

The regular meeting of the Souderton Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 pm on the above date by Chairman Edward Huber. Other Commission members present included Jeffrey Gross, Calvin Munden and Andrew Schlosser. The meeting was attended by Borough Manager P. Michael Coll and Danielle Baer, AICP, Montgomery County Planning Commission. The meeting was also attended by Mayor Daniel Yocum and Borough Councillors Julie Munden and Donna Rogers.

Chairman Huber asked for consideration of the minutes from the last meeting on June 1, 2022. A motion was made by Andrew Schlosser and seconded by Calvin Munden, to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2022 meeting of the Souderton Planning Commission as presented. The motion was approved.

Danielle Baer, AICP, reported on a memorandum dated April 1, 2022 outlining the review and comments of the Montgomery County Planning Commission on the existing sign ordinance for Souderton Borough. The Montgomery County Planning Commission is recommending a number of revisions and additions to the sign ordinance.

Mayor Daniel Yocum commented that he believes Borough Council is suggesting that the sign ordinance should be simplified and made less restrictive. Borough Manager Michael Coll noted that a significant challenge with the current sign ordinance is with traditional box signs. Many merchants desire to use a box sign but the direction of the current ordinance prohibits a box sign in favor of other sign types.

Harry Boardman of 105 N. Main Street suggested that many business owners have traditional box signs that they are reluctant to replace because of current ordinance restrictions. Perhaps the current ordinance is counter-productive to the intent of improving signage in our downtown business district.

As part of the sign ordinance, the Planning Commission discussed murals. The Planning Commission requested a review of a few existing municipal regulations for murals. There probably should be a permit process for murals in Souderton Borough, but the extend of regulation is still uncertain. The Montgomery County Planning Commission will assemble some examples for further review and discussion.

Danielle Baer, AICP, next presented and reviewed a memorandum dated May 13, 2022 concerning the Small Wireless Facilities Deployment Act, which on June 30, 2021, was signed into law by Governor Wolf as Act 50 of 2021. The Act provides for the deployment of small cell wireless facilities to be installed on utility poles throughout a municipality. The Act does establish certain standards and processes to implement these facilities. The facilities are designed to help add capacity for 4G and 5G wireless. Small cell wireless facilities are permitted in all areas. Wireless providers can collocate facilities on existing poles, replace an existing utility pole or install new utility poles. Municipalities can develop objective design guidelines to minimize the aesthetic impact as long as they are technically feasible and nondiscriminatory. Limited fees

are also provided within the Act. To date Montgomery County has not had any small wireless facilities locate in any municipality. However, some Montgomery County municipalities are developing regulations in anticipation of this Act.

The Planning Commission noted that a first consideration is to define a “utility pole” to specifically exclude the location of these facilities on the decorative street light poles in the core downtown commercial district. The Planning Commission suggested that Danielle Baer create a base model for further review and discussion.

Danielle Baer next discussed a memorandum dated May 26, 2022 concerning the Medical Marijuana Act and how the current Zoning Ordinance addresses such facilities within Souderton Borough. The existing zoning does contain certain definitions regarding medical marijuana, the medical marijuana act and a medical marijuana dispensary. There is no definition for a medical marijuana grower and processor facility. Souderton, like most municipalities, permits medical marijuana dispensaries in the same fashion as retail establishments for prescription drugs. Planning Commission members suggested that this topic should be considered as a regional zoning issue. This will be brought to the attention of the Indian Valley Regional Planning Commission.

Danielle Baer provided a brief update on the progress of the Souderton Borough Revitalization and Economic Development Plan. The survey has closed and experienced a tremendous amount of participation. They are now working on tabulating the results and survey data.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Michael Coll
Recording Secretary