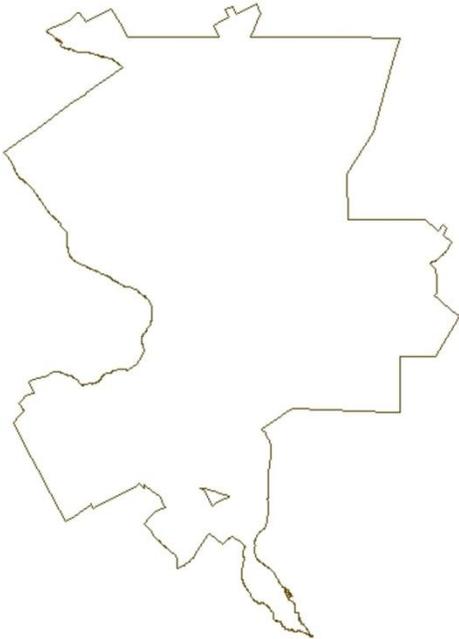


City of Reading  
PLANNING COMMISSION



2013  
ANNUAL REPORT



# CITY OF READING, PENNSYLVANIA

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PLANNING COMMISSION  
815 WASHINGTON STREET  
READING, PA 19601-3690  
(610) 655-6443

February 28, 2014

Francis G. Acosta, President  
City Council  
Room 2-24, City Hall  
815 Washington Street  
Reading, PA 19601-3690

Dear President and members of City Council:

In accord with Section 207 of the *Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code* (Act 247 of 1968, as reenacted and amended), the City of Reading Planning Commission respectfully submits its Annual Report for 2013. The Report outlines the Commission's activities throughout the year.

The Planning Commission will continue to administer the City's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, and those other functions delegated to it, in an effort to improve the quality of life in the City of Reading.

Sincerely,

Andrew W. Miller  
Planning Office



## **SUMMARY**

Section 207 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires the Planning Commission (the ‘municipal planning agency’) to keep a full record of its business and submit an annual, written report of those activities to City Council (the ‘governing body’), by March 1st of the following year.

The City of Reading Planning Commission held ten (10) regular monthly business meetings in 2013. The meetings convened on the fourth Tuesdays of those months in Room 1-06 (the “Penn Room”) of City Hall. The scheduled January 22nd and December 17th meetings were cancelled. The complete record of the Commission’s regular meeting activity is logged in the official written minutes, on file in the Planning Office and available on the City’s website. Additionally, recordings of each meeting have been catalogued in digital audio (.wma) format.

This report was reviewed, and approved for its general content by the Planning Commission at its February 25, 2014 meeting (resolution #2-2014).

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Written reviews, identifying defects and corrections required by the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, as well as the suggestions and opinions of the Planning Office staff, were prepared by the Planning Office and sent (by email, whenever such addresses were available) in response to all qualified applications for subdivision and/or land development. Certified copies of approved and recorded plans are on-file in the Planning Office.

## **SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT**

The Planning Commission’s primary role continues to be the administration and enforcement of the City’s Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (now Chapter 515 of the ‘Codified Ordinances’, pursuant to City Council’s Bill Nos. 35-2013 and 36-2013). What follows is a list and brief summary of the proposals brought before the Commission in 2013, organized first by category, then chronologically. Only those proposals having satisfied the preliminary-plan application requirements, at a minimum, have been included in the narrative. For an exhaustive listing of all business brought before the Commission, including proposals in the ‘sketch’ phase and any since withdrawn, see the “2013 Activity Summary”, attached, or the meeting minutes. Requests for building permitting and occupancy information (*i.e.* permit number and dates) were not answered.

### **COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL**

#### **219 Buttonwood Land Development (Dollar General)**

First presented at the February 26th meeting, this plan, for a 9203-square-foot retail store and 30 off-street parking spaces proposed for that parcel known as 219 Buttonwood Street, was granted final approval at the May 28th meeting (resolution #15-2013). It replaces the former Argo Furniture Company building destroyed in a March 2011 fire, and cleared by the Redevelopment Authority. Other prior uses included oil companies and service stations, prompting the developer to undertake an environmental assessment, resulting in the removal of an underground tank and its piping. The store itself is a floor plan typical of the franchise, and left room on this 1.22-acre parcel for both the required off-street parking and a generous landscaping design, enough to accommodate several shade trees at maturity. A reduction in impervious surface cover, soil amendments and vegetated infiltration swales satisfied the stormwater-planning obligations. Improvements in emergency access were provided at the request of the Fire Marshal. The plan was recorded with the Berks County Recorder of Deeds on June 11th, as Instrument No. 2013024522. The business appears to be open and operating.

