

**BOROUGH OF GREEN TREE
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
JULY 14, 2021**

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Green Tree Planning Commission met on Wednesday, June 9, 2021 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:

James Turocy, Chair
Firas Abdelahad
Rebecca Chembars
Al Erwin
Ed O'Donnell

Also Present:

Louis A. Casadei, P.E., Borough Engineer
Deborah N. Gawryla, Stenographer

Absent:

Cheryl Bakin
Robert McWilliams

HEARING OF THE CITIZENS

There was no one present who wished to be heard.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - Mr. Turocy

Mr. Turocy said he had contacted the Borough Manager about using the 2020 census data for the comprehensive plan. She informed him that it has not yet been received. If the census data does not come in soon, the 2010 census data will have to be used instead. Mr. Turocy noted that the 2010 Comprehensive Plan used the 2000 census data in its report.

Mr. Turocy said that he had spoken with Mrs. Bakin who was in the process of putting together her information from the creation of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

June 9, 2021

Motion:

Ms. Chembars made a motion, seconded by Mr. Erwin, to approve the June 9, 2021 minutes as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VIDEO: The Implementable Comprehensive Plan

The Planning Commission viewed the Local Government Academy's video entitled, "The Implemental Comprehensive Plan." The video was narrated by Denny Puko, a planner from the Department of Community & Economic Development that offered various ways of approaching the development of a comprehensive plan.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Planning Commission members agreed that the video was informative and helpful. It provided some good ways to approach the development of a comprehensive plan. Mr. Turocy suggested that Mr. Denny Puko, the narrator of the video, be invited to come in and speak with Planning Commission. He said that he would like Planning Commission to also view another video entitled, "Creating the Implementable Comprehensive Plan," and he hoped that would be available for viewing at an upcoming meeting. He would talk with the Borough Manager about accessing this video. The Manager seemed to be amenable to Planning Commission's plans and suggestions.

Ms. Chembars said Planning Commission should begin seeking community input for the plan. Mr. Turocy said that Octoberfest would have been a good way to talk to residents, but the event has been canceled this year. He suggested using the Farmers Market and looking for other events or programs where residents could be contacted for input. Ms. Chembars said that Planning Commission should create several categories that might be important to the borough for individuals to provide their input.

Mr. Erwin said the 2010 Comprehensive Plan had an action plan with a number of items in Chapter 4. Upon review, Mr. Turocy said that a number of these items had not been addressed. Mr. Erwin said the creation of a public parking lot had been a high priority. He has noticed that sometimes the parking lot of the shuttered 7-Eleven was full at times and that could be a good location for a public parking lot. Mr. Casadei said that the borough had tried to purchase one of the buildings across the street from the shuttered 7-Eleven years ago to turn into a parking lot. As a municipality, it is only permitted to pay the assessed value of the property. The borough got an assessment on the property and offered it to the property owner who turned the offer down. The owners often want more than the assessed value. Discussion continued regarding the action items in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and some of the reasons they had not been addressed.

Mr. Erwin said that when he and other Planning Commission members had met with the Borough Manager they had discussed the need to improve the back end of the Greentree Cemetery. There are a lot of old graves that are grown over. The Borough Manager suggested that a group could be created to help clear that area.

Mr. Erwin suggested making improvements to the entrance to the Green Tree Nature Center, making it more visible and attractive. He suggested that the Green Tree Garden Club could be asked to help improve the entrance's appearance. Parking near the Nature Center is also an issue with cars parked in front of residents' homes nearby. Mr. Abdelahad said that the sign for the Nature Center entrance on Greentree Road doesn't make sense since the walking entrance is on Crestmont Avenue. Ms. Chembars said that there should be trail to the Nature Center that starts at the Greentree Road sign. Discussion continued regarding possible Nature Center improvements.

When asked, Mr. Turocy said that Planning Commission should begin to review and discuss the action plan from the 2010 Comprehensive Plan at the next meeting. Ms. Chembars suggested that four or five of the most important points could initially be determined. Discussion continued

regarding some of the ideas presented in the video and how they could be incorporated into Green Tree's Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Turocy said that Urban Communities, the group that is seeking to convert the Pittsburgh Plaza Hotel into apartments, was at the last Council meeting. They are headquartered in Arizona and have apartment communities in a number of locations. Mr. Casadei said that Urban Communities would be seeking a variance at the August 12, 2021 Zoning Hearing Board meeting. He suggested that Planning Commission members who are familiar with the new Zoning Code might wish to attend this meeting to shed light on the different dynamics between hotel guests and permanent residents and their impact on the community. Mr. Erwin said that developers are unable to combine the hotel rooms to create larger, fewer apartments because of the construction of the building itself. Mr. Casadei said the applicants have indicated that a hotel is not feasible on that property despite the other hotels in the vicinity. Discussion continued regarding the details of this proposed development.

Mr. Turocy said that Planning Commission should also look at some of the issues in the current Zoning Ordinance that the Borough Solicitor had suggested should be reviewed and revised.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

Mr. O'Donnell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Abdelahad, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

James J. Turocy, Chairman

Ed O'Donnell, Secretary

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