

PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
March 17, 2015

PRESENT:

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

Executive Director:
Deputy Executive Director:

Gary J. Jastrzab
Alan Urek

Chair Alan Greenberger convened the City Planning Commission meeting of March 17, 2015 at 1:05pm.

1. Approval of the meeting minutes for February 17 and 27, 2015.

Upon motion by Ms. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Citron, the City Planning Commission approved the minutes for the February 17 and 27, 2015 meetings.

2. Executive Director's Update.

- CDR Meeting will be on Tuesday, April 7, 2015 at 1:00pm. There should be at least 2 cases.
- The next commission meeting will be on Tuesday, April 28, 2015.
- CPI spring semester applications will be accepted through the end of the month.
- River Wards District 2nd Public Meeting will be on Monday, March 30, 2015 from 6:00-7:30pm at the Horatio B. Hackett Elementary School at 2161 E. York Street.
- South District 3rd Public meeting will be on Thursday, April 16, 2015 from 6:00-7:30pm at the Philadelphia Performing Arts Charter School at 2407 S. Broad Street.
- Staff Recognition:
 - New staff- Ron Bednar, Development Division
- Redevelopment Items for Administrative Approval
 - a. Use of an adjacent lot at 529 Winton Street as a residential side yard
 - b. Use of an adjacent lot at 1642 Point Breeze Avenue as a residential side yard
 - c. Use of 2310-2314 North Marshall Street to expand the play area of an existing playground
 - d. Construction of a 3-story, 2-family structure at 2550 Emerald Street
 - e. Use of an adjacent lot at 1733 N. 31st Street as a residential side yard
 - f. Rehabilitate vacant structure at 5852 Race Street for use as single family rental unit
 - g. Rehabilitate vacant structure at 5146 Wyalusing Avenue for use as single family rental unit
- Legislative Items for Administrative Approval
 - a. Zoning Bill No. 150145
 - b. Streets Bill No. 150089
 - c. Streets Bill No. 150092
 - d. Streets Bill No. 150094
 - e. Property Bill No. 150161
 - f. Property Bill No. 150169

3. Staff Presentation: Frankford Creek Brownfields Area-Wide Plan

John Haak stated this is an update on a project started in 2013 covering Bridesburg and parts of the Frankford and Juniata Park neighborhoods adjoining Frankford Creek. We hope to be wrapping up this summer. We deal with a lot of brownfields in Philadelphia. The study area overlaps with the River Wards Planning District for which we are now preparing a *Philadelphia2035* district plan. Mr. Haak introduced Sean Garrigan from Stromberg Garrigan Associates.

The EPA created the Brownfields Area Wide Plan program in 2010. Instead of focusing only on the environmental contamination of specific sites, this program focuses on multiple properties in large areas that have been impacted. These areas have a real or perceived environmental aspect that prohibits redevelopment. The Frankford Creek project will focus on redevelopment visions and various aspects of infrastructure. The project recognizes the environmental justice aspects of brownfields.

Since the beginning of the public meetings, the team has taken all the information gathered and prioritized factors. The public strongly desires open space or a greenway along the riverfront. The team has been evaluating different opportunities for this. They are reviewing available data to make sure this vision aligns with reality.

All information is available on <www.frankfordcreekbrownfields.com>. The plan is scheduled to be completed by midsummer 2015. The intention is for the plan to make specific recommendations, and identify what federal resources are available to help fund implementation.

4. Action Item: Bartram's Mile Sidepath Review

Mr. Syrnick recused himself from this item.

Jeannette Brugger stated this is a review of Bartram's Mile Sidepath. A sidepath is an 8 to 12-foot asphalt path that is both a sidewalk and a bike trail. The sidepath is only a portion of Bartram's Mile; the rest is off-road. The sidepath will be between 49th and 51st Streets on Botanic Avenue. Currently, there is no sidewalk on either side. There will be a pedestrian roundabout and curb cuts. The staff recommendation is approval.

Upon motion by Mr. Eiding, seconded by Ms. Miller, the City Planning Commission approved Bartram's Mile Sidepath.

5. Action Item: Redevelopment Agreement with BMK Properties LLC, for 14 single-family homes on the 900 and 1000 blocks of North Marshall Street

David Fecteau stated this is a redevelopment agreement with BMK Properties LLC for 12 properties in the 900 and 1000 blocks of North Marshall Street. The properties include 942, 948, 950, 962, 981, 983, 985, 993, 995, 996-998, 1010, and 1012 N. Marshall Street.

The land is all vacant. There will be a \$200,000 disposition price. The homes will be made available to families who make 80-100% of the area median income. There is a charter school down the block. The different house sizes in the proposal are due to the different lot sizes. Staff recommendation is approval of the redeveloper selection.