*developed by:* MBC Development LP (Miller Brothers Construction)... *designed by:* Bogia Engineering Inc.

#### **Kutztown Road Retail**

First presented at the March 26th meeting, this plan, for an 8800-square-foot building adjacent to the existing retail strip – the ‘Shops at Hiesters Lane’, that replaced the one-time Burlington Coat Factory – and an additional 24 off-street parking spaces at that parcel known as 1920 Kutztown Road – with the annexation of 1854 Kutztown Road – was approved at the April 23rd meeting (resolution #9-2013). Rather than simply adding to the existing structure, a four-foot gap was left between them due to differences in structure and foundation design. Some utility services were extended from the existing building, while others came by new laterals. It made way for several additional

tenants, including a Subway restaurant, a doctor relocating his office from Albright College's Rockland Center, and the Berks County Workforce Investment Board, the latter complimenting the local office of Pennsylvania CareerLink that relocated to the original part of the mall in June. The combined property totals 4.05 acres. The plan was recorded with the Berks County Recorder of Deeds on July 2nd, as Instrument No. 2013028102. The consolidating deed had already been recorded on March 15th, as Instrument No. 2013010526. Construction was already well underway by late April. It appears that the tenants are open for business, with one vacant space remaining.

*developed by:* Kutzfactory LP (Shuman Development Group)... *designed by:* Ludgate Engineering Corporation

#### **Café Terrace (Sweet Street Desserts)**

This plan, for a 747-square-foot expansion of the restaurant part of the manufacturing facility on that parcel known as 722 Hiesters Lane, was approved at the June 25th meeting (resolution #20-2013). The approval would be more accurately described as a *waiver*, given the size and scope of the project. Originally intended as an 'outlet', the café had gained in popularity, necessitating additional space already at a premium for the production facility. The added area was primarily an outdoor dining area; a cantilevered deck with sail-cloth-like sunshades, furniture and landscaping enhancements. An adjacent hydraulic lift will provide handicapped accessibility. It didn't involve the installation of any new utility services, nor many of the other considerations typical of new land development and stand-alone buildings. A concern for the integrity of an adjacent storm sewer was allayed by consultation with the same geotechnical engineer that had designed the modified foundation for Sweet Street's 2010 'R&D Building Addition' project. The plan *was not* recorded, at the consent of the Planning Commission, in exchange for a set of the latest revisions for the City's files. The deck is presently under construction.

*developed by:* Sweet Street Desserts Inc... *designed by:* Quercus Studio LLC

#### **New Wire Cleaning Line Building, Building 154 (Carpenter Technology)**

First presented at the June 25th meeting, this plan, for a 21,000-square foot building housing a relocated coil-cleaning operation on that parcel known as 1001 Schuylkill Avenue (their 'west shore' property), was granted final approval at the September 24th meeting (resolution #29-2013). Approval was somewhat delayed while Carpenter waited on an 'air quality' permit from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. Several waivers had been granted in the meantime, consistent with those historically granted for Carpenter projects. The sections waived require data and calculations relative to the entire property, the overall size of which presents a hardship. The building would be squeezed in among existing buildings related to the coil-production process, and atop existing asphalt surfacing. It included an open, but roofed area for the staging and sheltering of finished product. The plan was recorded with the Berks County Recorder of Deeds on September 30th; Instrument No. 2013041648.

*developed by:* Carpenter Technology Corporation... *designed by:* SSM Group Inc.

#### **RDG North Reading Cell Site (Verizon Wireless)**

First presented at the September 24th meeting, this plan, for a 110-foot telecommunications tower, a 195-square-foot equipment shelter, and related equipment at that parcel known as 601 Spring Street, was approved at the November 26th meeting (resolution #35-2013). It will be located on the vacant part of Yeager Supply's property at the northeast corner of North 6th and Spring streets. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) approved the intermittent use of the existing driveway without a new 'highway occupancy' application. At the Commission's request, the November revisions showed additional landscaping framing the driveway entrance. The plan was recorded with the Berks County Recorder of Deeds on February 25, 2014; Instrument No. 2014005646. Construction has yet to begin.

