

**Minutes**  
**Regular meeting of the City of Reading Planning Commission**  
**November 27, 2012 at 7:00 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 Wagner, Reading Eagle Company

Chairman Raffaelli called the November meeting to order, and asked for acceptance of the agenda. Mr. Miller proposed cancellations of the 'downtown-newspaper corrals' presentation, the North 15th Street conditional-use review, and the reaffirmation of the Family Wash Day plan. Mr. Lauter moved to accept the modified November 27th agenda. Mr. Burket seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to accept the modified November agenda.

§603.c.2 conditional use review-912 Amity Street (conversion) [0:00.35]

Mr. Miller noted that he hadn't reviewed the application against each and every related section of the Zoning Ordinance. He felt that converting a commercial use to a residential use, in a residential zone, would make it immediately *more conforming*, which the Ordinance supports (§27-607.D.5). He questioned the applicability of the conditional-use hearing. Mr. Raffaelli was surprised that a commercial use was ever permitted in the first place. He felt approving the application would run counter the City's 'de-densification' goals, and commented on what appeared (from photographs) to be a series of additions to a still limited space. He preferred it be converted to a single-family dwelling. Mr. Miller said he presumed the second floor was a functioning apartment, if only that of the former business's proprietor. Asked when it was last known to be 'in business', Mr. Miller mentioned having checked the R. L. Polk & Co. (and W. H. Boyd Co.) directories, but unsure of the year last shown as a business and the accuracy of the directories. Clues in the deed description were briefly discussed. Mr. Miller suggested the Commission lay out its questions and concerns as findings with their recommendation.

Mssrs. Lauter and Miller, between them, crafted a recommendation: in consideration of, 1) the ambiguities in the layout of the second floor, 2) the functional independence existing between the commercial and residential spaces, 3) concerns in the representation and capacity of off-street parking, 4) the practicality of meeting applicable building codes, vis-à-vis the required level of alteration, and 5) the time elapsed since abandonment of the non-conforming commercial use, the Planning Commission would recommend permitting the second residential unit, if shown historically to be a fully-functioning independent space, and otherwise recommends limitation to one residential unit. Mr. Miller said a benefit of the hearing is the opportunity for the applicant to respond to these challenges. On Mr. Lauter's motion, Mr. Burket seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to forward their considerations of 912 Amity Street to City Council, for its hearing on December 5th.

**Resolution #30-2012**

The Commission briefly discussed the agenda's cancelled business.

**Other business:**

review the draft September 25, 2012 meeting minutes [0:31.13]

Mr. Bealer identified two grammatical errors. Mr. Lauter moved to accept the September meeting minutes, with the requested edits. Mr. Burket seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to accept the corrected September 25th meeting minutes.

**Resolution #31-2012**

Mr. Miller reminded the Commission that the December 2012 meeting was scheduled for the *third Tuesday* due to the date of Christmas, and identified a similar occurrence in December 2013. The members agreed to advertise another third Tuesday meeting (the 17th).

Mr. Bealer reported on the Blighted Property Review Committee activities for the last month, including five properties since repaired and removed from the list. Mr. Miller noticed that the Planning Commission hadn't recently been presented with any cases. Mr. Bealer attributed that to some confusion about the process.

Mr. Bealer mentioned that the planned Verizon communication tower at North 6th and Spring Streets will be considered again at the December zoning hearing, and that he had mentioned his access concerns to the Zoning Administrator. Mr. Miller said the driveway issue would ultimately be a civil matter between the lessor and lessee, as well as a responsibility of the plan preparer to disclose all encumbrances on the property. Mr. Bealer said he had also spoken with Frank Denbowski, a City employee and neighbor of the site, about the visual impact.

On Mr. Lauter's motion, and Mr. Burket's second, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the November 27th meeting. - 7:44p