

PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
January 20, 2015

PRESENT:

Alan Greenberger, Chairman
Joseph Syrnick, Vice Chairman
Manny Citron, representing Richard Negrin
Bernard Lee, Esq.
Elizabeth K. Miller
Nancy Rogo Trainer
Saskia Thompson, representing Rob Dubow

ABSENT:

Patrick J. Eiding
Nilda Ruiz

Executive Director:
Deputy Executive Director:

Gary J. Jastrzab
Alan Urek

Chair Alan Greenberger convened the City Planning Commission meeting of January 20, 2015 at 1:05 pm.

1. Approval of the Minutes for the December 9, 2014 meeting.

Upon motion by Ms. Rogo-Trainer, and seconded by Ms. Thompson, the City Planning Commission approved the minutes for the December 9, 2014 meeting.

2. Executive Director's Update.

- River Wards District Plan meeting was held on Tuesday, January 13, 2015 at "The Loom Philly." There were about 100 people in attendance. There will be a report next month on the event.
- South District Public Meeting #2 will be on Monday, February 2, 2015 at CAPA at 901 South Broad St from 6:00 to 7:30 pm.
- Frankford Creek Brownfields Area Plan, Wednesday, February 11th at Mariana Bracetti Academy Charter School, 1840 Torresdale Avenue (6:30-8:00 pm).
- The "Power of the Plan for All" celebration is tonight at the Independence Visitors Center ballroom at 6th and Market Streets. Doors open at 5:30pm. The event will begin at 6:15pm. There will be snapshots of plan progress, recognition of CPI graduates, and the formal release of the *Philadelphia2035* calendar.
- Staff Recognition:
 - Marty Gregorski has been promoted to Director of the PCPC Development Division (CP 5/CP Manager)
 - Manny Citron, representing the Managing Director's Office (MDO) on the Commission, has been promoted to Deputy Chief of Staff in the MDO
- Report on Items Recommended for Administrative Approval:
 - a. Market East Urban Renewal Area, Ninth Amended Redevelopment Proposal, and Second Amended Urban Renewal Plan. To amend the Market Street East Urban Renewal Plan to facilitate the rehabilitation of the Gallery at Market East (the Gallery). The rehabilitation of The Gallery will support continued growth and opportunities for new development on and around Market Street east of City Hall as outlined by the *Philadelphia2035* Central District Plan (adopted 6/11/13) and the Market East Strategic Plan (adopted December 2009).
 - b. Redevelopment Agreement with James Close for the use of an adjacent lot at 509 Wolf Street as a residential side yard (Whitman).
 - c. Redevelopment Agreement with Timothy Lederer to construct a single family home at 1346 S. 4th Street (Jefferson Square).
 - d. Redevelopment Agreement with S.17th St. LLC for the construction of sixteen market rate bi-level residences at 1002-1016 S. 17th Street (South Central).
 - e. Redevelopment Agreement with Home Solutions Group, LLC to construct a single family residence at 1227 N. Leithgow Street (North Philadelphia).
 - f. Redevelopment Agreement with North Liberty Realty, LLC to develop off-street parking at 1355-59 Germantown Avenue in support of an existing business (North Philadelphia).

- g. Redevelopment Agreement with Chris Sheffield for the use of 2218-20R Emerald Street as a residential rear yard (New Kensington-Fishtown).
- h. Streets Bill No. 140971 authorizing Children's Hospital of Philadelphia to construct, own, and maintain various right-of-way encroachments at 2716 South Street (Introduced by Councilmember Johnson on December 4, 2014). This bill is for the CHOP proposal at 700 Schuylkill Avenue. PCPC recommended approval for rezoning bill (# 140859) on 11/19/2014. This encroachment bill is to allow the proposed plaza (including steps, planters and ramps) connecting the building to South Street bridge sidewalk; building foundation along Schuylkill Ave; as well as steps, ramps and planters within Bainbridge Street. All of the encroachment elements will leave sufficient walking zones that meet the minimum complete streets requirement.

3. AIA Pennsylvania Award Presentation for "Skyplane" provisions in the Zoning Code. Presented by George Claflen

4. Staff Presentation: Philadelphia 2035 South Philadelphia District Plan Update

Nicole Ozdemir provided an update on the South Philadelphia District Plan. The plan is currently in the 5th month and halfway through. The plan started in September. The area is directly south of the City's Metropolitan Center, also known as the Central District. The area has seen an increase in population since the 1950s. There is a smaller White population, but more Latino and Asians. The population is mostly youngish people between the ages of 20-44. Fifty percent of the district is residential. Forty percent of households do not own a car. This underscores a need for public transportation. Seven percent of residents bike to work. A major issue is that there is little walkable access to public green/open space, which is defined as a ½ mile distance or 10-minute walk. The area is unique in the way residents use the fronts of their houses, such as using the stoop as a "living room" area and creative holiday decorations. This is a characteristic we do not want to lose.

At the first public meeting, there were over 100 participants. There was a good geographic representation. At the meeting, existing parks were identified as a strength, and the lack of green open space and trees, especially in Point Breeze, were identified as weaknesses. An opportunity area would be the Bok Technical High School. Three focus areas seen as a strategic place to benefit the entire district are: 1) Point Breeze, 2) the municipal complex near 11th and Reed, and 3) the public transportation centers at Broad & Snyder and Broad & Oregon.

The second public meeting will be on February 9th, 2015 at 6pm at CAPA.

5. Information Only: Zoning Bill No. 140906 amending the Zoning Code to add a new section entitled 'UED Urban Experiential Display Overlay Control District'

Ian Litwin talked a little about the Urban Experiential Displays (UED) legislation, and introduced Thaddeus Bartkowski, who works for the sponsoring company, CatalystOutdoor.

Mr. Bartkowski showed a brief multimedia presentation on UEDs. The process has been going on for 2 ½ years. The UEDs will be 3D advertising displays. Each UED will be unique and related to its location. No UED can be placed within 900ft of each other. UEDs cannot be within 500ft of a residential area or a passive park. Each UED will need a minimum \$2 million investment. This money would be for the construction of the displays only. It does not include the cost of designing the display. The structures would be limited to areas zoned CMX-4 and CMX-5, and be extinguished between midnight and 6am.

The UEDs would provide a significant benefit to non-profits. \$5.2 million of revenue from each sign would go back to the non-profits over the course of 25 years. This is to provide these organizations with an economic supplement. The idea is that the non-profits will put the money back into the city.

Ultimately, the non-profit organizations that will benefit from the UEDs will have to be approved by the Commission.

The three current proposed UEDs are on private property, and all three private owners are in approval.

Ms. Rogo-Trainer commented that compared to previous large-format sign legislation on Market East, which sought to accomplish planning goals through required investment in a public improvement program, this legislation does not have a similar planning-related objective.

Ms. Miller asked if UEDs have been implemented in other cities.

Mr. Bartkowski answered that this would be the first implementation that uses this type of technology in North America. The legislation requires the use of a minimum of 3 different types of technology. The purpose is to not create just another sign. It is to create something that adds excitement and vibrancy, and ultimately, to create a viewer experience.

Since this was an “information only” presentation, the City Planning Commission took no action on this legislation. The Commission will make a recommendation on Bill No. 140906 at a future meeting.

6. Action Item: Acceptance of the Philadelphia Land Bank Strategic Plan and Disposition Policies

Alan Urek introduced the Land Bank plan, and mentioned as a reminder that the Commission “accepts” plans prepared by other organizations, and “adopts” plans prepared by PCPC staff.

John Carpenter, who is with the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, said they have been working with the City Planning Commission since the fall of 2013. The process fundamentally builds in the plans of PCPC into the Land Bank. The Land Bank will evolve each year.

Scott Page, who led the consulting team, presented seven goals that were organized into three categories.

- Goal 1 (citywide) – Return individual vacant lots and buildings to productive use. There are over 2,100 opportunities where vacant lots could be used as a side yard or a parking space.
- Goal 2 (focus zone) – Affordable Housing: Identify opportunities for affordable housing. Preserve opportunities for affordable housing.
- Goal 3 (focus zone) – Market Rate Housing: Focus on acquiring places in the city on the fringe of strong residential markets for redevelopment by private market developers
- Goal 4 (focus zone) – Economic Development: Identify opportunities that will help grow or facilitate commercial corridors.
- Goal 5 (focus zone) – Greening: Identify areas completely lacking in green or open spaces. Support open space and greening projects that will improve and repurpose vacant land.
- Goal 6 (operations) – Use data for clear and transparent operations: There are times when there are 2 or more proposals for the same place. A lot of questions have to be asked. Guidelines were created for such situations.
- Goal 7 (operations) – Actively market Land Bank properties: There are over 100 opportunities to assemble 10+ contiguous properties for redevelopment.

Mr. Urek commented that there never had been a more consistent alignment of such plans, and said the staff recommendation is “acceptance” of the plan.

Mr. Greenberger said that even with all the data and science available, there are still a lot of judgment calls. There isn't going to be a series of filters where the right answer will just pop out. The Land Bank is a tool to enable properties to move more efficiently. Don't let expectations run wild.

Upon motion by Ms. Rogo-Trainer, seconded by Ms. Thompson, the City Planning Commission accepted the Philadelphia Land Bank Strategic Plan and Disposition Policies.

7. Action Item: ZBA Calendar No. 23052 for the construction of a 65-unit residential development at 3811 Main Street

Matt Wysong stated this is ZBA Calendar No. 23052 for 3811 Main Street. It is in the Manayunk neighborhood. The purpose is to erect a 65-unit multi-family building. The existing zoning is ICMX, and the existing use is an auto repair garage. This is the third time the applicant has met with PCPC to discuss the design of the building and parking configuration.

In July 2014, the project was originally proposed as a 75-unit multi-family building with a 77-space parking structure. The parking structure would have assumed $\frac{3}{4}$ of the street frontage. In October 2014, the project changed to a 74-unit multi-family building with a 45 space parking lot. The change from a parking structure to a parking lot would give the building more prominence along the street front. During the October meeting, questions were brought up on the accuracy of the site elevation.

Now the proposed project is for a 65-unit multi-family building with a 59 space parking lot. The site elevation discrepancy has been rectified. The height of the building has been reduced on the left. Additional parking has been incorporated on the right on the second level to address the developer's parking concerns. The staff recommendation is approval with proviso to submit an earth disturbance plan prepared by a licensed engineer.

Joe Bergen, a resident who lives behind the property on Cresson Street, is opposed to this project because of the size. He mentioned that neighbors are also opposed to the project.

John Hunter, another neighborhood resident, is concerned about the steep slope, and the impact the project will have on Main Street. The number of units will increase the number of cars. He thinks parking should be at least a 1:1 ratio of units and parking spaces available. He does not like that parking is still along 50% of the frontage of the building. It is unsatisfactory in terms of pedestrian safety. He recommends that all parking be on the east side of the building. He is unhappy with the lack of information on the steep slope. He said that the egress from the building is still complicated. Until these issues are addressed, there is still no viable scheme that should be voted on.

Ms. Rogo Trainer commented that the scheme is really the same scheme from last time. It didn't significantly change. She still has reservations because of the steep slope.

Mr. Citron said he is still prepared to approve. He doesn't think it can get better, and what they have is pretty decent.

Mr. Syrnick said if approved, it should be approved with "suburban driveway" curb cuts, not driveways that look like streets. When the driveways look like that, it signals that cars have priority, not pedestrians, and it should be the opposite.

Mr. Greenberger said he is at a loss to say what else can be done to make it work. It is a hardship site, and he thinks the proposal has gotten better. He thinks that there is questionable economic viability, but it should be given a chance.

Upon motion by Mr. Citron, seconded by Ms. Thompson, the City Planning Commission approved ZBA Calendar No. 23052 subject to the following provisos:

- Submit an earth disturbance plan, prepared by a licensed engineer, to PCPC prior to the applicant's ZBA Hearing. This plan should include proposed grading for the site, and measures for the stabilization of steep slopes and sediment and erosion control.
- Ensure that the pedestrian entrance to the building meets ADA standards for accessibility.
- Include the required number of bicycle parking spaces, as required by the Zoning Code.
- Include a landscape buffer to provide visual screening of the proposed parking ramp from Main Street and the southern edge of the site;
- Ensure that the proposed utility rooms for electric and sprinkler service are located above the base flood elevation.

Furthermore, the Commission requests that the applicant make a good faith effort to create an evacuation plan and implement measures to prevent the loss of life in the event a flood. This can be accomplished the following physical improvements:

- Installation of a fence along SEPTA railroad tracks at the rear of the property;
- The dedication of an access easement along the rear of property that would allow for evacuation of the building in the event of a flood;
- Outdoor rallying points for residents located out of harm's way in the event of a flood.

There were two dissenting votes by Ms. Miller and Ms. Rogo Trainer.

8. Action Item: Zoning Bill No. 141030 amending the Zoning Code by adding a definition for "spraygrounds"

Paula Brumbelow stated this is Zoning Bill No. 141030, amending the Zoning Code by adding a definition for "spraygrounds." This bill has citywide impact. A "sprayground" would be defined as a recreation area, often in a public park or playground, which is designed for water play and has little or no standing water. There are currently 11 city-operated spraygrounds.

Upon motion by Mr. Syrnick, seconded by Ms. Miller, the City Planning Commission approved Zoning Bill No. 141031.

9. Action Item: Zoning Bill No. 141031 remapping an area bounded by 6th, Wood, and 2nd Streets, the Benjamin Franklin Bridge Access Road, and the Vine Street Expressway Ramp

Amy Miller stated this is Zoning Bill No. 141031 remapping an area bounded by 6th, Wood, and 2nd Streets. It is north of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge and south of the I-676 ramp. Some of the buildings in the area include the Painted Bride, the Chocolate Works, and the old St. Augustine Church. The purpose is to change the multi-family zoning to CMX-3. An amendment to the bill is to keep 401-19 Vine Street as ICMX. This remapping recommendation comes from the Central District Plan. The staff recommendation is approval for Bill No. 141031, as amended.

Joe Schiavo, a resident of the Old City area, asked about a poultry processing plant between Lawrence and 6th Street on Vine. He wanted to know the reason for changing the zoning to CMX-3 instead of leaving it industrial.

Ms. Amy Miller replied that the zoning is currently CMX-3, and the current use is non-conforming.

Upon motion by Mr. Citron, seconded by Mr. Syrnick, the City Planning Commission approved Zoning Bill No. 141031 with Amendment.

10. Action Item: Property Bill No. 140969 authorizing the City to convey of a parcel of land bounded by West Venango Street, Germantown Avenue, West Tioga Street, and North Watts Street to the Philadelphia Authority for Industrial Development for further conveyance

Matt Wysong stated this is Property Bill No. 140969 authorizing the conveyance of 3548 Germantown Avenue. The area is near Broad and Erie. The party at interest is the City of Philadelphia, Department of Public Property. The current zoning for the property is CMX-2, and the surrounding zoning is CMX-2. The property was a former firehouse. The proposed use is for an indoor food market. The staff recommendation is approval.

Jihad Ali, a Philadelphia resident, asked for the identity of the buyer of the property.

Mr. Wysong replied Firehouse Fare, LLC.

Upon motion by Ms. Thompson, seconded by Ms. Miller, the City Planning Commission approved Property Bill No. 140969.

Mr. Greenberger adjourned the City Planning Commission Meeting of January 20, 2015 at approximately 3:00 pm.

SUMMARY

1. Approval of the Minutes of the December 9, 2014 meeting. **Approved**
2. Executive Director's Update
3. AIA Pennsylvania Award Presentation for "Skyplane" provisions in the Zoning Code (Presented by George Claflen).
4. *Staff Presentation: Philadelphia2035* South Philadelphia District Plan Update (Presented by Nicole Ozdemir).
5. *Information Only:* Zoning Bill No. 140906 amending the Zoning Code to add a new section entitled 'UED Urban Experiential Display Overlay Control District (Introduced by Councilmember Squilla on November 13, 2014; PCPC requested an additional 45 days to review on December 9, 2014; Introduced by Ian Litwin; Presented by Thaddeus Bartkowski, CatalystOutdoor). **Approved**
6. *Action Item:* Acceptance of the Philadelphia Land Bank Strategic Plan and Disposition Policies (Introduced by Alan Urek; Presented by John Carpenter, Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority). **Approved**
7. *Action Item:* ZBA Calendar No. 23052 for the construction of a 65-unit residential development at 3811 Main Street (ZBA Hearing Date TBD; Presented by Matt Wysong). **Approved**
8. *Action Item:* Zoning Bill No. 141030 amending the Zoning Code by adding a definition for "spraygrounds" (Introduced by Councilmember Jones on December 11, 2014; Presented by Paula Brumbelow). **Approved**
9. *Action Item:* Zoning Bill No. 141031 remapping an area bounded by 6th, Wood, and 2nd Streets, the Benjamin Franklin Bridge Access Road, and the Vine Street Expressway Ramp (Introduced by Councilmember Squilla on December 11, 2014; Presented by Amy Miller). **Approved**
10. *Action Item:* Property Bill No. 140969 authorizing the City to convey of a parcel of land bounded by West Venango Street, Germantown Avenue, West Tioga Street, and North Watts Street to the Philadelphia Authority for Industrial Development for further conveyance (Introduced by Councilmember Greenlee for Council President Clarke on December 4, 2014; Presented by Matt Wysong). **Approved**