Michael Youngblood, a resident of Philadelphia, asked if the redeveloper intends to tear down the charter school in order to build the houses.

Mr. Fecteau replied the applicant is simply asking for permission to buy the vacant land.

Upon motion by Mr. Eiding, seconded by Mr. Citron, the City Planning Commission approved the redevelopment agreement with BMK Properties.

6. Action Item: Subdivision of 1301 South Columbus Boulevard into two parcels to enable trail development

Sarah Chiu stated this is a subdivision of 1301 South Columbus Boulevard into two parcels to enable trail development. The area involved is behind existing buildings. The proposed Parcel A includes 2 piers.

There is a mandate to have a 6-mile trail from Oregon Avenue to Allegheny Avenue. DRWC seeks to acquire the trail area back from private facilities. They are already in control of Pier 53. The ownership group is supportive of this subdivision. Staff recommendation is approval.

Upon motion by Ms. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Eiding, the City Planning Commission approved the subdivision to 1301 South Columbus Boulevard into two parcels to enable trail development.

7. Action Item: Zoning Bill No. 150124 remapping the area bounded by Kensington Avenue, and Letterly, Jasper, and Hagert Streets

Dave Fecteau stated this is Zoning Bill No. 150124 remapping the area bounded by Kensington Avenue, and Letterly, Jasper, and Hagert Streets. This bill was introduced by Councilman Oh on behalf of Councilman Squilla.

The area is currently I-2, and the proposed zoning is IRMX. Proposed is a residential unit with commercial ground floor and on-site parking. The party of interest also wants to register the property on the National Register of Historic Places. The building had been used in recent years to breed and sell exotic fish. The empty blocks around the area were due to fires. The surrounding area is mostly residential. Staff recommendation is approval.

Upon motion by Mr. Eiding, seconded by Mr. Syrnick, the City Planning Commission approved Zoning Bill No. 150124.

8. Action Item: Zoning Bill No. 150168 revising the provisions of the “IRMX” Industrial Residential Mixed Use zoning classification

Andrew Meloney stated this is Zoning Bill No. 150168 revising the provisions of the “IRMX” Industrial Residential Mixed Use zoning classification.

IRMX is a district created in the new Zoning Code promoting compatible industrial and residential development, and that is being used in the citywide remapping process. Some problems were noted with the IRMX district, including that it allowed, but did not require mixed uses. This could lead to development as townhouse and multifamily buildings only, so it would really be mostly residential, not mixed-use.

The following are some of the proposed changes:

Use Standards:

- Non-residential uses would be required. 50% of the ground floor area would have to be industrial, or 60% of the ground floor area would have to be some other non-residential use.
- No vehicle sales. This is not meant to be an auto-oriented district.
- Take-out restaurants would require a special exception.

Dimensional Standards:

- Reduce lot coverage to 80% on corners and 75% in the middle of the block.
- Setback required for buildings on streets less than 35 feet in width.
- A height bonus would be given for buildings with 50% ground floor area being industrial.

Parking Standards

- Reduce the parking requirement to be in line with other mixed-use districts.
- Loading standards would be more amenable for light (rather than heavier) industrial uses.

Any pre-existing structure would be grandfathered in this classification.

Upon motion by Mr. Eiding, seconded by Mr. Syrnick, the City Planning Commission approved Zoning Bill No. 150168.

9. Action Item: Zoning Bill No. 150091 creating the “/WWA West Washington Avenue Overlay” and prohibiting selected uses along the Washington Avenue corridor from Broad to 25th Streets

Ian Litwin stated this is Zoning Bill No. 150091 creating the “/WWA West Washington Avenue Overlay,” and prohibiting selected uses along the Washington Avenue corridor from Broad to 25th Streets. This bill was introduced by Councilmember Johnson.

The vast majority of the area is I-2. This would prohibit a series of uses in I-2. We have been working to find an appropriate solution for this corridor. The overlay is a “do no harm” measure that would prohibit egregious industrial use.

Staff recommended approval, as amended, with further recommendations from the Commission members that comprehensive remapping occur and that the /WWA overlay be repealed when the remapping is enacted.

Tiffany Green, a resident of Philadelphia, said she doesn’t understand IRMX. Every area doesn’t have to be mixed-use. The remapping process should be more of a “sit-down and talk” versus looking at poster boards. She didn’t feel African Americans were well-represented in public meetings. The public meetings should be more accessible.

Steve Cobb, of Councilmember Johnson’s staff, expressed the District Councilmember’s support. He stated that we might not know exactly what stakeholders want, but we are confident we know what they don’t want. No one wants a storage facility across from their homes. We’ve seen what happened in Southwest Philadelphia with auto and salvage facilities. They can be blighting uses.

