

**BOROUGH OF GREEN TREE
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
NOVEMBER 17, 2021**

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Green Tree Planning Commission met on Wednesday, November 17, 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
Cheryl Bakin
Al Erwin
Robert McWilliams

Also Present:

Todd Carter, Code Enforcement Officer
Deborah N. Gawryla, Stenographer
Kim Beck, Stenographer

HEARING OF THE CITIZENS

There was no one present who wished to be heard.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - Mr. Turocy

Mr. Turocy had nothing to report at this time.

Review to Solicitor's changes to the Green Tree Zoning Code

Mr. Turocy stated that Planning Commission had reviewed the Zoning Code changes from the Borough Solicitor as well as the addition of the details for high-rise apartments and are waiting for the Solicitor's reply. When it is received, Planning Commission will review it again for recommendation to Council.

Review of Portable Storage Container Ordinance

Mr. Turocy said he had received comments on this ordinance from Council that had been discussed at the last meeting. Some revisions had been made to the proposed ordinance and Mr. Turocy distributed copies of the revised ordinance to Planning Commission. Council had said that the ordinance limiting containers to a 14-day time period might be too short. It was suggested that container permits could be tied to the building permit for the duration of the construction or renovation. Additionally, the definition of small and large containers should be reviewed. The smallest container shown on the PODs website was about 17 cubic yards, which would make all of their containers considered to be large containers according to the ordinance. Council had also said that there was no reference to containers on commercial properties, but Mr. Turocy felt that the proposed ordinance was only for residential properties since it states in the first paragraph, "Whereas, Council has determined that the placement and location of Portable Storage Containers in any Residential District is a zoning use that is best regulated for the health, safety, and welfare of its residents." It does not cover commercial use of storage containers and dumpsters.

Mrs. Bakin asked if a separate ordinance should be created for commercial use. Mr. Turocy said that decision would be up to Council's discretion. As a recommending body, Planning Commission could consider whether to draft and create a separate ordinance for commercial portable storage

containers, but at this time Planning Commission should continue to review and address the ordinance for residential containers first. Discussion continued regarding the possibility of a separate ordinance for commercial construction.

Mr. Turocy asked for a review of the definitions for the portable storage containers. He said there would be a difference between the sizes of portable storage containers with Bagsters being considered a small dumpster or container and PODs and large dumpsters being considered a large container. PODs should not be permitted to be used as a personal shed for ongoing storage.

Mrs. Bakin said the separation of a small container of three cubic yards or less from a larger dumpster or POD was a good idea and Planning Commission should work on adjusting the time periods for the containers. She said Section 2 (A)(6) should be changed from 14 days to 30 days. Mr. Turocy said the type of container used in that section would be exclusively for a "move in or move out" situation, but the use of large containers for construction or renovation and would be tied to the length of the building permit. Mr. Erwin asked if the longer use of a container would be covered in Section (C)(1). Mrs. Bakin said that Item (C) states that a container may be placed on a residential lot without a permit for a period not to exceed 30 days. Mr. Turocy noted that Item (C)(1) references, "...the Portable Storage Container may remain on the residential lot shall be equal to the period of the duration to complete the work set forth in the Building Permit for the repair, renovation or reconstruction of any such structure on the residential lot."

Mrs. Bakin asked if there might be instances where there would be repairs that would not require a building permit. Mr. Carter said there could be instances where this situation may occur when there is carpeting, cabinet, dry wall, or window replacements. Discussion continued regarding these types of situations.

Mrs. Bakin said when Planning Commission initially started this review the types of portable storage containers were separated into smaller Bagster-type dumpsters versus big dumpsters and whether the dumpster was placed in the yard or on the street. Now it appears that the POD storage containers are also in the mix. She asked if PODs should be split into its own section. Discussion took place regarding the different uses for each of the containers being discussed.

Mr. Turocy stated the opening statement should be changed to read:

"An Ordinance of the Borough of Green Tree, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, amending Article V of the Planning and Zoning Code to add §420-64A and §420-65B to set forth provisions regulating the placement and use of Portable Storage Containers and Dumpsters in any residential district; setting requirements for permits and fees for the placement and parking of Portable Storage Containers and Dumpsters; and authorizing the amendment of fees by resolution."

Mr. Abdelahad asked who had established the section numbers. Mr. Turocy replied that he had changed them after the two types had been separated. Mr. Abdelahad said that §420-64 is Daycare Centers, Adult and Child and felt that §420-128 would be more appropriate. After a discussion, Planning Commission was not sure where the best place for this ordinance would be and decided that the numbering itself could be worked out later.

