

ROCKY HILL PLANNING BOARD
Minutes of the September 9, 2008 Meeting

Present: R. Ayrey, T. Bremner, C. Cann, T. Corlis, L. Goldman, D. Kluchinski, G. White, R. Whitlock, E. Zimmerman

Absent: C Pihokken, A. Youtz

Also present: V. Kimson and K. Philip

Statement Of Adequate Notice

Pursuant to the Sunshine Law, a notice of this meeting's date, time, place and agenda was mailed to the news media, posted on the Municipal bulletin board and filed with the Municipal Clerk. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

a) August 12, 2008 – Motion made by R. Whitlock and T. Bremner seconded the motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of August 12, 2008 as amended. The vote was 6-0 in favor of those eligible to vote. Motion carried.

Chairman's Comments and Correspondence:

Acting Chairman Cann stated that the signage component for the Rocky Hill Inn will be reviewed this evening; the proposed architectural modifications to the exterior will be scheduled for review at the next meeting or a special meeting of the Planning Board. No further notice is required.

Open Public Comment Period: The meeting was then opened to the public. Being that no one who wished to address the board, the open public portion of the meeting was closed.

Resolution of Approval

a) Capital Improvement Review:
Sidewalk Installation on Washington Street

Ms. Kimson stated that the State historic preservation office is going to review this improvement and the property owners will meet with Bill Tanner about their issues.

Motion was made by L. Goldman and R. Whitlock seconded the motion to approve the resolution for the Capital Improvement Review of the Washington Street sidewalks. The vote was 6-0 in favor. Motion carried.

For: Ayrey, Bremner, Cann, Corlis, Goldman, Whitlock

Against: None

Abstain: None

DISCUSSION:

a) Draft Housing Element: Susan Kimball, PP/AICP

Susan Kimball, planner for the Board, outlined the Housing Plan and stated that the deadline for submission is December 31, 2008. Many documents must be submitted with the Housing Plan,

the Housing Plan is the only Master Plan element that is approved by the governing body. All remaining elements are approved by the Planning Board.

She advised that under the revised rules, Rocky Hill's obligation is 11 units of growth share and 4 units of rehabilitation. Some units have been rehabilitated since the census was taken and she believes that three of the seven rehab units should qualify for credit in the Third Round rules. The Housing Plan notes that the Borough will provide \$10,000 per unit for rehabilitated units, the Borough must also pay for this to be administered by a qualified consultant. The accessory apartment program can also be administered by the same consultant. Ms. Kimson stated that she met with the two owners of group homes to find out if they are interested in constructing an additional room which and one of the providers is interested in speaking with the Borough so she and the Mayor will work on this.

Ms. Kimball stated that, other than an accessory apartment program and the expansion of the group home, she is unsure how we can satisfy the growth share obligation without constructing units or rezoning land to permit this type of housing. She provided an estimate of the fair share costs (\$300,000), for which development fees can be used to the extent that there is sufficient revenue available. She stated that a formal proposal must be done by the administrator. Development fees can be used to fund this however, in the Third Round rules it states that at least 30% of the development fees must be used for affordability assistance. At this time we do not have enough money available to fund any part of the plan and affordability assistance is only required when we do have development fee revenue. The Borough must guarantee that the cost of the accessory apartment and rehabilitation programs will be appropriated by the Borough if development fees are insufficient.

Ms. Kimball stated that COAH would like all municipalities to address the growth share requirement by making a program available. She called the Board's attention to the implementation schedule in the Housing Plan, which indicated an estimated time frame for the construction of the Pulte project and completion of accessory apartments. She stated that if fewer units are constructed in the Pulte development, then we may be able to propose that the plan be amended with revised projections of a reduced number. Ms. Kimball stated that the Department of Labor's projections are incorrect and should be questioned because the number of government employees grew from 12 to 70.

She advised that she may make additional changes to the draft plan as COAH places additional updates on their website, but that all changes to the Housing Plan will be tracked so the board members will be able to review them. She will be on vacation in October, if the Board holds a hearing on this in October, she recommended that we take public comment and then table the discussion to November in case COAH makes additional changes to the rules.