*developed by:* Cellco Partnership (Verizon Wireless)... *designed by:* CMC Engineering

#### **Weigh-Up Room Addition (AkzoNobel)**

The Planning Office staff presented this plan at the November 26th meeting, after learning of it at a 'OneStopShop' meeting two weeks earlier, and recommended a 'small project' waiver based on its size. It proposes an 812-square-foot addition to the rear (the railroad side) of an already-over-83,000-square-foot AkzoNobel powder-coating production facility at that parcel known as 1156 Clarion Street. Intended to accommodate aluminum powder – a potential explosive hazard – the construction will include several blast-resistant and 'tethered' features. The Planning Commission granted the waiver (resolution #37-2013). The plan was not recorded, at the consent of the Planning Commission, in exchange for a set of the latest revisions for the City's files.

*developed by:* Akzo Nobel Coatings Inc.... *designed by:* Muhlenberg Greene Architects Ltd.

### **Jet Set Restaurant Parking Area**

This plan, also covered in the 2011 and 2012 reports, proposed a 28-space surface parking lot on that 0.2 acre known as 109 Peach Street and 116 South 9th Street, required by the Zoning Hearing Board in July 2011 as a condition of approving the adjacent restaurant (Appeal No. 2011-27). After several incremental extensions of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code's deadlines, an indefinite extension was provided in June 2012 pending the resolution of ownership/lease issues and a highway-occupancy permit for an already-constructed driveway. At the August 27th meeting, this year, the plan was again presented by a newly-retained design engineer, but without any apparent progress on the unresolved issues. And the prior approval of the Berks County Conservation District had since expired. The cycle of extension requests began anew. The restaurant continues to operate, without the requisite off-street parking, though the lots appear to be used for the purpose if only in an unfinished state. The plan was presented again at the February 25, 2014 meeting, where the project manager reported that applications were under review by both the Conservation District and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT).

*developed by:* Jet Set Restaurant LLC... *designed by:* DH Enterprises Inc.

## **RESIDENTIAL**

### **315 Pear Street Subdivision**

First presented at the October 22nd meeting, this plan, involved a subdivision of that 1895-square-foot parcel known as 315 Pear Street, and annexations of 350 square feet to 133 Elm Street and the remaining 1545 square feet to 135 Elm Street. It was proposed as a solution to a vacant space left from a home that had been demolished following a fire, and donated to Our City-Reading. The odd shape resulting at 135 Elm elicited some questions from the Commission members, who would have preferred a more-conventional division of the vacant parcel. They nonetheless granted final approval at the November 26th meeting (resolution #36-2013). The plan was recorded with the Berks County Recorder of Deeds on December 4th; Instrument No. 2013050409). No further construction was proposed as a part of this plan. The subdivider agreed to stabilize and sod the bare ground. The conveyances, by revised legal descriptions (deeds), have been recorded as Instrument Nos. 2014002284, for 133 Elm on January 22, 2014 and 2014003374, for 135 Elm on January 31, 2014.

*developed by:* Our City-Reading Inc.... *designed by:* Stackhouse Bensinger Inc.

## **INSTITUTIONAL & UTILITY**

### **Humane Society Building Addition**

First presented at the February 26th meeting, this plan proposed a 7900-square-foot building expansion of the Humane Society's kennel and veterinary services, and 14 off-street parking spaces at that parcel known as 1801 North 11th Street. Within, several modernizations and reconfigurations were planned for the operation, including a new surgical suite to replace that contained in a 'trailer' separate from the kennel building. Open areas, currently accessible by the animals, would be wholly contained, for the noise attenuation and climate control. The Society's director expected the renovations to finally qualify them for a long-sought a national accreditation. Several mature evergreen trees would be removed to accommodate the new parking area. This caused some frustration for the neighboring property owners who claimed to have cared for the trees, based in part on a misunderstood boundary, and complained of trespass from the Society's volunteer 'walkers'. A landscaped screen was offered in compromise. Final approval was granted at the July 23rd meeting (resolution #23-2013), conditioned on additional landscaping detail and stormwater planning. The plan was recorded with the Berks County Recorder of Deeds on October 21st; Instrument No. 2013044731. In September, the Society announced their plan to merge with the Humane League of Lancaster County, to be led by the Berks chapter's director following his counterpart's retirement. No construction activity is apparent.

*developed by:* Humane Society of Berks County... *designed by:* DH Enterprises Inc.

### **Rockland Professional Center Renovation (Albright College)**

Presented at the February 26th meeting, this plan for an additional 1110 square feet and a reconfigured entrance to the existing classroom and professional office building at that parcel known as 1940 North 13th Street was approved/waived as a qualifying 'small project' (resolution #1-2013). More interior than out, the alterations made way for a more-dedicated academic use of the previously-mixed use of the Rockland Center. The bank remained, but other tenants, including a Pennsylvania Senate (District 11) office, relocated. Materials for the new partition walls were chosen in an attempt to further 'daylight' the interior of the building. The Commission required that a

revised site plan, depicting the exterior and ‘footprint’ alterations, be provided for the City’s file. The entrance is presently under construction.

