

Town of Phillipsburg
Planning Board Meeting
525 Warren Street
Minutes for Aug 24, 2017

Chairman Corcoran called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm and led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Corcoran read the Open Public Meeting Acts Statement. Those Present were: Mayor Stephen Ellis, Chairman Kent Corcoran, Keith Zwicker, David P. Morrisette, Jennifer McBride, Dominick Vangeli, Rosanne Rohm, Darren Bodogh, Bernie Rooney, and Bill Duffy. Also in attendance were William Mandry, Planning Board Attorney; Mr. Bogard, Board Engineer standing in for Stan Schrek; and Ms. Charee Carney, Recording Secretary.

Resolution June 22,2017 Planning Board Meeting (Modifications to the phasing)- **OPUS KTV Case # 15-004**

Mr. Duffy approved Case # 15-004 Resolution from June meeting and Ms. McBride seconded. The vote carried with one abstention from Darren Bodogh.

New Business

17-002 Bourbon Street

Mr Bogard stated that there is more information needed, such as a traffic study and recommended moving the case to the next meeting. Attorney Mandry stated that the applicant will not have to renote and information must be submitted by Sept 1 to be on the Sept agenda.

Attorney Edleston asked if the applicant is planning to have a traffic study by next Friday. The applicant stated that they will address everything on Mr. Schrek's letter by Sept 1st.

Mr. Joe Getz presentation for Union Square, marketing and revitalization study paid for by the UEZ.

Mr. Getz gave a brief history of the projects his company worked on and how they helped jumpstart communities after Hurricane Sandy.

Mr. Getz stated that 50 to 75 thousand people go to the Union Square area from I-78, and from the Route 22 Bridge, 42 to 47 thousand people every day. The amount of people is enough to sustain an economic development. For local traffic, 9,900 cars go across the free bridge. He stated that there aren't any signage for parking; which makes it difficult for people that are out of town to find parking.

They looked at the audience segments within a 15 minute walk, which included the Lafayette area and other areas in Easton to Delaware Park. There are 8,700 people in the area and 5,200 employees, which is not a big enough economy to sustain South Main Street and support the businesses. As for the regional audience, which only brings to the middle of Bethlehem, 34,000 people, which is a target rich environment. The tourists are mostly parents and grandparents bringing children live as much as 60 miles away, which are about 914,000 people a year. He suggests we conduct a consumer survey for the tourists to find out more information about what they want. We have more people coming to Union Square from Baltimore than Allentown.

Mr. Getz stated the demographics support that the audience will drive 10 miles for specialty food. The unmet demand for restaurants is 53.9 million and a quarter of that demand is definitely capturable. He also recommended capturing the college red cup spending. He feels that there is a significant economic opportunity. The proposed Perucci development on River Side will produce about 16.7 million dollars a year in new retail demand.

Phillipsburg, particularly Union Square, has lost its definition, even if it is obtained by shrubbery. The traffic is chaotic and the area is restricted. The area needs a gathering spot by the waterfront that is an asset. He does not recommend competing with internet or with Easton but recommends complementing Easton.

Mr. Getz recommends recreating the square, creating gathering spots, make parking visible, and calming the traffic. By putting in benches, it will help shoppers feel more comfortable and help them want to stay around and shop. Mr. Getz recommends having 2 to 3 shopping enclaves a week. He recommends also the need to celebrate the waterfront by cutting down the trees, removing the gas station, the building and create a park so people can come and

relax. Small trees can help create the square. It should be a primary place for things such as movies in the park, Christmas tree lighting, fireworks display. People will have to walk past the stores to get to the new park.

The road before the boat ramp should be closed off and then eventually narrowed and be a right hand turn only for westbound traffic.

Next Mr. Getz recommends connecting the cities. The bridge will be relit with cable soon. Mayor Ellis stated that the lights on the bridge need to be LED and one day out of the year, half should be red and white and half garnet and grey.

Phillipsburg looks like trees from the Easton side, that there isn't anything over there. He recommends cutting down the trees and light up the town buildings with lights. So people will notice Phillipsburg.

The parking lot is not easily found and the parking signs are difficult to see. Mr. Getz recommends putting up new visible, simple parking signs.

Mr. Getz said that Easton is doing a study for a new hotel. 138,000 people could possibly stay over and then their spending will increase by 79%. Mr. Getz recommends putting in a hotel on the waterfront to help increase the spending of visitors. He recommends having people park in the south and entice them to the free bridge and put all of the offerings in the way. He recommends asking the building owners to accept very reasonable or no lease rates for six months and the town of Phillipsburg will bring business in for them. Mr. Getz suggests creating fact sheets for each property; make an event for prospective businesses, provide coffee and donuts and bus them in to see the buildings.

People are fleeing Jersey City to go to Easton because Jersey City is very expensive. He stated that Easton is out of room and Phillipsburg can accommodate, from Jimmy's north. A Hilton or a Ramada would be suitable and possibly housing. Waterside dining would be ideal which can be year round. Construct a small craft marina. Close the boat ramp and move it to the marina.

Mr. Getz said that we need to work not compete with Easton. Phillipsburg does not need to hire a full time promotion and talk to Easton and maybe buy 10 to 25 percent of their promotions manager and do a joint survey. They get more inquiries than they know what to do with it and they don't send it to Phillipsburg because they don't have a plan.

Mayor Ellis stated that Easton and Phillipsburg are a regional economy and if Easton failed, so would Phillipsburg and vice versa.

Mr. Getz stated that the next steps will be the marketing material and the building lists, after he's given the O.K.

Mr. Rooney stated that he would like the trees to be removed as soon as possible. Mayor Ellis stated that the trees are not trees we would like to keep. Mr. Bodogh said that he would like to see a plan for after the trees come down because it can look like a bomb hit if not planned properly. Mr. Getz recommends decks on the riverfront and also fruit trees, but they should not spend a tremendous amount of money on the park. He has seen many towns that have made that mistake.

Mr. Zwicker stated that the executive director of the Bridge Commission is redoing the lights on the bridge.

Mr. Duffy asked if Phillipsburg should have one event on the river every weekend and Mr. Getz responded that it should be once or twice a week. Mr. Duffy recommended that Phillipsburg have something for the kids during the Easton's Farmer's Market and maybe charge a small fee. Mr. Getz recommends only having the stores open during the events, for now. Right now we have car traffic and Phillipsburg needs foot traffic. When visitors come for the train, they go on the train and they get in their car and go someplace else.

Mr. Zwicker recommended taking out the gas station by the black bridge, making an entrance to the train. Mr. Getz said that there is green acre money and blue acre money and that would help fund projects such as that.

Minutes- Aug 3, 2017

Mr. Bodogh motioned to approve the minutes and Ms. McBride seconded. The motion carried with abstentions from Mr. Rooney and Mr. Vangeli.

There being no further business before the Board this evening, the meeting was adjourned at 8:03.

Respectfully Submitted,

Charee Carney
Recording Secretary