The meeting was opened to the public.

Phil Hayden, 38 Washington Street, requested information about the impact on property taxes if accessory apartments are constructed. How does this diminish any contributions that are received from the municipality? Ms. Kimball stated that she suspects that the value of the property increases however the assessor has to recognize that the improvement is affordable housing with deed restrictions. She assumes that there is some impact however after 10 years the restriction is lifted.

Being that no one else wished to address the board, the public portion of the meeting was closed.

Ms. Kimball stated that she will make the recommended changes to the text and the revised document will be sent to Ms. Kimson and provided to the board for review.

Applications:

- a) Rocky Hill Inn - Signage
Washington Street; Block 7, Lot 15

Bruce Blomgren, applicant, was sworn in. Mr. Blomgren stated that the proposal is for new signage at the Rocky Hill Inn. They hired one of the best known signage manufacturers in the northeast and the main signage is the same size as the existing sign for the Sante Fe Grill. The only difference is that there will be two posts holding the sign and it will be illuminated on both sides. He stated that the sign will include several symbols in addition to the name.

Maria Blomgren, applicant's daughter-in-law, was sworn in and stated that the sign is a faux wood, made of a composite material. She said that the sign is a two-sided carved sign with black with gold lettering. The proposed colors of the sign are black, gold, cream and burgundy. Mr. Blomgren stated that the lighting is almost flush to the ground, very little is above ground. E. Zimmerman questioned if several colors are permitted on a sign and Ms. Kimson stated that this is acceptable, neon lighting is not permitted. Ms. Kimson read aloud the sign ordinance requirements. Mr. Blomgren stated that the signage will be setback three feet in order to comply.

Ms. Kimson asked if there are any signs proposed on the building. Mr. Blomgren stated that a sign is proposed over each entrance. The existing triangular sign for the Rocky Hill Inn will remain in place.

The meeting was opened to the public.

Al Robotti, Washington Street, expressed concern about the proposed uprights reflecting into the road and affecting the vision of drivers. Mr. Blomgren stated that the two lights are 50 watts each so this should not be a problem.

David Dorey, Washington Street, stated that noise at the restaurant/pub is a concern. There are problems with noise at night during the summer. He requested that there be a condition that the porch area be cleared by 11pm every evening.

Being that there were no other comments from the public, motion was made and seconded to close the public portion of the meeting. The vote was 8-0 in favor. Motion carried.

Board discussion took place. G. White asked about the material of the bars on either side of the sign. Ms. Blomgren stated that it made of metal. G. White asked the overall dimensions of the posts. Mr. Blomgren stated that the dimension is 4"x4" but it will be wrapped with PVC so the overall dimension of each post would be 6" x 6".

Ms. Kimson stated that the historic preservation consultant has been unavailable to generate a report in time for this meeting so the proposal can be carried to the next meeting or a special meeting can be scheduled so public notice is not required.

Motion was made by L. Goldman and T. Bremner seconded the motion to approve the proposed signage as presented. The vote was 8-0 in favor. Motion carried.

For: Ayrey, Bremner, Cann, Corlis, Goldman, White, Whitlock, Zimmerman
Against: None
Abstain: None

A special meeting for the historic preservation component of the Rocky Hill application was requested for Tuesday, September 23, 2008. Motion was made by E. Zimmerman and T. Bremner seconded the motion to schedule the special meeting. The vote was 8-0 in favor. Motion carried.

Mr. Blomgren stated that he was considering an additional pathway connection. Ms. Kimson recommended that he discuss this with Bill Tanner because of impervious coverage.

T. Bremner recused himself from litigation matters. E. Zimmerman made a motion to go into closed session to discuss litigation matters and R. Whitlock seconded the motion. The vote was 7-0 in favor. Motion carried.

Motion was made by E. Zimmerman and L. Goldman to open the meeting to the public. The vote was 7-0 in favor. Motion carried.

Being that there were no other matters before the board, motion was made by R. Whitlock and E. Zimmerman seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m. Motion carried.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 14, 2008. A special meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 23, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerry A. Philip
Secretary