakin noted that at the last meeting, Ms. Short and Ms. Swiech had agreed to work together to talk with people from the local schools, including Aiken Elementary, St. Margaret’s, Bishop Canevin High School, and possibly Unity Preschool. She asked if there were any other schools or preschools that should be considered. Ms. Swiech suggested Crafton Children’s Corner, located in Parkway Center, and Tender Care Learning Center, in Foster Plaza.

Ms. Short said that she had reached out to Dr. Stropkaj, the superintendent of Keystone Oaks School District, who had asked her to reach out again after the beginning of the year. She stated that she was giving him a little bit of time before contacting him again.

Ms. Bakin said that she would like Ms. Short and Ms. Swiech to ask the schools, especially Aiken Elementary, if they are seeing an increase or decrease in the number of new students being enrolled in the borough. Mr. Abdelahad noted that his son’s kindergarten class started the year with two classes but had a third class added after a couple of weeks. When asked how many students were in his son’s grade, Mr. Abdelahad said he believed there were around 45 students. Ms. Bakin noted that this seemed like an encouraging number.

Mr. McWilliams and Mr. Abdelahad had volunteered to speak with the church organizations located in the borough. Ms. Bakin listed Unity Presbyterian, St. Margaret’s, the Church of the Latter-Day Saints, and New Apostolic as churches for Mr. McWilliams and Mr. Abdelahad to reach out to. She noted that even though Mt. Pisgah was no longer located in the borough, many members of the congregation still lived in Green Tree, so they could offer some important input for the comprehensive plan.

Ms. Bakin asked if a congregation had moved into the former Mt. Pisgah church yet. Mr. McWilliams said that there was extensive construction on the building being completed, and he believed that the new church would be opening sometime later this year.

Ms. Bakin said that herself and Mr. Erwin were focusing on real estate brokers and major real estate owners in the borough. She listed Kossman Development, PWC Associates, Burns and Scalco Realty, and the L.B. Foster Company in Foster Plaza as a few of the companies they would want to try and speak with. She stated that there were a few other major companies that she planned to add to this list. Ms. Bakin asked if any members of Planning Commission had advice on how to get input from the smaller business owners in Green Tree, such as All State, State Farm, and the Green Tree Hardware store. She asked if Planning Commission should reach out and speak with each business individually, or if they should all be invited to attend an upcoming meeting. Mr. Erwin stated that he could stop into some of the smaller businesses and see when they would be willing to meet with Planning Commission. Mr. Turocy suggested that the Rotary might be another valuable resource for businesses in the borough.

Ms. Bakin asked if the 2020 census data was available at this time. Mr. Turocy stated that he would ask Ms. Miller, the borough manager.

Ms. Bakin distributed a list of questions she had gathered from the survey that had been sent out earlier in the comprehensive plan process, to use as a starting point for the questions that should be asked to various organizations. She suggested that Planning Commission focus on the questions that required more of a response than just a simple yes or no, as an attempt to get more of a conversation going.

Ms. Bakin said that there have been several ideas, such as the summer concerts at the Farmers Market, that have been implemented as a direct result of suggestions given for the original comprehensive plan. She suggested that Planning Commission make sure that the residents understand that their suggestions are not going unnoticed. Mr. Abdelahad asked what Planning Commission planned to do with the suggestions they received from residents. Ms. Bakin said that Planning Commission would compile all the suggestions and compare them to the original comprehensive plan, to see what needed updated in the plan. Planning Commission would then decide which changes they would recommend to council.

Mr. Abdelahad stated that Planning Commission needed to clarify the intentions with the residents, so they didn't feel as though their suggestions were being ignored. He mentioned the ongoing complaints regarding the aesthetic of the businesses on Green Tree Road. Ms. Bakin stated that she had planned to talk to Ms. Miller regarding the possibility of there being any grants or streetscape money available to the borough. Mr. Turocy said that he had spoken with Ms. Miller, who was not aware of any grants at this time. Planning Commission had a discussion regarding vacant properties in the borough, the dangerous structure ordinance, and a property maintenance code.

Ms. Bakin noted that one of the biggest issues at the last public meeting involved the misperception that there were a lot of vacant commercial properties along Greentree Road. She said that she had spent some time on Greentree Road after the meeting and found very few vacant properties. Mr. Turocy said that he believed that the main complaint involved the aesthetic of the buildings, as opposed to vacant properties. Discussion continued regarding the aesthetic of Greentree Road.

Ms. Diersen stated that she had recently gone through the comprehensive plan process in another community. One of the most beneficial lines of questioning was asking residents and business owners what improvements they would like to see happen to bring in new residents and businesses. And, on the other side of that, what they found to be a hindrance to bringing in new residents and businesses. She noted that, they would receive a lot of similar answers, which would help Planning Commission learn where to direct their focus.

Ms. Bakin stated that she was made aware recently of a possible roundabout being put into Green Tree by PennDOT in the future. Mr. McWilliams said that he believed that project had been put on hold. Discussion continued regarding possible changes to streets, specifically on and off ramps, in Green Tree. Ms. Bakin suggested that Planning Commission touch base with PennDOT to get some information about future projects for the comprehensive plan. Mr. McWilliams suggested that Planning Commission invite PennDOT to an upcoming meeting to get their input. Ms. Bakin stated that she would reach out to the person in charge of District 11 at PennDOT.

Ms. Bakin said that during the original comprehensive plan, they had issues getting input from the youth in the community. She asked Ms. Short and Ms. Swiech if they could reach out to Aiken and Bishop Canevin to see if it would be possible to have a meeting with their student council or student ambassadors to gain some insight from the youth. Ms. Short said she would also reach out to Jen Mathie, the Recreation Coordinator, to ask if she had any resources. Planning Commission discussed other possible avenues for reaching the youth of the community, including reaching out to the Green Tree Athletic Association.

Ms. Bakin asked if there were any other groups or organizations in the borough that should be considered at this time. Mr. Turocy noted that City Vista has a large population of residents, and Planning Commission should try to reach out and get some insight from them. Ms. Short suggested putting some information in their community center as an attempt to reach out to more residents.

Mr. Abdelahad asked if anyone knew what the population of City Vista was. Ms. Bakin stated that she wasn't sure of an exact number, but she believed they had 300-400 units there. When asked, Mr. Turocy said that he believed City Vista was a mix of young professionals and families.

Ms. Diersen suggested that Planning Commission reach out and speak with the communities that border Green Tree. Ms. Bakin said that they were going to try and get copies of some of the neighboring communities' comprehensive plans, including Scott Township, Carnegie, Dormont, and City of Pittsburgh.

Mr. Turocy suggested that Planning Commission consider reaching out to Port Authority regarding transportation accessibility in the borough. Ms. Bakin said that she had worked with Port Authority in the past regarding the bus route on Greentree Road past her place of business. Discussion continued regarding current bus routes throughout the borough.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion:**

**Mr. Abdelahad made a motion, seconded by Ms. Swiech, to adjourn the meeting.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

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Cheryl Bakin, Chairman

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Firas Abdelahad, Secretary