

A special meeting of Bloomsburg Town Council was held Tuesday, March 18, 2008, beginning at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, Town Hall, 301 East Second Street, Bloomsburg, PA. Present were Mayor Dan Knorr; Council Members Paul Kinney, Paul Houseknecht and Diane Levan; Town Administrator Carol Mas; Code Enforcement/Zoning/Planning Officer Ed Fegley and Solicitor Jack Mihalik. Absent were Council Members Kathy Shepperson, Sylvia Costa and W. Carey Howell.

PUBLIC HEARING – AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE

Prior to the beginning of the special meeting, a Public Hearing was held at 6:00pm on the proposed changes to Chapter 27 (Zoning) of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Bloomsburg.

Emily Rupert of 332 Glen Avenue questioned the issue of grandfathering. J. Mihalik explained that a property owner has the right to have as many tenants as they did prior to the adoption of the ordinance. The proposed amendment set the number of tenants at the 2007 licensing year with the landlord proving a previous non-conforming use.

Thomas Leipold, Attorney for Matthew Zoppetti, disagreed. He feels it should be the responsibility of the municipality to prove non-conformity. The total number of tenants should be based on the physical capacity of the structure.

D. Knorr believes that by basing the number of allowable tenants on the physical space capacity could increase the number of students permitted in the structure.

J. Mihalik suggested Council adopt Parts 1 and 2 of the amendment but not 3. He will meet with Attorney Leipold and E. Fegley to work out the non-conforming use issue.

Rich Ridgway of 95 Friar Lane has a three bedroom home for rent but understands under this amendment he would not be able to have each bedroom rented as the total number of unrelated tenants would be two (2).

D. Knorr is not willing to run zoning on the few exceptions to the rule and leave residential areas open to uninhibited student housing.

Attorney Leipold, on behalf of his client, asked Council to consider dividing the new Residential–Urban (R-U) District into two sections with one of the sections that includes Mr. Zoppetti’s land be changed to High Density (H-D) District. M. Zoppetti said this would give him more flexibility on the structures he could build on that particular parcel.

Emily Rupert is not in favor of giving Mr. Zoppetti any more High Density (H-D) areas.

Ann Beaver of 2 Pine Street inquired as to the number of students going into Mr. Zoppetti’s new building on Irondale Road. It would be more than 24. She is concerned about adding to the already congested traffic on Glen Avenue which they will be using to get to the campus.

Sandra Sabol of 86 Reservoir Street has lived in the area for 45 years. She has seen the increase in student housing. She admits that Mr. Zoppetti makes nice student housing but there are already too many students using Glen Avenue. He will be adding another 78 students in that area. She would like to see families moving back to town.

M. Zoppetti has concerns with the new R-U District and the 350 foot requirement. He feels this will put students where they aren’t wanted. J. Mihalik noted that the R-U District was already changed and this amendment just corrected the boundaries.

Sandra Sabol mentioned the consultant’s testimony that Bloomsburg already has adequate student housing.

Emily Rupert added that the town’s solicitor said at two different meetings that the town could say no to any new student housing. J. Mihalik confirmed that the town can say they have provided their fair share of student housing.

D. Knorr does not agree since student housing is the economic driver in Bloomsburg. It is better we control the housing and the number of students than to eliminate any further growth.

Hearing no additional public input, the Public Hearing concluded at 6:55pm.

APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE NO. 911 AMENDING CHAPTER 27 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES

On a motion by D. Levan, seconded by P. Kinney and voted on unanimously, Council approved Ordinance No. 911 amending Chapter 27 of the Code of Ordinances. Adopted were Part 1, amending the Zoning Map and Part 2 amending Part 5, District Regulations. Part 3 amending Part 8, Supplementary Regulations, was not adopted.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:57pm.

CAROL L. MAS
Town Administrator & Secretary