*developed by:* Albright College... *designed by:* Spillman Farmer Architects

### **Iglesia Cristiana**

First presented at the March 26th meeting, this plan proposed a 4561-square-foot church expansion and 33 off-street-parking spaces on that 32,902-square-foot parcel known as 925 South Street, formerly the Adams Apple restaurant among others. Several large trees were removed, ostensibly for the expansion of the parking lot. A landscaping plan proposed replacements following construction. Vegetated rain gardens were proposed within the parking areas to offset the stormwater impact of the increasing impervious cover. A sprinkler system would be installed, and a new water lateral laid to serve it. Final approval was granted at the June 25th meeting (resolution #19-2012), and already reaffirmed once (resolution #34-2013, October 22nd) pending its recording. The surveyor has since been waiting on the City’s approval of the terms of an improvements agreement, modified to allow the church time to finance the project through a capital campaign.

*developed by:* Iglesia Cristiana el Poder de la Palabra de Dios Inc.... *designed by:* Tarson LLC

### **Student Lot F (Reading Area Community College)**

First presented at the July 23rd meeting, this plan proposed the demolition of a former Reading Eagle Company building and a 237-space off-street student parking expansion at that parcel known as 201 South Front Street. Its layout continues a pattern established by the ‘Oritsky’ and ‘Fleetwood’ lots, in 2004 and 2007 respectively. The Commission granted final approval at their August 27th meeting (resolution #26-2013). The plan was recorded with the Berks County Recorder of Deeds on October 8th; Instrument No. 2013043117. Demolition began in December, and was completed by the end of it. The building on the southern portion of the parcel – that of the former Merritt Corporation – remains, and will be used for storage. Construction of the parking surface has yet to begin. The College intimated that it may not be built immediately, as they feel their current need has been met, intending the F Lot to serve the future needs in the event of new buildings on their existing parking lots. Their 2006 campus master plan shows how this may develop. Refer to the May 28th review of the traffic planning summarized under the Comprehensive Planning section.

*developed by:* Reading Area Community College... *designed by:* LTL Consultants Ltd.

### **Modifications**

Section 512.1.d of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires the Planning Commission to keep a written record of all action on all requests for modification/waiver of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. Those waivers formally granted are summarized in this report, but are further explained and notated in the meeting minutes and on the title sheets of the record plans themselves.

## **ZONING**

### **Conditional Uses**

Sections 603.c.2 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code and 27-301.B.3 of the City’s Zoning Ordinance give the Planning Commission an opportunity to comment on any applications for ‘conditional uses’ as classified by the Zoning Ordinance. There were five (5) such applications reviewed in 2013.

#### **600 North 12th Street (conversion)**

On February 26th, the Planning Commission cautiously recommended City Council’s approval (resolution #2-2013) of this application for a third dwelling unit. Their recommendation was based on limited information about the historical use and status of the property. They were primarily concerned with the availability of off-street parking. Council held its hearing March 4th, and ultimately denied the application on March 11th (their Resolution No. 19-2013), citing the Zoning Ordinance’s prohibition on new efficiency units.

#### **912 Amity Street (conversion)**

On April 23rd, the Planning Commission recommended City Council’s approval (resolution #11-2013) of an application for a second dwelling unit, on the first floor in what was purportedly a commercial space. This action essentially repeated its earlier recommendation (resolution #30-2012, November 27, 2012) to approve the application subject to some clarifications on the structural division between the units. Council first heard the application on December 5, 2012, and denied the conversion on January 14th (their Resolution No. 3-2013) because

of the unpermitted work found. They advised the applicant to correct the existing violations and reapply. After a second hearing, May 7th, Council approved the conversion on May 28th (their Resolution No. 45-2013), subject to a widening of the garage door and the satisfactory finding of a property-maintenance inspection scheduled for June 14th.

#### 1146 North 6th Street (conversion)

On April 23rd, the Planning Commission recommended City Council's approval (resolution #12-2013) of this application for a two-unit status, in a home to be renovated following a March 7th fire. A third unit, in the basement, was the focus of a previous enforcement action. Council held its hearing May 7th and, on May 28th, tentatively approved the conversion (their Resolution No. 46-2013), if limited to a one-bedroom first-floor unit and a three-bedroom unit between the second and third floors, proof of a permitted and compliant building renovation by licensed contractors, and subject to the approval an off-street parking variance by the Zoning Hearing Board. The basement area would be made a part of the first-floor unit's lease.