Mr. Turocy said there would be instances where a residence might need both a dumpster and a POD during renovations. Mr. Erwin asked if there would be a separate fee for each of them. Mr. Turocy

said that if the ordinance was expanded for small dumpsters, large dumpsters, and PODs separately then there should be separate fee for each. Discussion continued regarding ideas to help clarify the differences between small and large dumpsters and PODs.

Planning Commission decided that the proposed ordinance should be broken into regulations for three separate containers: Large Dumpster, Small Dumpster, and Portable Storage Containers (i.e., PODs). §420-64A in the draft, which needs to be correctly renumbered before completion, should have all references to "Portable Storage Container" changed to "Large Dumpster."

The definition of Portable Storage Container in Section 1 should be changed to Dumpster with the following revised definition:

"DUMPSTER - A portable temporary container for the storage of bulky waste, construction debris, refuse and like materials, or other storage device generally delivered or picked up by truck tractor, or other such vehicle, and used for the purpose of storing *debris of any variety*."

Detailed discussion took place regarding the length of time a dumpster should be permitted for a remodeling of a house when a building permit is not needed. Mr. Carter said there could be construction projects that could require a long period of time, but not need a building permit. Mrs. Bakin did not feel that 14 days for a dumpster was sufficient. Mr. Carter said it seems that the dumpster should be allowed for the duration of the length of the project, but consideration might be given for the need for a renewal of the permit every 30 days. Should the project be abandoned for some reason, a new permit would not be reissued. Mr. Abdelahad said the need to apply for a new permit every 30 days would help prevent residents from leaving a dumpster for an indefinite period of time.

When asked, Mr. Carter said a building permit could be active up to five years if work is continuing. If the work is abandoned, then the permit is revoked after it has been abandoned after six months.

After additional discussion, Planning Commission revised Section 2, Item (A)(2) to read, "Provided the **Large Dumpster** Permit Application is timely submitted, and the Permit Fee paid, the Borough Code Enforcement Officer may grant the Permit for a period not to exceed **30 days for the current permit of the Dumpster, subject to renewal by the Borough Code Enforcement Officer.**"

Discussion took place whether the police department should also review location of a Large Dumpster in this section. Mr. Turocy said that this section only refers to placement of a dumpster on an individual's private property, whether it is a yard or driveway. He did not feel that the police needed to be involved except for dumpster placement on a street and the Code Enforcement Officer could check the location and inform the resident if the dumpster created any hazards or problems from ruining a yard or creating problems for parking in a driveway.

After a discussion, Planning Commission agreed that Section 2, Item (A)(6) should be revised to change the permit for a total period from 14 days to 30 days.

Item (B)(3), which addresses the length of time a large dumpster can be on a street, is limited to 14 days. Planning Commission agreed that this shorter length of time was acceptable since it is a

different type or dumpster and used for a different situation. Mr. Carter said there was a portable storage permit form that would be available on the website after the ordinance was passed.

Mr. Abdelahab noted that Item (B)(15) had incorrectly put "...ten (7) days..." and it should be corrected to read, "...seven (7) days..."

Mr. Turocy stated that Item (C) covers the use of the dumpster during a catastrophic loss to the residence. This item indicates that even if there is a catastrophic loss and a large dumpster must be placed on the street all the requirements listed in Item (B) will still need to be followed.

Upon reviewing the next section 420-64B - Placement and Location of *Small Dumpsters*, Planning Commission agreed that small dumpsters, such as Bagsters, should not be permitted to be placed on any borough street. Item B was edited to read, "Small Dumpsters shall not be permitted to be placed on any Borough street," and deleting the rest of the item. Mr. Abdelahad felt that small dumpsters could be placed curbside for collection without being on the street. Mr. McWilliams asked about collection of small dumpsters at some of the houses along Noblestown Road since their front yards are all steep hillsides. Discussion continued whether it was practical for small dumpsters to be placed on the street since they need to be collected by Waste Management and Planning Commission concurred that they should not be permitted on streets and could be a hazard. Item B was revised to read, "Small Dumpsters shall not be permitted to be placed on *any* Borough, *County, or State-owned* street."

Mrs. Bakin said that there is now a definition for Dumpster and she asked if a definition could also be created for Portable Storage Containers, such as PODs, and add another section to the ordinance with similar requirements as for a Large Dumpster. Mr. Turocy said the ordinance heading should read, "Regulating the Placement and Use of *Dumpsters and Portable Storage Containers* in any Residential District."

