

PLANNING COMMISSION
AUGUST 23, 2016

The Gladwin Planning Commission met in regular session August 23, 2016. The meeting was called to order by Chair Darlington at 5:15 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioners Present: Darlington, Stout, English, Wenzel, Wendell, David
Commissioners Absent: Clayton

Also Present: Zoning Administrator Weaver, Nancy Bodnar, Karen Stroh, Sheryl Wright, Dick Metz, Robert Giannola, Carolyn Giannola and John Abbott.

Motion by Commissioner David, supported by Commissioner Stout to approve the minutes of the July 26, 2016 meeting. All ayes. Motion carried.

The first item of business was a scheduled hearing for a special use request to construct and operate a water treatment facility in the R-1B district north of where the city water well and tower is located. A motion was made by Commissioner Wenzel and supported by Commissioner Stout to adjourn the meeting and go into the public hearing. All ayes. Motion carried, public hearing opened at 5:16 p.m.

Weaver read the public hearing notice. She then briefly explained the two step process whereby the water is filtered and minerals are removed, eliminating the sulfur odor and iron. The building to house the equipment would measure 36 by 50 feet and would be 14 feet high. The split face construction would resemble what is on the existing wellhouse. It would be accessed by Hwy. M-18 and would not be manned other than Department of Public Works personnel checking it on a daily basis. The equipment would cycle or re-generate on a weekly basis similar to the way a water softener operates in a residential home. Noise would be kept to a minimum and every effort would be made to keep as many of the existing trees as possible to act as visual and additional noise buffers. There were no comments from the commissioners and Darlington asked those in attendance for comments and questions.

Mr. Giannola, the adjacent property owner to the east, had several questions and concerns beginning with his opposition to re-zoning the property to commercial status. He commented he was concerned as commercial properties lowered the values of adjacent residential properties. He was assured the property was not being re-zoned; that this municipal use was allowed with special considerations. He asked whether or not the sulfur odors from the water would be released outside the building and he was told they would not be. Concerns were also raised about possible noise from the operation, appearance of the building and with hopes that as few trees be removed as possible. The greenery there now is an effective barrier to traffic noises from M-18. He asked where the building would be located as it was difficult to visualize looking at the preliminary site plan provided. It was also stated that area owners hope the building can be placed as far south on the property as is feasible. Zoning Administrator Weaver told him that the building would start at roughly where there appeared to be an abandoned utility pole and extend east 50 feet. Special use restrictions in the ordinance mandated a minimum of 40 foot setbacks from all sides and the engineer indicated that those setbacks could be met. Mr. Giannola asked if the lot had been surveyed and if someone would point out corners before construction commenced? He was concerned that he was unsure of the boundaries. Weaver noted that a survey had been done and Chairperson Darlington assured him that construction would not begin without clearly defined property lines.

Mr. Giannola asked why the building had to be put on that lot? Why couldn't it be located on the lots which already housed the wellhouse and water tower? It was speculated it was because of elevation that it needed to be sited in such a manner (the lot in question is fairly higher than the water tower lots) but the city's engineer would be asked. Weaver pointed out the differences in elevation between the two parcels on the preliminary plans and noted that the lot was purchased approximately ten years ago as it was deemed a desirable lot for such future operations. Possible funding from grant sources had prompted the City Council to proceed with their plans.

Richard Metz asked how would the system operate? Would water be pumped from the wellhouse, etc.? Weaver responded that water would be pumped from the wellhouse to the treatment facility, undergo the iron and odor removal process and flow back to the tower where it would be stored for use.

Mr. Giannola noted that his water was of very good quality with no odor; he did not see the need for a facility of this kind. Commissioner English noted that poor water quality had been a problem in the city for many years and something needs to be done as this does harm to appliances and infrastructure in addition to looking and smelling unpleasant and while one area of town was not experiencing problems, many others were.

Richard Metz asked if the adjacent properties would experience bubbling in their sinks and toilets when the system regenerates and also will the filtering operation be constant or cycle periodically? It is believed that the re-cycling could probably be programmed to cycle periodically but again, the engineer could best answer that. Mr. Metz noted that when sewers are being cleaned, there is the increased bubbling activity in household plumbing fixtures. Mr. Metz and Mr. Abbott also commented that they have experienced basement and crawl space water infiltration since the upgrades to M-18 were made and the ditches were filled in. They requested reassurance that those problems would not be increased as a result of the construction and operation of the facility.

Mr. Metz also noted concerns about the proposed 8 inch sanitary sewer which would discharge from the proposed facility. Was that adequate and could the sewer system handle that or would there be adverse consequences to neighbors as well? Would upgrades be needed to the system to accommodate additional discharge? A question was asked about whether or not there were any plans to raise the utility rates and although grant funding may be procured, what are the anticipated maintenance costs?

A motion was made by Stout with support from Wenzel to adjourn the hearing and go back into regular session. All ayes. Motion carried.

It was decided that the request would be tabled until answers to the questions raised by the neighbors could be researched. The city's engineer would be asked to attend the next regular meeting scheduled for September 27, 2016 at 5:15 pm. Darlington thanked those who attended and asked questions.

The second item of business was a request from Sheryl Wright for multiple signs at the site of the former stained glass shop, 320 W. Cedar, where two businesses will be operating, both a yarn and a quilt shop. This is allowed under the ordinance but must have planning approval. Motion by English, supported

by Wenzel, to approve the request as long as the signs, which have not been finalized, meet the requirements of the ordinance. All ayes. Motion carried.

Updates from Weaver about the following: Cynthia Forsythe is expected to apply for rezoning on the church property. She purchased in a C-2 district and is applying for the re-zoning to R1A, so it can be used as a residence.

Nothing has been received from Beacon and Bridge.

Weaver has been in contact with the City attorney about a request for possible street vacation where Spring Street ends at the south end. More information is being sought.

Attorney Jacobson has also drafted a document to be recorded regarding the Christina Lawrence property at 310 N. Bowery Ave. The property is in violation of the current City ordinance. The document will then show up on any title search. The commissioners also expressed support for moving forward with enforcement measures.

Weaver was approached asking if a single-family residence in Pine Ridge Estates would be allowed to be used as a group home for some folks transitioning out of the New Dawn Shelter. The zoning is not compatible.

Questions were also asked about whether or not the shelter is complying with the original process for working with the homeless population from Gladwin County as was promised as part of the special use process approval. Weaver will follow up with Doug Piggot, the planner.

Motion by Stout, supported by Wendell to adjourn the meeting. All ayes. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan David
Secretary

