

TOWN OF TRAPPE
PLANNING COMMISSION
TRAPPE TOWN OFFICE

March 20, 2018

7:00 PM

The meeting of the Trappe Planning Commission was called to order at 7:01 pm by Chairman Edgar Harrison. Members present were Bobby Quidas, Scott Metje, and Norm Fegel. Also present were Zoning Administrator Cheyenne Cowell, Town Administrator Erin Braband, Shirley Quidas, Don English, Jim Thompson, and Bud Reed.

Review of Minutes

The minutes from November 21, 2017 were approved as presented.

New Member Appointment

Chairman Harrison welcomed Commissioner Scott Metje.

Permits

Chairman Harrison asked about the details of the two pending permits (T-04-2018 and T-08-2018). Administrator Braband said that permit T-04-2018 will be issued in-office once plans and fees are submitted. Permit T-08-2018 is pending additional plans and would come in front of the Planning Commission once everything was submitted.

Old Business

None

New Business

Chairman Edgar Harrison – Zoning Ordinance sections 9.45 and 9.50

Chairman Harrison expressed concerns with the Village Overlay side yard requirements. He noted that the intent of the Village Overlay was to preserve the existing town with the intent that a remodeled/damaged building could be rebuilt on the original footprint by means of a special exception. There is an additional requirement that there be at least 10 feet between buildings. Administrator Cowell recommended that the line “the side yard width on the adjoining property,

or” and “whichever is greater” should be removed from Section 9.45 block 4 and Section 9.50 block 4 of the Zoning Ordinance so that the blocks would read “The minimum side yard width shall be no less than five feet.” Chairman Harrison said that he agrees that mention of the adjoining property should be removed, but that leaving the mention of five feet could undermine the underlying fifteen foot side yard setback. Commissioner Fegel said he feels there should be a minimum requirement other than the buildings being ten feet apart because without a minimum one building could be four feet from the property line and the other six and they would have met the setback of ten feet apart. There was a unanimous agreement by the Planning Commission to strike “no less than the side yard width on the adjoining property”, but more discussion would be needed to decide on the minimum setback requirement. Chairman Harrison suggested that a line should be added to essentially state that the underlying setbacks should apply except as a relief to existing homeowners in the case of property damage. Administrator Braband suggested going through the entire Village Overlay section of the Zoning Ordinance to identify any parts that need revision, such as the section detailing duplex and triplex regulations. Chairman Harrison suggested rewording Section 9.60 block 7 to eliminate the variance process. Jim Thompson and Bud Reed expressed concerns that a variance regulation would impose a burden on homeowners in a burndown situation. Chairman Harrison proposed that Administrator Cowell should come up with a recommendation before the next meeting and that the Planning Commission should walk the Village Overlay district to examine existing property lines. He said that he thinks Attorney Booth should be at the next Planning Commission meeting. Administrator Braband said she will talk to Attorney Booth to see what the Planning Commission should do. Chairman Harrison also noted that the index and page numbers are out of order in the Zoning Ordinance.

Bud Reed – Possible Violation at Mitchum’s Tavern

Mr. Reed said that he had concerns that the building behind Mitchum’s Tavern was being turned into a game room. He said he had talked with the restaurant operator who expressed plans for a game room, and he had seen a pool table being moved into the building. Chairman Harrison said that if that was the case and the Tavern was found in violation, the owners would receive a letter of violation. It was noted that Mitchum’s Tavern could turn the back building into a game room with a special exception and would be required to follow the appeals process to do so.

Staff Items

Chairman Harrison and Commissioner Quidas – Update on “A Better Maryland” Meeting

Commissioner Quidas noted that he, Chairman Harrison, and Commissioner Metje attended the meeting on March 16, 2018. He recounted a disagreement between Chairman Harrison and a couple of other meeting attendees. Chairman Harrison said that MDP went over a question regarding legal authority. He said that the government is three tiers – federal, state, and local (municipal or county). He said that some county commissioners feel that the levels should be state, then county, then local. A question about the levels was introduced during the meeting, and

they came to an agreement that counties do not have authority over municipalities. Chairman Harrison noted that he felt the meeting was “reassuring”.

Chairman Harrison – Term Ending

Chairman Harrison noted that in two months his term as a Planning Commissioner would be up.

Administrator Braband – 3997 Main Street

Chairman Harrison asked about the 3997 Main Street project. Administrator Braband noted that a demolition permit was issued that was valid until June 29, 2018. She noted that the property owner has not decided what she would like to do after demolition.

Commissioner Norm Fegel – Comprehensive Plan

Commissioner Fegel noted that the Planning Commission would have to review the Comprehensive Plan soon. April 2020 will mark ten years since the last Comprehensive Plan review. Administrator Braband confirmed that the Planning Commission could start with public work sessions.

With no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheyenne Cowell, Zoning Administrator