#### 34 North 6th Street (banquet hall)

On November 26th, the Planning Commission recommended City Council's approval (resolution #39-2013) of this application for what was already a permitted retail establishment in the downtown core. The owners sought permission to rent the space for private parties. The 'change of use' would extend the hours of permitted operation, and possibly trigger additional building-code measures by the increasing occupancy. An additional request was made for 'sidewalk dining' on a seasonal basis. The Commission relied on the Comprehensive Plan's aim of increasing downtown activity, especially in the evening and weekend hours. Council held its hearing December 17th, and ultimately approved the expanded use and hours of operation on January 27, 2014 (their Resolution No. 11-2014), on the condition of their compliance with other applicable codes and permits.

#### 918 Lancaster Avenue (conversion)

On November 26th, the Planning Commission, with little deliberation, recommended City Council's approval (resolution #40-2013) of this application to convert a commercial space in a residential building back to residential use. It had been an insurance broker's office. Council held its hearing December 17th, and ultimately approved the reversion on January 27, 2014 (their Resolution No. 10-2014), pursuant to an occupancy inspection and permit.

### **Zoning Ordinance Amendments / Zoning Map Changes**

Section 609.c of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code gives the Planning Commission a 30-day period in which to comment on proposed zoning ordinance amendments and/or map changes. There were two (2) such proposals considered by the Commission during 2013.

#### corrections and clarifications to 'various sections'

On October 22nd, the Planning Commission tabled its consideration of a proposed amendment to several sections of the Zoning Ordinance, covering definitions, enforcement duties, appellate processes, allowable uses and signage. They deferred in anticipation of the recommendations of the Law Department and County Planning Commission, and expected revisions. City Council eventually passed an amended version of the bill December 16th (Bill No. 83-2013).

#### rezoning 15 Prospect Avenue from Residential 2 (R2) to Commercial Highway (CH)

On November 26th, the Planning Commission recommended that City Council deny the rezoning of 15 Prospect Avenue (resolution #38-2013). It and a neighboring property – 290 Morgantown Road – are under common ownership. The home on the former has increasingly been used as an annex of the restaurant on the latter, Mimmo's Ristorante, including a physical connection constructed across the parcel (and zoning) boundary, in 2005, without City approval or inspection. The Commission had considered and advised against a similar petition in March 2004, and found no compelling change in the circumstances to merit the map change. City Council had scheduled a public hearing for January 23, 2014, but postponed it after the County Planning Commission identified errors in the application. It has been rescheduled for April 1, 2014.

## **REDEVELOPMENT**

The Planning Commission took no official actions related to the activities of either the Reading Redevelopment Authority or the Blighted Property Review Committee.

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING**

Section 303 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires the Planning Commission to review certain public actions as they relate to policies set forth in its Comprehensive Plan. The following entries detail the extent to which such review opportunities were given.

### **STREETS & PUBLIC GROUNDS** per Section 303.a.1

#### newspaper and periodical vending regulation in the Commercial Core

On February 26th, the City's Community Development Department, representing the Reading Downtown Improvement District and speaking on behalf of the Mayor's downtown 'main street' initiative, presented a plan for the purchase and installation of a standardized 'corral' intended to organize the newspaper and periodical vending boxes. Scattered and often chained to trees, lamp posts and other City property, they hoped to better control their location and realize an improved perception in downtown cleanliness. The Commission questioned the public outlay, and preferred that application fees fully recover the costs of the project. It was also suggested that the businesses fronting the areas proposed should have some say in the placement. Apparently, the anticipated funding was never awarded, and the project was suspended.

#### petition to vacate Moss Street, in its 1800 block (Reading Area Water Authority)

On April 23rd, the Planning Commission recommended City Council act to vacate (resolution #13-2013) that portion of Moss Street bordering the Water Authority's land at 1801 Kutztown Road. The Authority had recently moved its offices from City Hall, and the abandonment of the Street was settled by an amendment to the 'lease and operating agreement' between the City and the Authority. The Commission determined that the street had been *effectively* vacated by a 1996 (A&A Auto Store) land development plan, and a building constructed within its right-of-way. Apparently, no formal description was recorded at that time. City Council enacted the topographical change on August 26th (Bill No. 40-2013), and the Mayor approved it the following day.

#### campus planning and public street changes (Reading Area Community College)

On May 28th, the Planning Commission heard a presentation from Bogia Engineering Inc. regarding the Community College's plan to reconfigure the streets and traffic patterns around and through their campus. The most consequential part of the plan involves the closure of the 100 block of Franklin Street, between Front and South 2nd Streets, replacing it with an extended Front Street and reopened Chestnut Street route. It was a 'next step' in the Community College's implementation of a campus master plan that generally seeks to centralize current and potential buildings while providing adequate parking accommodations on the margins. The 'Student Lot F' plan, summarized in the land development section, reinforces this pattern. The Commission recognized a difficult condition existing at the South 2nd and Franklin Streets intersection, and offered their tentative support on the expectation of additional detail to come.

### **PUBLIC STRUCTURES** per Section 303.a.2

#### consideration of two proposed memorial benches in City Park (American Gold Star Mothers Inc.)

On March 26th, the Planning Commission recommended (resolution #5-2013) City Council's approval of two engraved granite benches for the 'Veterans Grove' area of City Park. City Council authorized the installation April 8th (their Resolution No. 33-2013), attaching the conditions provided by the Historical Architectural Review Board from their meeting March 19th (their 'appropriateness' resolution #11-13).

#### proposed City Park monument to the Fairgrounds Field Hospital nurses (Sigma Theta Tau International)

On August 27th, the Planning Commission recommended (resolution #25-2013) a marker designed for placement at or on the 'comfort station' that currently stands in the vicinity of a Civil War-era field hospital (southwest of the intersection of Rose Garden Road and Washington Street). Xi Omega Chapter, the local affiliate of the Sigma Theta Tau nursing fraternity had preferred a stone monument placed in the 'Veterans Grove'. The Commission members expressed their usual concerns about the number and care of memorials in City Park. The Historical Architectural Review Board had reviewed the application August 20th, focused on its size and style, deferring to the Planning Commission for the actual location (their 'appropriateness' resolution #51-13). City Council authorized a historical marker for the 'comfort station' at their August 28th meeting (their Resolution No. 85-2013), suggesting a design

like that of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's blue and yellow markers, and deferring to the Public Works Department on the specifics of placement and mounting.

proposed ordinance governing memorial and monument installations and responsibilities on public grounds

On October 22nd, the Planning Commission recommended (resolution #31-2013) enactment of an ordinance that would establish definitive procedures for the siting of new memorials in City-owned parks and properties. Motivated by a perceived overcrowding of the 'Veterans Grove' collection, and the general proliferation of monuments throughout City Park, the draft ordinance covered all City-owned lands, and established a 'memorial review committee' to consider future applications and arrange for their long-term maintenance and repair. It included a moratorium on new installations until such time as that committee is seated. The Historical Architectural Review Board had discussed the legislation at their October 15th meeting. City Council enacted the policy by ordinance on November 12th (Bill No. 55-2013), and the Mayor approved it the following day. No applications have yet been made under the new process.

**ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS** per Sections 303.a.3 and 609.c

Refer to the "Zoning Ordinance Amendments/Zoning Map Changes" section, under the ZONING heading. No capital improvements budget was presented to the Planning Commission in 2013.

**PUBLIC WATER & SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE** per Section 303.a.4

No water or sewer projects were presented to the Planning Commission during 2013. The City continued work on upgrades to the Fritz Island Wastewater Treatment Plant, including the new 42-inch force main between the Sixth and Canal streets pumping station and the Treatment Plant, and repairs to the 'secondary anaerobic digesters'.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Membership and Offices**

The Planning Commission is currently short one of the five billets established by ordinance. The current, active members and their terms are as follows:

- Ermete J. Raffaelli, Chairman – reappointed to the Commission, with a term ending April 1, 2016 (Council's Resolution No. 115-2012)
- Brian J. Burket, Vice Chairman – appointed to the Commission, with a term ending April 1, 2014 (Council's Resolution No. 108-2010)
- Michael E. Lauter, Secretary - reappointed to the Commission with a term ending April 1, 2013 (Council's Resolution No. 76-2011)
- Wayne Jonas Bealer, Assistant Secretary – reappointed to the Commission with a term ending April 1, 2014 (Council's Resolution No. 121-2010)

### **Community Involvement**

Ermete Raffaelli serves as a member of the South Mountain YMCA Board of Directors. Mr. Raffaelli also serves as the President of the Reading Hose Company No. 1.

Michael Lauter serves as Executive Director of the Centre Park Historic District Inc.

Wayne Jonas Bealer serves as the Planning Commission's representative on both the Blighted Property Review Committee and Vending Licensing Board, and serves as Acting Executive Director of the Violence Prevention Center of Berks.

Brian Burket is a member of the Greater Reading Young Professionals network (GRYP), serving on its Legislative Impact Committee.

### **2014 PROJECTIONS**

While the 2013 business appeared to lean more heavily toward commercial development as a share of the whole, the overall pace of subdivision and land development applications continued to decline. The December 2013 and

January 2014 meeting were both cancelled for lack of applications for review, the first time in recent memory for such a sequence. Further, the Zoning Administrator reported that no new appeals were presented to the Hearing Board for either the January or February zoning hearings.

The Planning Commission continues to anticipate plans for the renovation and reuse several former industrial sites, including a few recently acquired by the Redevelopment Authority. The former outlet buildings continue to attract interest for residential conversions, some even including office and retail mixes. A December 20th ground-breaking ceremony for the DoubleTree Hotel renewed hopes for this downtown compliment to the convention center/sports arena across the street.

On October 18th, the Planning Office, together with the Zoning and Historic Preservation staff, relocated from the third floor (Room 3-03) to the first (Room 1-27), their first change of location since the 1994 City Hall renovations. Many of the Planning Office's records remain behind in a part of that third-floor space.

Beginning in mid-December, in an effort to provide better background information, the Planning Office took over the scheduling of appointments for the City's 'OneStopShop', an advisory forum convened weekly since early 2006 with the primary goal of interpreting and resolving land-use and building code issues *in advance* of plan submittals. It has also served as a general primer for prospective developers who may be unfamiliar with the local submission and review procedures.

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The Planning Commission will continue to administer the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, and perform those zoning functions delegated it by law and/or ordinance.

**City of Reading Planning Commission  
2013 Activity Summary**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>RES#</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>PLAN BOOK</u>
Jan. 22		<i>- the January 22nd meeting was cancelled -</i>		
Feb. 26	n/a	§303.a.1 review-newspaper vending regulation in the Commercial Core	heard the concept presentation	
Feb. 26	n/a	Humane Society Building Addition - final land development plan	tabled the final plan, 3-0	
Feb. 26	1-2013	<b>Rockland Professional Center Renovation (Albright College) - sketch land development plan</b>	waived additional review, 3-0	n/a
Feb. 26	n/a	219 Buttonwood Land Development (Dollar General) - preliminary land development plan	tabled the preliminary plan, 3-0	
Feb. 26	2-2013	§603.c.2 conditional use review-600 North 12th Street (conversion)	recommended City Council's approval, 3-0	
Feb. 26	3-2013	review the draft November 27, 2012 meeting minutes	approved the November 27th minutes, 3-0	
Feb. 26	4-2013	review the draft 2012 Planning Commission Annual Report	approved the 2012 Annual Report, 3-0	
Mar. 26	5-2013	§303.a.2 review-consideration of two proposed memorial benches in City Park (American Golf)	recommended City Council's approval, 3-0	
Mar. 26	n/a	Kutztown Road Retail - preliminary subdivision and land development plan	tabled the preliminary plan, 3-0	
Mar. 26	n/a	Iglesia Cristiana - final land development plan	tabled the final plan, 3-0	
Mar. 26	6-2013	219 Buttonwood Land Development (Dollar General) - final land development plan	tabled, waivers granted, 3-0	
Mar. 26	n/a	Humane Society Building Addition - final land development plan	tabled the final plan, 3-0	
Mar. 26	7-2013	review the draft February 26, 2013 meeting minutes	approved the February 26th minutes, 3-0	
Apr. 23	8-2013	219 Buttonwood Land Development (Dollar General) - final land development plan	granted preliminary approval, 4-0	
Apr. 23	9-2013	<b>Kutztown Road Retail - final subdivision and land development plan</b>	approved the final plan, 4-0	<b>2013028102</b>
Apr. 23	10-2013	§508.3 agreement to extension-Humane Society Building Addition	agreed to review period extension, 4-0	
Apr. 23	11-2013	§603.c.2 conditional use review-912 Amity Street (conversion)	recommended City Council's approval, 4-0	
Apr. 23	12-2013	§603.c.2 conditional use review-1146 North 6th Street (conversion)	recommended City Council's approval, 4-0	
Apr. 23	13-2013	§303.a.1 review-petition to vacate Moss Street, in its 1800 block	recommended City Council's approval, 4-0	
Apr. 23	14-2013	review the draft March 26, 2013 meeting minutes	approved the March 26th minutes, 4-0	
May 28	n/a	§303.a.1 review-campus planning and public street changes (Reading Area Community College)	heard the concept presentation	
May 28	15-2013	<b>219 Buttonwood Land Development (Dollar General) - final land development plan</b>	approved the final plan, 3-0	<b>2013024522</b>
May 28	16-2013	§508.3 agreement to extension-Iglesia Cristiana	agreed to review period extension, 3-0	
May 28	17-2013	§207 nominations-2013 Planning Commission office holders	elected the proposed slate, 3-0	
May 28	18-2013	review the draft April 23, 2013 meeting minutes	approved the April 23rd minutes, 3-0	
Jun. 25	19-2013	<b>Iglesia Cristiana - final land development plan</b>	approved the final plan, 3-0	<b>xxx page xxx</b>
Jun. 25	20-2013	<b>Café Terrace (Sweet Street Desserts) - final land development plan</b>	waived additional review, 3-0	n/a
Jun. 25	21-2013	New Wire Cleaning Line Building, Building 154 (Carpenter) - final land development plan	tabled the final plan, 3-0	
Jun. 25	22-2013	review the draft May 28, 2013 meeting minutes	approved the May 28th minutes, 3-0	
Jul. 23	n/a	Student Lot F (Reading Area Community College) - parking lot land development plan	tabled the final plan, 4-0	
Jul. 23	23-2013	<b>Humane Society Building Addition - final land development plan</b>	approved the final plan, 4-0	<b>2013044731</b>
Jul. 23	24-2013	review the draft June 25, 2013 meeting minutes	approved the June 25th minutes, 4-0	
Aug. 27	25-2013	§303.a.2 review-proposed City Park monument to the Fairgrounds Field Hospital nurses	recommended City Council direction, 4-0	