Upon motion by Ms. Rogo Trainer, seconded by Mr. Eiding, the City Planning Commission approved Zoning Bill No. 150091.

10. Action Item: Zoning Bill No. 150170 revising requirements for accessory signs, in the area bounded by Juniper Street, East Passyunk Avenue, and Mifflin Street

Paula Burns stated this is Zoning Bill No. 150170 which will amend the Zoning Code for the area bounded by Juniper Street, Passyunk Avenue, and Mifflin Street, and was introduced by Councilman Squilla on March 5, 2015. The zoning for this block is zoned commercial mixed-use and residential single-family attached homes.

The bill would permit a building to have an accessory sign extend above the roofline of a commercial structure. The sign may be internally illuminated, cannot exceed 90 square feet, and may only have nine feet located above the roofline.

This bill is in response to a new sign located at the corner of Juniper and East Passyunk Avenue for a new restaurant. The Zoning Board of Adjustment reviewed this application in November 2014 and denied the request for variance. The applicant could have appealed that decision within 30 days, but did not do so. Instead, the applicant installed the sign without a permit, and is now seeking legislative approval after he was cited in violation from Licenses & Inspections.

Staff recommendation is not to approve this bill. The sign is out of character with the surrounding properties and not supported in any district of the zoning code.

Mr. Greenberger stated that he does not have a problem with the sign itself, but does not want the Commission to reward illegal action as a matter of principle.

Ms. Rogo Trainer concurred.

Upon motion by Mr. Syrnick, seconded by Mr. Eiding, the City Planning Commission recommended that Zoning Bill No. 150170 not be approved.

11. Action Item: Streets Bill No. 150121 legalizing an existing masonry and concrete patio encroaching on the public right-of-way at 214 West Sergeant Street

Sarah Chiu stated this is Streets Bill No. 150121, legalizing an existing masonry and concrete patio encroaching on the public right-of-way at 214 West Sergeant Street.

The encroachment is about 2 feet 3 inches above the sidewalk, and extends about 2 feet and 10 inches into the sidewalk, leaving approximately 3 feet of sidewalk for pedestrians. The recommended sidewalk width for this street is 5 feet. This encroachment was done without the necessary approvals.

Staff recommendation is not to approve this bill. The encroachment was done without a permit, and it creates a substandard sidewalk width.

Upon motion by Mr. Citron, seconded by Mr. Eiding, the City Planning Commission recommended that Streets Bill No. 150121 not be approved.

Mr. Greenberger adjourned the City Planning Commission Meeting of March 17, 2015 at approximately 3:00pm.

SUMMARY

1. Approval of the meeting minutes for February 17 and 27, 2015.
2. Executive Director's Update.
3. Staff Presentation: Frankford Creek Brownfields Area-Wide Plan (Presented by John Haak and Sean Garrigan, Stromberg Garrigan Associates)
4. Action item: Bartram's Mile Sidepath Review (Presented by Jeannette Brugger).
Approved
5. Action Item: Redevelopment Agreement with BMK Properties LLC, for 14 single-family homes on the 900 and 1000 blocks of North Marshall Street (Presented by David Fecteau).
Approved
6. Action Item: Subdivision of 1301 South Columbus Boulevard into two parcels to enable trail development (Presented by Sarah Chiu).
Approved
7. Action Item: Zoning Bill No. 150124 remapping the area bounded by Kensington Avenue, and Letterly, Jasper, and Hagert Streets (Introduced by Councilmembers Squilla and Oh on February 19, 2015; Presented by David Fecteau).
Approved
8. Action Item: Zoning Bill No. 150168 revising the provisions of the "IRMX" Industrial Residential Mixed Use zoning classification (Introduced by Councilmembers Squilla and Johnson on March 5, 2015; Presented by Andrew Meloney).
Approved
9. Action Item: Zoning Bill No. 150091 creating the "WWA West Washington Avenue Overlay" and prohibiting selected uses along the Washington Avenue corridor from Broad to 25th Streets (Introduced by Councilmember Johnson on February 12, 2015; PCPC requested an additional 45 days for review on February 17, 2015; Presented by Ian Litwin). **Approved**
10. Action Item: Zoning Bill No. 150170 revising requirements for accessory signs, in the area bounded by Juniper Street, East Passyunk Avenue, and Mifflin Street (Introduced by Councilmember Johnson on March 5, 2015; Presented by Paula Burns). **Not Approved**
11. Action Item: Streets Bill No. 150121 legalizing an existing masonry and concrete patio encroaching on the public right-of-way at 214 West Sergeant Street (Introduced by Councilmember Quinones-Sanchez on February 19, 2015; Presented by Sarah Chiu).
Not Approved