Mr. Turocy said that under Section 1 §420-14 where (a) Dumpster, Large and (b) Dumpster, Small are both defined, an additional (c) Portable Storage Container should be added with the definition reading, "A portable container, generally delivered or picked up by truck, tractor, or other such vehicle and used for the purpose of storing material, furniture, equipment, supplies, and/or personal belongings of any variety." An additional section for Portable Storage Container should be added after those for Large Dumpster and Small Dumpster and should follow the same regulations for Large Dumpster regulations on residential lots.

Mrs. Bakin asked if Portable Storage Containers should be permitted on streets. Planning Commission felt that these containers should not be permitted on streets. Mr. Turocy said that portable storage containers could be kept on a property for the same amount of time as permitted in §420-54A (B) for large dumpsters. Mrs. Bakin said a portable storage container is often taller than the height of a large dumpster. Mr. Turocy said that a portable storage container, or POD, tends to store personal items during construction and residents would probably not want their personal items stored on the street. If a POD cannot fit on a resident's property then it probably not the right thing to use and they might want to consider renting a storage unit.

Mr. Turocy said that Item (B) for portable storage containers should use the Item (B) for the small dumpsters stating, "Portable Storage Containers shall not be permitted to be placed on any Borough, County, or State-owned street."

Mr. Turocy asked that the ordinance be revised to reflect the changes discussed this evening and they would review the ordinance at the next meeting for recommendation.

Discussion regarding Public Meeting results and continued review of the Comprehensive Plan

Mrs. Bakin said that the Public Meeting had been relatively calm. Mr. Turocy said it was nice to get the residents' opinions including some from newer residents to the borough. Mr. Turocy said that Planning Commission will need to begin creating the next online survey.

One of the comments from the survey stated, "There is a perception that there are too many empty storefronts along Greentree Road and many ugly, unkempt buildings and too few parking spaces." Mrs. Bakin said a similar comment had been submitted for the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. She said she traveled Greentree Road yesterday and could only find three vacant storefronts. Discussion continued regarding the Greentree Road businesses.

Mrs. Bakin said that although most of the business buildings are occupied, many of them look bad from the outside. Some Greentree Road businesses have difficult parking situations and that has continued to be an issue along Greentree Road. The perception seems to be that there is more vacant space than there really is and, as a result, there is not a need for more commercial space. The Greentree Road commercial district looks dirty and dingy. Mrs. Bakin asked what the borough could do to find Main Street grant money to improve Greentree Road's appearance and renovate the buildings. Mr. Turocy said that Potomac Avenue in Dormont recently went through the same issue and managed to get some funding to fix up Potomac. Mrs. Bakin suggested that the business owners in the area could be told that the appearance of the buildings continues to be a concern for the residents and the borough. Mr. Turocy said that would be a good outreach for Planning Commission to get cooperation from Greentree Road business owners. Discussion continued regarding ideas to improve the appearance and parking situations along Greentree Road's commercial district.

Mrs. Bakin said she had heard that PennDOT has plans for a major roundabout for Green Tree. Although many of PennDOT's ideas do not come to fruition, she said it would be worth the trouble to see what their plans might be. Planning Commission continued to review the list of suggestions that were made at the Public Meeting.

Mrs. Bakin said that two different residents had mentioned the idea of inviting microbreweries to Green Tree. Mr. Turocy said that microbreweries do draw business to an area. Discussion continued regarding other communities that have benefited from microbreweries.

Mrs. Bakin suggested that the next step should be to start corralling borough stakeholders, such as members of the school district, church leaders, real estate companies and developers, young people in the borough, etc., and get them together for a meeting seeking their direct input on what they envision for Green Tree or what they would like to see in the future. Mr. Turocy felt that they could get input from the Keystone Oaks superintendent who seems to be involved, as well as the Aiken principal, and invite a number of Green Tree school board members. Mr. Turocy said that there used to be a Junior Councilperson on the Green Tree Borough Council, but there has not been one for several years. Mrs. Bakin said there should be representatives from Guardian Angel Academy as well. She said it would be helpful for Planning Commission members to sit down individually with the priests or pastors and discuss the issues. Discussion continued regarding the various

churches in the borough and other stakeholders who could be asked to provide input for the Comprehensive Plan.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

Mr. Abdelahad made a motion, seconded by Mr. Erwin, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

James J. Turocy, Chairman

Al Erwin, Secretary

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