**City of Reading Planning Commission  
2013 Activity Summary**

Aug. 27	n/a	Jet Set Restaurant Parking Area - parking lot land development plan	tabled the parking plan, 4-0	
Aug. 27	26-2013	<b>Student Lot F (Reading Area Community College) - parking lot land development plan</b>	approved the parking plan, 4-0	<b>2013043117</b>
Aug. 27	27-2013	§508.3 agreement to extension-New Wire Cleaning Line Building 154 (Carpenter)	agreed to review period extension, 4-0	
Aug. 27	28-2013	review the draft July 23, 2013 meeting minutes	approved the July 23rd minutes, 4-0	
Sep. 24	n/a	RDG North Reading Cell Site - final land development plan	tabled the final plan, 3-0	
Sep. 24	29-2013	<b>New Wire Cleaning Line Building, Building 154 (Carpenter) - final land development plan</b>	approved the final plan, 3-0	<b>2013041648</b>
Sep. 24	30-2013	review the draft August 27, 2013 meeting minutes	approved the August 27th minutes, 3-0	
Oct. 22	n/a	315 Pear Street Subdivision - final subdivision plan	tabled the final plan, 3-0	
Oct. 22	n/a	§609.c review-zoning amendment ordinance, various sections	tabled consideration, 3-0	
Oct. 22	31-2013	§303.a.2 review-memorials/monuments on public grounds ordinance	recommended City Council direction, 3-0	
Oct. 22	32-2013	§508.3 agreement to extension-Jet Set Restaurant Parking Area	agreed to review period extension, 3-0	
Oct. 22	33-2013	review the draft September 24, 2013 meeting minutes	approved the September 24th minutes, 3-0	
Oct. 22	34-2013	§513.a approval reaffirmation-Iglesia Cristiana	reaffirmed final plan approval, 3-0	xxx page xxx
Nov. 26	35-2013	<b>RDG North Reading Cell Site - final land development plan</b>	approved the final plan, 3-0	<b>2014005646</b>
Nov. 26	36-2013	<b>315 Pear Street Subdivision - final subdivision plan</b>	approved the final plan, 2-1	<b>2013050409</b>
Nov. 26	37-2013	<b>Weigh-Up Room Addition (AkzoNobel) - sketch land development plan</b>	waived additional review, 3-0	n/a
Nov. 26	38-2013	§609.c review-zoning map amendment, rezoning 15 Prospect Avenue from R2 to CH	recommended City Council's denial, 3-0	
Nov. 26	39-2013	§603.c.2 conditional use review-34 North 6th Street (banquet hall)	recommended City Council's approval, 3-0	
Nov. 26	40-2013	§603.c.2 conditional use review-918 Lancaster Avenue (conversion)	recommended City Council's approval, 3-0	
Nov. 26	41-2013	review the draft October 22, 2013 meeting minutes	approved the October 22nd minutes, 3-0	
Dec. 17		<i>- the December 17th meeting was cancelled -</i>		

n/a = no action, not applicable, or not assigned

xxx page xxx = recording required