

A public hearing of Bloomsburg Town Council was held Thursday, December 20, 2007, beginning at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, Town Hall, 301 East Second Street, Bloomsburg, PA. Present were Mayor Claude Renninger; Council Members Don Pursel, Bill Brobst, Terry Lemon, Paul Kinney, Dan Knorr and Paul Houseknecht; Town Administrator Carol Mas and Code Enforcement/ Zoning/ Planning Officer Ed Fegley.

#### PUBLIC HEARING – ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

Richard Koch of Gannett Fleming summarized the proposed changes to the zoning ordinance. He emphasized the demographic data collected. The changes provide protection for the residents and still allow development for student housing. He believes the town has already provided their “fair share” of student housing. Bloomsburg is not required to provide more.

Solicitor J. Mihalik assured Council the ordinance was legal and would not be overturned if challenged. Bloomsburg has the power to restrict further development of student housing.

David Greenwald of 387 East Fifth Street asked for a meaning of RU-1 changing to RU and any differences in use that may create. B. Brobst explained that the RU-1 allows three unrelated students in each side of a double house provided the houses were separated by two structures of non-students. The change would require any new student housing development be 350 feet from the adjacent property lines and they would have to meet the parking requirements.

Michael Morrucci, a local developer, noted that would eliminate any further student housing development in the East Third and East Fourth Street area. He felt an actual study of the area should have been done. He also asked if it was consistent with the comprehensive plan.

Attorney Thomas Leipold, representing Shangrila Development Corporation, said Council was really looking at two changes – a map change and text change. Additional text was added to the purpose of the RU district to provide a place for student housing. A map his client provided showed only two areas in the proposed RU district above Fair Street that would accommodate student housing following the required 350 foot distance.

D. Knorr stated that Council considered waiting until Council changed in January but they would need to be brought up to speed. So far everyone is concentrating on the 350 foot distance requirement and not looking at the other good changes that are included such as allowing accessory apartments; removing nonresident student, university student, multiple student housing; making all parking stalls one size, and defining family. Mr. Knorr visited Mr. Zoppetti’s property off Glen Avenue and believed it might be suitable for a High Density district but the amendment shouldn’t be held up for that determination to be made.

B. Brobst mentioned that the new council will be embarking on the comprehensive plan update. Other revisions to the ordinance could be addressed at that time. He also agreed the Zoppetti property could be HD.

Matthew Zoppetti, a local developer, feels there are deficiencies in the amendment. He believes that landlords should have been involved in the amendment process. He mentioned the elimination of double-bank parking which he feels is working fine.

Gregg Wirth of 519 East Third Street and a member of Bloomsburg’s Planning Commission argued that developers are aware their properties will be grandfathered. The amendment is not a major overhaul but it does close up loopholes and refines definitions.

Gerry McGinn, a real estate agent, has been trying to sell a home on Lincoln Avenue since April. No one is interested since it is surrounded by student housing.

Mike McCloskey of East Third Street has put a lot of money in his home and wonders how he will be able to sell it when the time comes since his house sets among student houses.

Emily Rupert of 332 Glen Avenue told Council to say no more to student housing.

Barry Thorne of 819 East Third Street is new to Bloomsburg. He spent eight hours reviewing the amendment. He commended the committee on the outstanding work they did on the proposed changes and does not feel Council should back down from passing the amendment.

Kathleen Mulligan of 595 East Third Street has been impacted by the RU-1 district and will be impacted by the change from RU-1 to RU. There has been an increase to pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Mr. Morrucci's developments have changed the complexion of the entire neighborhood.

Kay Hartman of 924 Country Club Drive is worried the college will invade their neighborhood if student housing developments are allowed to continue.

Charlyne Eichner once lived on East Third Street. She found it unsafe for young children and has since traded students for flood waters.

Robert Aungst, Bloomsburg's planning consultant and a resident of Bloomsburg, believes the developers have exploited the ordinance and now the residents are crying out for it to stop.

Sondra Sabol who lives on Reservoir Hill wants the development to stop before her area becomes another Sesame Street. There are too many students there now, it is out of control. Residents from that vicinity stopped student housing from going onto the Warhurst property (now owned by M. Zoppetti). She asked Council to try this amendment – we deserve this. She also asked why the university cannot create more housing for their students.

In closing, D. Knorr said we need this in place before the new Council begins. We need to start this.

