

**BETHLEHEM PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
December 17, 2014
BETHLEHEM TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM**

Present: Dave Wiley, Sandy Laleme, Peter Roy, Mike Bruno, Don Lavoie, Andrea Bryant and Chris McGrath.

Absent: Alecia Loveless and Libby Staples

Dave Wiley opens the meeting at 6:00 pm and appoints Don Lavoie as a full member for Alecia Loveless.

The board reviews the minutes from the November 12, 2014 meeting. Don has emailed Dawn asking her to change the wording in his statement regarding Dave recusing himself for the Arlington Hotel public hearing. Email is attached. New wording is:

Don Lavoie asks Dave Wiley if, as a property owner in the close vicinity of this project, if he planned to sit on the board for this public hearing. Don continued to state that in the past someone who owned property across the street would usually take the more conservative approach and recuse themselves. Dave feels he can sever on this board without any bias and therefore will remain seated for the public hearing.

Motion by Chris McGrath, seconded by Dave Wiley, to accept the minutes from the 11/12/2014 Planning Board meeting as amended. Peter Roy abstains from voting due to absence. The remaining members vote in favor, minutes accepted as amended.

The board reviews the minutes from December 10, 2014. Sandy points out an error on the top of page 3. The new wording is:

Sandy also feels that the board cannot impose impact fees on this application because they are not imposing them across the board.

Motion by Peter Roy, seconded by Chris McGrath, to accept the minutes from the 12/10/2014 Planning Board meeting as amended. Andrea, Don, and Mike abstain, the remaining members vote in favor, minutes accepted as amended.

Dave moves on to the continued public hearing for the Arlington Hotel from November 12th. He invites Mike Norman to come forward to present the new plans, which include the changes requested at the last meeting, as well as Jack Anderson's request for changes.

Mike reviews each item as well as Jack Anderson's request for emergency access from Arlington St.

Sandy reviews Jack's letter and feels what has been submitted fits the request.

A discussion takes place regarding the traffic study. (Attached)

Joel Strolovic makes a statement thanking everyone for their time and consideration.

Questions arise about delivery trucks, busses, walkways/open space, and dining area.

Dave opens the discussion to the public.

Attorney Bill Oliver addresses the board on behalf of the Orlandellas, who own the property at 30 Arlington Street, were unable to attend as Mr. Orlandella is serving in the military. They are concerned about the bank between the Orlandella property and the Arlington Hotel. They feel it needs attention. Attorney Oliver noticed the matter was addressed on the plans. On behalf of his clients he wants to assure that lighting won't be an issue, and that no lights from the hotel will be shining into the Orlandella home.

Dave satisfactorily addresses both of these concerns.

John Degroat, 124 Lewis Hill Road, expresses concerns about the lack of street lighting and water runoff.

Amy Delventhal, 65 Lewis Hill Road, offers that it is difficult to sort out what concerns are with the Arlington verses the Synagogue. She is still concerned about the traffic, but realized this may not related to this specific project. She is also concerned with the parking and what would happen if the Arlington ever sold and the new owners opened up their dining room to the public. Dave explains that they would have to come before the board for a change of use. This is noted on the plan.

Rick Robie, caretaker for the Arlington, points out that traffic and parking on Lewis Hill Road have been an issue even with the Arlington closed for 3 or 4 years. Other residents often have cars parked on the side of the road overnight and local home tours and other events cause parking issues. He asks that people don't confuse the Rabbi's house and the Synagogue with the Arlington. He adds that any drainage problems were taken care of a few months ago and he keeps an eye on it.

Dick Robie, 59 Strawberry Hill, wants to remind everyone, that in its heyday, Bethlehem saw 30 hotels, a movie theater with 2 shows a night, 2 drug stores, 3 grocery stores, and a taxi company that ran until midnight. No new businesses in town leads to high tax bills. He states, "We can't have the same 10 people running the show. Enough is enough. Bethlehem needs something." He urges the board to welcome the Arlington.

Donna Devlin Young, 60 Lewis Hill Road, wishes to thank Mike Norman for addressing the concerns form the last meeting, as well as the question in her letter to the Planning Board (attached). She states she is

not lobbying to save the old hotel, but has items she would like revisited; a completion bond, capacity of the hotel, the size of the dining room, and Dave Wiley's recusal from the public hearing.

Sandy interjects that the board spent an hour and a half going over all of this at the last meeting. It's time to move forward. Dave agrees that these matters, including his recusal, have been addressed.

Christopher Hodge, who has been with the project since 2006, explains it didn't get completed then due to the financial crisis. He doesn't think it would be fair to ask for a completion bond because this is private property, and no one could have seen the financial crisis coming.

Mike Bruno agrees, the board cannot set a precedent by asking this project for a completion bond. If the board did that then every house would require a bond.

The conversation regarding a completion bond continues with comparisons to numerous projects in town, i.e. Village at Maplewood, Miller's Run, and Balance Bethlehem.

Motion made by Chris McGrath, seconded by Sandy Laleme, that no bond be required for the Arlington Project. Chris, Peter, Mike, Dave, and Sandy in favor, Don opposed, Andrea abstains. Motion carries.

A question is raised about asbestos. Dave assures everyone that any demolition permit requires an asbestos study/environmental report, and how it will be disposed of. Joel Strolovic states the study has already been done.

A brief conversation takes place regarding the sequencing of events. Dave wonders if the board should set a condition stating demolition should take place first, before construction. Andrea and Sandy feel the board does not have that authority. Chris Hodges states they cannot move forward with construction until the demolition is complete.

Motion made by Sandy Laleme, seconded by Chris McGrath to approve the Site Plan Review application.

Don asks about conditions. The following suggestions were made:

1. Restore eroded land of the Orlandella property.
2. A written statement regarding the status of the sewer submitted to the Planning Board.
3. Chair must receive approval of the final plan from the fire chief.

Don then questions whether or not a condition can be placed that the dining room not be open to the public and wonders if the board should not seek legal counsel on the matter. Dave feels that having the matter stated on the plans is enough. Don thinks the board needs a legal opinion regarding other uses.

The conversation then moves to whether or not a member of the public should not be allowed to fully express their concerns. Dave feels it's the role of the chair to keep the conversation relevant to the Site Plan Review application. Matters relating to the synagogue were a separate issue.

Chris McGrath withdraws his motion, and Sandy Laleme withdraws her second.

Motion made by Sandy Laleme, seconded by Chris McGrath, to approve the Site Plan Review application for the Arlington Hotel with 3 conditions. 1. The eroded land on the Orlandella's property be restored, 2. A written statement regarding the status of the sewer by submitted to the Planning Board, and 3. Chief Anderson must approve the final plan. All member is favor, motion carries to approve Site Plan Review for the Arlington Hotel.

Other business:

Don would like to know if the rest of the board feels there should be a procedure in place for the submission of audio statements.

Dawn will call LGC to see if there are guidelines.

Motion made by Sandy Laleme, seconded by Dave Wiley, to adjourn at 8:05. All members in favor, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Ferringo
Planning and Zoning Clerk