

**Minutes**  
**Regular meeting of the City of Reading Planning Commission**  
**June 24, 2014 at 7:02 pm**

**Members present:**

Ermete J. Raffaelli, Chairman  
Brian J. Burket, Vice Chairman  
Michael E. Lauter, Secretary  
Wayne Jonas Bealer, Assistant Secretary

**Staff present:**

Andrew W. Miller, Planning Office

**Others present:**

Michael D. Hartman, DH Enterprises Inc.  
Stephen F. DeLucas, Reading Eagle Company

Chairman Raffaelli called the June meeting to order, and asked for acceptance of the agenda. Mr. Miller explained that the 'Homes at Riverside' team withdrew earlier that day, while their zoning issues are settled. Mr. Burket moved to accept the June 24th agenda, as modified. Mr. Lauter seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to accept the revised June agenda.

**Other business:**

§508.3 agreement to extension-Jet Set Restaurant Parking Area [0:01.06]

With the attendance of its project manager, the Commission began with the Jet Set issue. Mr. Hartman requested another extension of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code's deadline, explaining that the highway-occupancy permit was complicated and delayed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) expanding the scope of the permit to include the parking and driveway at the property to the south of the restaurant (124 and 126 South 9th Street). He said it had been permitted by a City process, but without consulting PennDOT. He said he resubmitted the plans, and hoped to have the permit in time for the meeting. Addressing an issue of ownership, he said the '109 Peach Street' portion of the parking plan has been conveyed to Jet Set Restaurant LLC, and will finally be annexed to 116 South 9th Street with a new deed. He provided a 90-day extension, but hoped to have it ready in the next 30. Mr. Miller deferred to the Commission, noting the progress in the property transfer. He said he couldn't yet verify the total parking provided as satisfying the zoning conditions.

Mr. Bealer moved to extend the review of the Jet Set plan, as requested in a June 24th letter emailed from the design engineer. Mr. Burket seconded. And the Commission voted 3 to 1 to grant another 90-day extension of the 'Jet Set Restaurant Parking Area' plan, Mr. Raffaelli casting the dissent.

Resolution #12-2014

§303.a.1 review-planned renovations and repairs of the Schlegel Park Pool [0:06.32]

Mr. Miller explained that these types of grant applications and funding arrangements often require some documentation from the local planning agency that affirms a project's conformity to local land-use plans, like comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances. He added that where a project appears limited to the repair and replacement of existing facilities, he usually provides a letter to that effect. Because of the timing of this latest request and the early notice, he elected to schedule a 'review' and provide an opportunity for any recommendations from the Commission members. He assured that any projects involving new or changing facilities – to the extent they are presented to the Planning Office – would be scheduled for the Commission's review regardless of 'timing'.

Mr. Lauter moved to support the planned renovations as consistent with the Comprehensive Plan objectives, and without objection. Mr. Burket seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to document its support for the planned repairs and renovations of the Schlegel Park Pool.

Resolution #13-2014

§303.a.1 review-petition to vacate St. George Street (300 block) [0:10.48]

Mr. Miller admitted he hadn't been aware of the unopened street at issue before receiving the petition. He described its position, adjacent to Norfolk Southern's 'beltline' railroad. He said there is no apparent evidence of a public street, apart from the City's official topographic map, and believed other parts (blocks, northwesterly through St. Mary Roman Catholic Church cemetery and southeasterly into Angelica Park) may have been previously vacated. He didn't know any more about the petitioners' intent, describing the area as a back yard for the homes

fronting the 300 block of St. Bernardine Street and the 600 block of Greenway Terrace. He suggested the circumstances were a little different because of the neighboring railroad, whose claim appears to change in width, widening as it approaches Upland Avenue. He said a typical outcome involves the adjacent owners claiming 'their halves' of a vacated street, by a newly-recorded legal description incorporating the area by 'metes and bounds' with their existing property. His concern was that of a 'no-man's-land' if Norfolk Southern declined its share. He expected additional information at a public hearing, and doubted the City would ever build/open the street. He speculated on Alvernia University's master plan for the area, and suggested other petitions may eventually follow for nearby streets. He made clear the University was not party to the current petition. Asked if the railroad was active, he confirmed that it carried regular traffic bypassing the City's center. He doubted the City could compel Norfolk Southern to accept and annex its half, and suggested the petitioners seek a written consent to take the full width. He wondered why Norfolk Southern would object, other than from a perceived encroachment concern, and thought Council might require that the petitioners investigate and resolve that question. Mr. Raffaelli asked about any existing utilities. Mr. Miller said the Engineering Office wasn't immediately sure, and referred to standard City language reserving that caveat.

Mr. Burket moved to recommend that City Council vacate St. George Street, only after determining the railroad's interest, arranging a satisfactory conveyance and incorporation of the full vacated width, and determining the presence and fate of any existing public utility services coincident with the present right-of-way. Mr. Bealer seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to forward the conditional recommendation to vacate the 300 block of St. George Street.

**Resolution #14-2014**

review the draft May 27, 2014 meeting minutes [0:21.04]

Mr. Bealer requested a couple corrections and clarifications.

Mr. Lauter moved to accept the May meeting minutes, as corrected. Mr. Burket seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to accept the corrected May 27th meeting minutes.

**Resolution #15-2014**

The Commission briefly discussed the recently-approved, but subsequently-withdrawn 'MDJ 23-3-09 District Justice Office' plan. Mr. Bealer announced his reappointment for another four years on the Commission. He then reported on the recent activities and strategies of the Blighted Property Review Committee. Mr. Miller said that the Zoning Administrator has requested contact information from each of the Commission members.

Mr. Lauter moved to adjourn the June meeting. Mr. Burket seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the June 24th meeting. – 7:42p