

CITY OF JOHNSTOWN PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, January 2, 2025

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, ROLL CALL:

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The following members of Planning Commission were present for roll call:

Chairman Carthew and Commissioners Buday, White, and Casals. Michael Grandinetti was absent. Commissioner Huchel arrived at 5:20 P.M.

In addition, Codes Enforcement Manager Dave Williams and City Manager Art Martynuska were present. Jason Mash with Mash Engineering was also in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT (AGENDA ITEMS):

No comment was offered by members of the public.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. White motioned to approve the Minutes of the December 4, 2024 Planning Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Buday. A roll call vote was taken:

Planning Commission:

James Carthew – Chairman – YES

James White – YES

Donald Buday – YES

Tomas Casals – YES

The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS:

LAND MERGER - Donna L. Ickes

JRT, LLC. surveyors of property owned by Donna L. Ickes located at 184 Peelor Street, Johnstown, PA, submitted a proposal that would allow two adjacent lots of the same ownership to merge that would result in one 0.25 total acre lot. This proposed land merger was reviewed and approved by the Cambria County Planning Commission. The City Staff also reviewed and found no issues with the proposed land merger as requested. The matter was opened up for public comments or questions.

Mr. Dave Williams added there was no plan for development on the property.

Mr. Buday motioned to approve the land merger. The motion was seconded by Mr. Casals. A roll call vote was taken:

Planning Commission:

James Carthew – Chairman – YES
James White – YES
Donald Buday – YES
Tomas Casals – YES
The motion passed unanimously.

LAND MERGER & BOUNDARY LINE CHANGE -

Thomas W. Pawcio/Thomas & Georgia Leahman

Mash Engineering submitted a proposed subdivision that would merge two adjacent lots of the same ownership and a boundary line change with a neighboring property, resulting in one 0.19 total acre lot. The proposed land merger and boundary line change was reviewed and approved by the Cambria County Planning Commission. The City Staff also reviewed the proposal and had not found any issues with the land merger boundary line change as requested.

Mr. Mash discussed the proposed land merger and explained that Mr. Pawcio desired to merge the pieces of land together to have a bigger piece of property in the hopes of building a garage. Mr. Leahman and Mr. Pawcio have also come to an agreement to slide the property line down to create a graveled area. A new deed would be created for Parcel number 3.

Mr. Mash confirmed that a map was reviewed, agreed upon, and notarized by both parties.

Chairman Carthew motioned to approve the land merger and boundary line change. The motion was seconded by Mr. Buday. A roll call vote was taken:

Planning Commission:

James Carthew – Chairman – YES
James White – YES
Donald Buday – YES
Tomas Casals – YES
The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

URBAN MURAL PROGRAM

Mr. Barry Polster was not in attendance. City Manager Martynuska stated a meeting was to occur with some other art people. There was a conversation with representatives of the Southern Allegheny Museum of Art. Mr. Martynuska stated that progress has been made on the project.

GIS SOFTWARE

City Manager Martynuska stated that discussions and meetings have taken place with Steve Kocsis with Cambria County GIS. E-mails were also exchanged. Much information has been transferred into the system, but licenses have to be updated. Steve Kocsis will continue to be involved during this implementation of software.

PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT

Further discussion occurred regarding the status of the CJL Engineering Assessment Report. City Manager Martynuska stated that part of the remediation has been completed, but the work continues. Industrial humidifiers were purchased for the basement, and ServPro will provide a cleanup of hazards. Progress is being made slowly. A meeting will be held with Representative Burns regarding a public safety facility. The decision is still ongoing as to whether the current building would be renovated or a new one built. Offers are still ongoing, and there is approximately \$5 million in available funding. The current building will require an estimated \$12 million, and there has yet to be a good estimate on a new building. A discussion followed regarding where to build a new building.

The sewer connection on the building has been completed. Since the trenching has been performed, there have been no reports of water in the basement. The sidewalk of the building is still in need of repair and has rooms under it.

The Commission further discussed the funding and benefits for a remodel versus rebuild.

The HVAC system update was brought up. City Manager Martynuska stated that this would fall in line with the decision whether to remodel or rebuild. Improving the air quality and getting rid of the mold in the basement was the first priority.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Art Martynuska stated the data collecting process continues. Lists of contacts have been developed with additional input. Meetings are being scheduled with various groups and community foundations. Some of the groups and foundations mentioned were 1889 and CamTran. A schedule of the upcoming meetings will be sent via e-mail. A survey will be distributed to support this effort.

ZONING OFFICER

The Planning Commission has been seeking the hiring of a Zoning Officer. Dave Williams plans to become the Zoning Officer within the next month or two to aid in the process of land development and general planning.

City Manager Martynuska noted discussions with Laurel Municipal Inspection Agency, one of the City's third party UCC plan review agencies, on providing Zoning review assistance. Art stated their staff will be located on the first floor at City Hall to be easily accessible. A meeting occurred recently to discuss transitions moving forward. The city will maintain control over the matter.

CITY STAFF REPRESENTATION

The Commission determined this item was no longer of importance and could be removed from the agenda.

ZONING REVIEW

Commissioner Huchel suggested a review and discussion on a couple of items from the previous Planning Commission meeting. She requested clarity as to the side lot program, particularly as regards lien (City Taxes) forgiveness. Mr. Williams stated he found an inter-office memo from February 28, 2022, and also located an application detailing the side lot program. It involves lien forgiveness and it is questionable as to whether this should be an ordinance. Additional clarification and review is needed in order to make future decisions.

Commissioner Huchel stated she had been told there was a program where if a person owned a property, and if an adjoining property became available on tax day, it could be purchased in some way only if there was a lien on it. She added that the lien could be forgiven for a \$500.00 fee, but she could not find concrete documentation regarding this previously.

The Commission discussed the land bank and JRA's taking of properties. The Commission will discuss the side lot program with Mr. Andrews moving forward.

Commissioner Huchel's second concern related to the zoning limitations regarding the sale of animals and whether it applied to the adoption of animals. The matter will be investigated and an update provided.

It was brought to the attention of the Planning Commission, that zoning limitations around artists/makers living in the same building as a retail outlet was on the agenda. A discussion followed regarding the difference between residential and retail space. Commissioner Huchel felt this was mostly for the existing commercial spaces. City Manager Martynuska stated the space would be considered as a mixed occupancy. As long as the UCC is being met and there is mixed occupancy, no zoning violation existed.

MAIN STREET/CENTRAL PARK REVITILATION PROJECT

The Final Design and Construction documents were presented and submitted to the City for final review on August 6, 2024. City Manager Martynuska stated this is moving forward, and interviews will soon be conducted for a potential replacement for Construction Manager/Construction Administration RFP. Advertising did take place and applicants were received.

City Manager Martynuska added a new residential and construction officer and a new fiscal officer for DCD would soon be employed.

City Manager Martynuska was questioned as to how the Construction Manger bid structure worked within the City. He stated the process would be that the CM would manage the project for the RFP.

Chairman Carthew hoped that the project continues to move along and stays on schedule.

Johnstown Planning Commission

Meeting Minutes

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Commissioner Buday discussed an issue of having auxiliary structures on a lot. He said there were homes torn down and a gentleman wanted to build a shop/garage. He was not allowed to do so because it would be a commercial structure. The City is missing out on new construction.

City Manager Martynuska contacted Melissa Komar of JRA to inquire if all liens to a property get resolved when the land bank gets the property. It was determined that this only happens through the judicial process. The land bank does have to satisfy liens attached to a property obtained.

RECESS/ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 6:02 P.M.