The hearing concluded at 7:20pm and a Special Meeting of Council convened at 7:25pm.

#### CITIZEN TO BE HEARD – MATTHEW ZOPPETTI

Matthew Zoppetti told Council he had canvassed the area above Fair Street that was proposed to be re-zoned. He believes Council should restrict students in some areas by setting up a residential district only.

#### CITIZEN TO BE HEARD – GREGG WIRTH

Gregg Wirth urged Council to pass the proposed zoning amendment to close loopholes currently present in the ordinance. Since the ordinance is a living document, changes can be made at a later date to address other issues. He does not feel it is good for Council to base decisions on people who say they cannot sell their houses because they have student housing around them. He introduced Barry Thorne who returned to Bloomsburg and bought a house on East Third Street not far from the university. B. Brobst agreed as he also purchased a home on East Street, a predominantly student housing area.

#### APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE NO. 909 – AMENDING CHAPTER 27 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF BLOOMSBURG

On a motion by B. Brobst, seconded by P. Houseknecht and voted on unanimously, Council adopted Ordinance No. 909 amending Chapter 27 of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Bloomsburg.

#### ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE NO. 910 – TAX LEVY OF 2008

On a motion by D. Knorr, seconded by B. Brobst and voted on unanimously, Council adopted Ordinance No. 910 setting the tax levy for 2008 as follows: 6.159 mills for general Town purposes; .981 mills for debt purposes; .38 mills for fire protection; .882

mills for street lighting purposes; and .200 mills for the Bloomsburg Public Library. The total real property tax is 8.602.

#### APPROVAL OF CORRECTED AUGUST 13, 2007 COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

On a motion by T. Lemon, seconded by P. Kinney and voted on unanimously, Council approved correcting page 5 of the August 13, 2007 Council meeting minutes to read "...purchasing of a new security video system and door alarms for the police department from North Eastern Technologies in the amount of \$4,410.00 and a panic alarm system from Keystone Communications in the amount of \$668.00 with budgeted **DUI funds**."

#### APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 10, 2007 COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

On a motion by D. Knorr, seconded by T. Lemon and voted on unanimously, Council approved the December 10, 2007 Council meeting minutes with no additions or corrections.

#### APPROVAL OF PAYMENT TO SEDA-COG FOR SERVICES RENDERED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BLOOMSBURG AREA FLOOD CONTROL PROJECT

On a motion by T. Lemon, seconded by P. Kinney and voted on unanimously, Council approved payment to SEDA-COG in the amount of \$4,636.23 for contracted services rendered in the development of the Bloomsburg Area Flood Control Project for the period May 16, 2007 through November 30, 2007.

#### APPROVAL OF WORKERS COMPENSATION INSURANCE CARRIER FOR 2008

On a motion by T. Lemon, seconded by P. Kinney and voted on unanimously, Council approved the proposal from EMC Insurance Company in the amount of \$117,041.00 for workers compensation insurance coverage for 2008.

#### APPROVAL OF AUTO/LIABILITY INSURANCE CARRIER FOR 2008

On a motion by T. Lemon, seconded by P. Kinney and voted on unanimously, Council approved the proposal from Travelers in the amount of \$64,901.00 for an auto/general liability coverage package for 2008.

#### APPROVAL OF RUCKLE AND YOHEY HANGAR LAND LEASE AGREEMENT

On a motion by T. Lemon, seconded by B. Brobst and voted on unanimously, Council approved a Hangar Land Lease Agreement with David Ruckle and John Yohey for a period of fifty (50) years. A ten (10) unit steel framed hangar will be constructed on a parcel of land, 246 feet by 123 feet. The land lease rent shall be \$24.00 per unit per year for the first five years. Rental rates will be adjusted at five year intervals.

Council adjourned into an executive session at 7:50pm to discuss union negotiations and reconvened at 8:12pm.

#### APPROVAL OF 2008-2010 UNITED STEEL, PAPER AND FORESTRY, RUBBER, MANUFACTURING, ENERGY, ALLIED INDUSTRIAL AND SERVICE WORKERS INTERNATIONAL UNION, AFL-CIO-CLC CONTRACT

On a motion by B. Brobst, seconded by P. Kinney and voted on unanimously, Council approved the 2008-2010 USW union contract with the Department of Public Works and Recycling employees.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:14pm.

CAROL L. MAS  
Town Administrator & Secretary