

City of Reading Planning Commission
Tuesday, March 9, 2010
Work Session
Council Chambers

Planning Commission Members Attending: B. Bingaman, F. Rothermel, M. Lauter

Others Attending: M. Mayfield, C. Schmehl, L. Kelleher

The purpose of the work session was to review and comment on the draft Zoning Ordinance prepared with the assistance of consultant Charlie Schmehl, from URDC and the Zoning Amendment Committee.

Mr. Schmehl explained the process used to compose the current draft and the process to refine and then adopt the final Zoning Ordinance. He answered various questions about the proposed changes within the draft ordinance.

Ms. Mayfield stated that representatives from Albright College and Alvernia University are present. Attorney Heidi Masano, representing Albright College, along with the Vice President of Finance and Attorney John Roland, representing Alvernia University, along with the Vice President of Finance announced their desire for an Institutional District overlay at the parcels owned and operated by these educational institutions. Mr. Roland apologized for the request so far into the amendment process. Ms. Mayfield noted that Albright is located within an R3 zoning district that abuts with R1 and R2 zoning districts and Alvernia is located within an R2 zoning district. Copies of the organizations Master Plans were distributed.

Ms. Masano and Mr. Roland explained that the application of an Institutional Overlay would ease the need for these organizations to obtain variances for height, set backs, etc. Ms. Masano described the new style apartment dwellings planned for Alvernia. She noted that the Institutional Zone would also ease the work load currently on City staff. She stated that Alvernia continues to purchase residential properties around Alvernia.

Ms. Mayfield inquired if an overlay or district designation is desired. Mr. Schmehl stated that either application would achieve the same end result. He added that the Institutional overlay or zone would allow the organizations to undertake certain changes within the core of the campus and impose specific controls. He stated that the normal application only allows changes in the interior of the campus and applies the

status quo around the campus edges, with change to be approved through Special Exception.

The Albright Vice- President of Finance stated that Albright is currently seeking ownership of the old David Crystal building along with the TV Station located on North 11th Street.

Ms. Masano suggested meeting on a staff level to refine the language. Mr. Lauter inquired how the Institutional Zone would apply to Albright. Mr. Schmehl stated that the new zone would apply to the main campus located between North 13th Street and Palm Street - Union Street to Bern Street. Mr. Lauter and Mr. Rothermel suggested careful planning to prevent development at the edges of the parcel which would change the aesthetic of the neighborhood. Mr. Roland stated that the Master Plan is focused on development to the North West of the main campus.

Ms. Mayfield inquired if any conversation has occurred with RACC. Mr. Roland and Ms. Masano stated that they were unsure if RACC has been contacted. Ms. Mayfield suggested inviting them to the staff meeting.

Ms. Kelleher stated that she originally planned to attend the meeting on behalf of the Reading LRA. She explained that the seven (7) acre Navy Marine parcel, located on Kenhorst Boulevard, will be transferred to the Reading Hospital and Mary's Shelter for a combined use. She stated that she and Council President Spencer attended a meeting with Mr. Mable from the Reading Hospital at their engineer's office. The Reading Hospital also requested an Institutional Zone that would lift restriction on height, loading docks, etc. She stated that after reviewing the map she suggests applying the zone to the Navy Marine site, the State Police Barracks and the undeveloped parcel located behind the Barracks building.

CD Director Dan Robinson introduced himself to the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission next reviewed the draft zoning ordinance. Mr. Schmehl made corrections and changes directly to the draft document. A new draft will be distributed to the Planning Commission prior to their next meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk