

**CITY OF NEWARK
DELAWARE
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING**

November 7, 2012

7:00 p.m.

Present at the 7:00 p.m. meeting were:

Chairman: James Bowman

Commissioners Present: Patricia Brill
Bob Cronin
Angela Dressel
Andy Hegedus
Edgar Johnson

Commissioners Absent: Peggy Brown

Staff Present: Maureen Feeney Roser, Planning and Development Director
Mike Fortner, Development Supervisor

Chairman James Bowman called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 2, 2012 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING.

ON MOTION BY BRILL, SECONDED BY DRESSEL, THE OCTOBER 2, 2012 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS RECEIVED. THE MOTION WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

2. REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF THE MINOR SUBDIVISION OF PROPERTIES LOCATED AT 29-35 PROSPECT AVENUE (FORMERLY KNOWN AS 45 PROSPECT AVENUE) IN ORDER TO SUBDIVIDE THE TWO EXISTING TAX PARCELS (18-014.00-74 AND 18-014.00-075) INTO FOUR SEPARATE LOTS TO CONSTRUCT TWO THREE-STORY TWIN (DUPLEX) BUILDINGS AND ASSOCIATED PARKING AND ACCESS WAYS.

Ms. Feeney Roser explained that she normally summarized her report at this time, however, there was no one present in the room except the applicant, counsel, City Staff and Planning Commissioners, everyone has read the report and is familiar with it. Therefore, Ms. Feeney Roser simply read the recommendation from the report with the Commission's approval, but for the record, the report follows:

"On September 20, 2012, the Planning and Development Department received an application from South Pond Properties, LLC for a minor subdivision for the properties located at 29-35 Prospect Avenue, formerly known as 45 Prospect Avenue. The applicants are requesting development approval in order to subdivide two existing tax parcels (18-014.00-74 and 18-014.00-075) into four separate lots in order to construct two three-story twin (duplex) buildings and associated parking and access ways.

Please see the attached McBride and Ziegler minor subdivision plan, supporting letter, and building elevation drawings.

The Planning and Development Department report on 29-35 Prospect Avenue follows:

Property Description and Related Data

1. Location:

South side of Prospect Avenue approximately 250 ft. west of the intersection of Prospect Avenue and Wilbur Street.

2. Size:

.3612 +/- acres

3. Existing Land Use:

The property is currently fenced and mowed open lawn with a gravel driveway on the eastern end of the property leading to a three car garage in the southeastern corner.

4. Physical Condition of the Site:

The 29-35 Prospect Avenue property is fenced and mowed open lawn with a three car garage and several large trees in the rear of the property. In terms of topography, it is relatively flat with a gentle slope to the southeast.

Regarding soils, according to the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service and the subdivision submittal, the property is composed of Elsinboro-Delanco-Urban Land Complex soil, 0 to 8 percent slopes. The Conservation Service does not indicate development limitations for this soil type.

5. Planning and Zoning:

29-35 Prospect Avenue is zoned RD. RD zoning permits the following:

- A. A one-family, semidetached dwelling.
- B. Accessory uses and accessory buildings subject to special requirements.
- C. Cluster development subject to site plan approval as provided in Article XXVII
- D. A one-family detached dwelling.
- E. The taking of nontransient boarders or roomers in a one-family dwelling by an owner-occupant family resident of the premises, provided there is no display or advertising on the premises in connection with such use and provided there are not more than three boarders or roomers in any one-family dwelling.
- F. The taking of nontransient boarders or roomers in a one-family dwelling by a non-owner-occupant family resident on the premises, is not a use as a matter of right, but is a conditional use subject to special requirements, including the requirement for a rental permit, and provided there are not more than two boarders or roomers in any one-family dwelling.
- G. Church or other place of worship, seminary or convent, parish house, or Sunday school building.
- H. Public and private elementary, junior, and senior high schools.
- I. Municipal park, playground, athletic field, recreational building, and community center operated on a noncommercial basis for recreation purposes.
- J. Municipal utilities; street rights of way.
- K. Swimming pool, private; swimming pool, public.
- L. Temporary building, temporary real estate or construction office.
- M. Utility transmission and distribution lines.
- N. Public transportation bus or transit stops for the loading and unloading of passengers.
- O. Student Homes, with special requirements

RD also permits, with a Council-granted Special Use Permit, the following:

- A. Nursing home, rest home, or home for the aged, subject to special requirements.

- B. If approved by the Council, property in a residential zone adjacent to an area zoned "business" or "industrial" may be used for parking space as an accessory use to a business use, whether said business use be a nonconforming use in the residential zone or a business use in said adjacent area zoned "business" or "industrial."
- C. Police and fire station, library, museum, and art gallery.
- D. Country club, regulation golf course, including customary accessory uses subject to special requirements.
- E. Professional office in residential dwellings for the resident-owner of single-family dwellings, with special requirements, including the requirement that the professional office is permitted only for the resident-owner of a single-family dwelling.
- F. Customary home occupations subject to special requirements.
- G. Substation, electric, and gas facilities, subject to special requirements.
- H. Day care centers, kindergartens, preschools, day nursery schools, and orphanages, subject to special requirements.
- I. Public transportation bus or transit shelters.
- J. Public transportation bus or transit off-street parking facilities.
- K. Swimming club, private (nonprofit) subject to special regulations.

Regarding adjacent properties, the lands immediately adjacent to the east, south and western portions of the site and to the north across Prospect Avenue are all zoned RD and contain single family homes, the majority of which are twins.

Regarding comprehensive planning, the Newark Comprehensive Development Plan IV calls for "single family residential (medium density)" uses at the 29-35 Prospect Avenue. The Comprehensive Development Plan defines single family residential (medium density) as overall densities of four to ten dwelling units per acre. The 29-35 Prospect Avenue minor subdivision plan calls for eleven units per acre.

Status of the Site Design

Please note that at this stage in the Newark subdivision review process, applicants need only show the general site design and the architectural character of the project. For the site design, specific details taking into account topographic and other natural features must be included in the construction improvement plan. If the construction improvement plan, which is reviewed and approved by the operating departments, does not conform substantially to the approved subdivision site plan, the construction improvement plan is referred back to City Council for its further review and reapproval. That is, initial Council subdivision plan approval means that the general site concept and more specific architectural design has received City endorsement, with the developer left with some limited flexibility in working out the details of the plan -- within Code determined and approved subdivision set parameters -- to respond in a limited way to changing needs and circumstances. This does not mean, however, that the Planning Commission cannot make site design or related recommendations that City Council could include in the subdivision agreement for the project.

Be that as it may, as the Commission can see from the subdivision plan, the 29-35 Prospect Avenue plan calls for the demolition of an existing three-car garage and the construction of two three-story twin buildings, resulting in four units with twelve parking spaces and associated access.

While not required by the City's Subdivision Regulations for a minor subdivision outside the boundaries of downtown, the applicant has provided the proposed architectural design of the four units for Planning Commission consideration.

Departmental Comments

The City's Planning and Operating Departments reviewed the 29-35 Prospect Avenue plan and provided the comments below. Where appropriate, the minor subdivision plan should be revised prior to its review by City Council. The Departmental comments are as follows:

1. The Electric Department indicates that:
 - Electric service is available from Prospect Avenue and will be aerial to the peak of each duplex.
 - The developer must pay \$2,100 towards the cost of aerial high voltage extension across the street, a transformer, low voltage aerial wires and meters, and shall pay all costs to have Verizon replace pole 14B39 so that the City can install a transformer.
2. The Parks and Recreation Department indicates that:
 - The developer must create a “Tree Protection Zone” to prevent damage to the Norway Spruce located on the adjacent property to the west near the property line. The detail of the tree protection zone must be illustrated on the landscape plan.
 - The planting detail on the plan will need to be revised to reflect the City’s Tree and Planning Specifications.
3. The Public Works Department indicates:
 - Because these are individual residential lots, the access way, parking, sidewalks and stormwater area will be used by all and, therefore, a homeowners association or like entity formed for maintenance of the stormwater facility and drainage system onsite will be necessary. A note has been added to the plan regarding storm water.
 - There needs to be cross access, parking, sidewalk, driveway and drainage easement agreements for all lots. A note has been referenced on the plan regarding this matter.
4. The Water and Wastewater Department indicates the following:
 - The STP fee will be due at the Certificate of Occupancy for each unit.
5. The Planning and Development Department indicates that proposed construction of four units in duplex configuration corresponds to the land use guidelines in the Comprehensive Development Plan IV, and generally meets the density proposed for the area.
6. The Planning and Development Department notes that variances were granted by the Board of Adjustment on August 16, 2012 for minimum lot area, maximum lot coverage, minimum lot width and height. With these variances, the plan meets Code.
7. The Code Enforcement Division of the Planning and Development Department indicates that all units on the plan will be required to conform to the 2012 International Building Code requirements, and that fire suppressions, along with fire alarm systems, will be required.

Recommendation

“Because the proposed 29-35 Prospect Avenue project, with the Departmental recommended conditions, will not have a negative impact on nearby and adjacent properties, because the project conforms to the land use recommendations in the Comprehensive Development Plan IV, because the proposed residential use conforms to the development pattern in the area, the Planning and Development Department suggests that **the Planning Commission recommend that City Council approve the 29-35 Prospect Avenue minor subdivision plan, as shown on the McBride & Ziegler plan dated June 21, 2012, with revisions through October 11, 2012, with the conditions in the Planning and Development Department report.**”

Ms. Feeney Roser: The developer and his representative are present and I will be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Bowman: Are there any questions for Ms. Feeney Roser?

Ms. Dressel: Why is it formerly known as 45 Prospect Avenue?

Ms. Feeney Roser: Because when the plans came in, it said 45 Prospect Avenue so we opened a file that said 45 Prospect, then when it was sent to the Police Department for review, it was noted that the address under which it was submitted was incorrect. The addresses are actually 29-35 Prospect Avenue. We put the reference to 45 Prospect to make sure that years from now when we try to find it and somebody says something about 45 Prospect, we will be able to find it.

Mr. Shawn Tucker: I am a land use attorney here in Delaware and I represent the applicant this evening, South Pond Properties, LLC. My address is 1100 N. Market Street, Wilmington, Delaware.

Just a quick thumbnail sketch of the application. I would submit that the plan is pretty straight forward this evening. Ms. Feeney Roser's report, as usual, is a very thorough recitation of the background and the zoning information and the history of the project to date.

As you have undoubtedly noted from the plan before you, there are two lots that are being subdivided into now a total of four lots. The property is approximately .36 acres in size. It is zoned RD. This is not a rezoning. There were variances that were obtained by the applicant. The hearing lasted about an hour or so. It was pretty involved regarding some bulk area variances that were all granted and the vote was unanimous in favor of those variances, as I recall. The report prepared by Ms. Feeney Roser dated 10/26/12, I think gives us the key language for purposes of the standard this evening, Code compliant and consistence with the Comp Plan. We have, both from a legal standpoint and from a civil engineering standpoint, worked together as a team to go over the Code sections and ensure that we did make a submission that is Code compliant.

Mr. Ziegler is here this evening who is our client's professional engineer who can offer comments on the plan if there are any questions or concerns. Mr. Longo is our architect for the project and, although, no architectural plans are required by Code because this is a minor plan and we are not located in downtown Newark, my client has offered up architectural plans that he is quite proud of and Mr. Longo is here this evening to offer some comments about those plans briefly and answer any questions you may have.

With that, I am happy to defer to the Planning Commission with any questions or concerns you may have for me or my client. Mr. Lisa is here as a representative of the legal entity, South Pond Properties, LLC, as well.

Mr. Bowman: Are there any questions from the Commission for the applicant?

Mr. Bob Cronin: There is a symbol on the plan that I don't understand.

Mr. Tucker: May I approach?

Mr. Cronin: This little thing right here and also this.

Mr. Ziegler: That is an entry door, that's a pole. There are symbols on the plan.

Mr. Bowman: Mr. Cronin, would you clarify for the record what you are questioning because we are not catching this on the recorder for the record.

Mr. Tucker: Mr. Ziegler, why don't we do this with the microphone based on the Board's question so we have it on the record appropriately.

Mr. Mark Ziegler: I am with McBride & Ziegler. I am not sure if that is a sign or not. I will need to check.

Mr. Cronin: It is in the way of the building, I was just curious as to what it would be.

Mr. Ziegler: I am not sure, to be honest with you, what that symbol is right there.

Ms. Dressel: Which plan is it that you are looking at to ask the question so we can find it?

Mr. Tucker: It is the first page of the minor subdivision plan. My client is looking at some of the pictures as well to try to confirm what that existing field condition is.

Ms. Feeney Roser: Shawn, could you point to, on your plan, what we are looking at?

Mr. Tucker: If I could approach. Just for the record, I am showing the first page of the plan and it is that symbol located next to the 56. Mark, let's do it on the record. Mr. Ziegler is going to hand forward a photograph that we will mark as Exhibit A to assist the Commission with the question. This picture is marked A-1 for the record, Mr. Ziegler.

Mr. Ziegler: I believe it is a pole and there is a sign on the pole and the symbol is for a sign. It should be right next to the pole.

Mr. Cronin: Thank you.

Mr. Tucker: Is that depicted on A-1, Mr. Ziegler?

Mr. Ziegler: Yes, it is.

Mr. Tucker: Mr. Cronin, would you like to see that picture?

Mr. Cronin: Sure, I would be happy to see it for my own edification. I see it. It says reserved parking and something to that effect.

Mr. Andy Hegedus: Bear with the new guy. This is my second meeting and the first time I have been reviewing plans. When I went and looked at the property towards the back of the property there is a clump of trees but I didn't hop the fence and I didn't go back there to look. On the plan, it looks like you are going to pave over that area and there is going to be water retention area underground. I'm wondering if there is something going on back there already because it was kind of odd that there was that clump in the middle of that area.

Mr. Tucker: Mr. Ziegler, will you give an overview of what is happening in the rear of the property and what is changing from field conditions today to help answer that question?

Mr. Mark Ziegler: I am with McBride & Ziegler. Our firm prepared the engineering plans for this project. We are proposing a parking lot that will accommodate 12 parking stalls. You are correct, there are going to be some trees removed but there is also a landscape plan that will be submitted and approved by the City of Newark and there will be other trees proposed along the street and, I believe, a couple of trees in the rear of the yard.

Mr. Hegedus: So, my question is, is there something there now because it is odd that there are these trees and big clumps of grass that I couldn't see behind?

Mr. Ziegler: Not that I am aware of. There is an existing garage.

Mr. Hegedus: I saw the garage and the driveway, but it was just weird that there was something back there where everything was growing in tall grass.

Mr. Ziegler: I am not aware of anything else.

Mr. Tucker: Perhaps, so we are 100% clear for the record, Mr. Lisa, the entity that you are here on behalf of, could you come up and, perhaps, also speak to that question to make sure we are 100% accurate?

Mr. Lisa: 211 South Pond Road, Hockessin, Delaware, the owner of the entity of the proposed project. I am unaware of any of that. I do have a couple of pictures that I took of the overall site. I am not sure that I see it. I know on the topo there was nothing noticed as any type of an elevation change, at least something that we were concerned about.

Mr. Hegedus: It is just a curiosity. I stood at the road, I looked. It is a nice flat thing with a garage in the back and then right towards the back end of it is a bunch of trees, bushes and stuff that I was figuring you were getting rid of, but it was just weird that it was there, so I didn't know if there was some other purpose for it before.

Mr. Tucker: If I could approach, let me show you Exhibit A-1 to see if this is consistent with what you saw.

Mr. Hegedus: If you just say nothing is back there, do you mean that there wasn't any stormwater anything back there, no pipes back there.

Mr. Lisa: There is nothing back there.

Mr. Hegedus: That's fine. That is all I needed to know.

Mr. Lisa: Unless somebody did it within the last few days and we don't know about it.

Mr. Bowman: Are there any further questions for the applicants from the members of the Commission?

Mr. Johnson: You have a driveway between your twin dwelling units that are on the property of lot #2 and lot #3. Is that correct?

Mr. Tucker: That is correct.

Mr. Johnson: Who owns that driveway and access road? Lot #2, lot #3?

Mr. Tucker: Currently, those lots will be owned by South Pond Properties and there will be a cross access easement that we will have to record in the event that one of the lots is sold off.

Mr. Johnson: Will they be sold as individual units at some point in the future?

Mr. Tucker: That is correct.

Mr. Bowman: Are there any other questions from anyone on the Planning Commission? If not, since I have nothing written from the zero attendance from the public tonight, we will bring it back to the table. If there are no further questions, we will entertain a motion.

Mr. Cronin: One question I have, with the four lots, if for some reason they are sold off to separate owners, the outside units, would they be able to have an independent driveway in the back along the outside of the property line? Is there enough space for that?

Mr. Tucker: There would not be but because of the recordation of the cross access easement they would have the legal right in perpetuity to access that parking and that driveway.

Mr. Cronin: So, lots 1 and 4 would have legal right to use the driveway.

Mr. Tucker: Yes, once the easement is recorded which would be part of the record plan process.

MOTION BY HEGEDUS, SECONDED BY JOHNSON, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION MAKES THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS TO CITY COUNCIL:

- A. THAT CITY COUNCIL APPROVE THE 29-35 PROSPECT AVENUE MINOR SUBDIVISION PLAN, AS SHOWN ON THE MCBRIDE & ZIEGLER PLAN DATED JUNE 21, 2012, WITH REVISIONS THROUGH OCTOBER 11, 2012, WITH THE CONDITIONS IN THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT REPORT.

VOTE: 6-0

AYE: BOWMAN, BRILL, CRONIN, DRESSEL, HEGEDUS, JOHNSON

NAY: NONE

ABSENT: BROWN

3. DISCUSSION ON THE CITY'S "PLAN FOR PLANNING" REGARDING THE UPDATE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

[Secretary's Note: Mr. Fortner and the Planning Commissioners referred to PowerPoint and a handout that Mr. Fortner prepared for his presentation to the Planning Commission].

Mr. Mike Fortner: I am here to give you a progress report on the update of the Comprehensive Plan and about what we did in the past month. This past month we had our first big event. We called it a "Drop-In Open House." We had flyers and posters. We had 33 stakeholders participate in the process. We had 9 Twitters. So far, we have 94 individuals signed up for our E-Newsletter. It is a fairly good start to a year long process. We are going to do a lot of these events. We are going to keep building on the participants to come, with the newsletter reaching out to more and more stakeholders as we go through this process.

We promoted this "Drop-In Open House at Community Day; we had posters and flyers; we distributed them to a lot of public buildings, Newark Senior Center, for example; we have them posted in City Hall; the Library; the Community Bulletin Board; we emailed City boards and committees and people on our E-Newsletter list; we had a press release; we had a legal notice in the News Journal; it was on Channel 22; and, the Newark Post covered us on the day of the event; WDEL came and did a story.

The Open House was a drop-in. Between 4-7 p.m. you could drop in and we did a Newark SWOT analysis. SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. You may have participated in something like this in another setting. The questions were, what are the strengths of Newark; what do you think the weaknesses are; what are the opportunities; and what do you think the threats might be?

These are the results that we got. The first question you see is what are Newark's Strengths. The first item is actually what someone wrote. Literally, I copied it from the poster board. You will notice that right next to it is a number. What people could do is they could write something down or they read something that someone else wrote and they liked it, they could put a check mark on it. So, the number right next to it indicates the number of check marks. So, someone wrote that and someone else looked at it and said it looked good so they check marked it saying they agreed with it. I didn't limit people on the amount of check marks they could put on the board. Someone could have check marked something five times because they thought it was really pertinent. It was a way of getting the feel of what people thought was out there. The next page was what people thought were the weaknesses, what people thought were opportunities – things that were coming in the next five to ten years that the City could take advantage of and that could make our community a better place. On the next page you have what are Newark's threats. This is the opposite of opportunities. These are things that in the next five or ten years people perceive could be coming down the line that could be harmful to our community that we need to be cautious of. Finally, I asked something that was outside of the SWOT analysis, something about Newark that you would never change. These are the comments people wrote about that and the check marks.

Another thing we did was we asked the same questions we asked in the Resident Survey and we asked people what three things they liked most about living in Newark,

what they liked least about living in Newark, what businesses they would like to see come to Newark and what challenges they thought Newark had. So, we had these categories and people use little dots. People were given three dots for each question and they could put the dots on what three things they liked most about Newark. If they didn't see their category, they had the opportunity below to write a category and then if other people thought that, too, they could put dots next to that as well.

These are the totals that we came up with. What the people at this meeting liked most were the City parks and natural environment, downtown Main Street, pedestrian bicycle friendly and college town were your main things. Other things that people said that they really liked are that it is a small town; they really liked the location and city services.

We also asked what people liked least about living in Newark; and, of course, the same thing – three dots – they put them on the category that they liked least or they wrote something down if it wasn't on there. Traffic was number one. It was number one in our resident survey as well. Parking, affordability, the cost of living and city design were all listed.

Then we asked what the three biggest challenges that Newark will face in the next five years. Again, the same concept – three dots – they could place them anywhere they wanted to or create their own category. So, again, they think the biggest challenge we will have in the next five years is traffic and dealing with traffic congestion. UD expansion and specifically land acquisition was number two, as opposed to an increased number of students. You also see economic development, parking downtown, pedestrian friendly and bicycle friendly could be a challenge.

What three types of businesses would you like to see in Newark? Again, we had a list from the Resident Survey. It surprised me that number one was movie and arts theater; green industry, which was a big one in the Resident Survey; clothing store was also a big one in our Resident Survey; gourmet grocery store is also a big one that people want. Bookstore is, of course, lower down. When we did the Resident Survey we didn't have the Barnes and Noble.

Upcoming events. We have had some changes in the schedule because there is a lot going on in November. We decided it would be best to change things around with the neighborhood committee meetings. On Tuesday, November 13th, Maureen and I are going to the "Complete Communities Summit." It is open to the public. It is about healthy communities, interconnectivity and mobility, with pedestrians connecting to transit, having parks and good economic development. That will be on November 13th. On November 14th, WILMAPCO is having an Our Town meeting, which is a meeting with all kinds of information with the regional rail and what's happening to them in the next five to ten years. That is open to the public as well. It will be at the Embassy Suites. Next, on Tuesday, November 27th, we are partnering with the Newark Transit Subcommittee. We are going to have a Planning Workshop and Meeting in the Newark Council Chamber between 6 and 8 p.m. We are going to have interactive displays like we had at the first Planning Workshop but it will be focused on transit. WILMAPCO and DART will be there. They will give a presentation on current bus services, how we got the kind of bus system we have here in Newark and what kind of planning has been done for transit in Newark and what they are looking at in the future in terms of more transit in Newark or not. Finally, on Thursday, December 6th, the Newark Bicycle Committee is developing in conjunction with the Newark Comprehensive Development Plan, a bicycle plan and they will be having a workshop. It will be in Council Chambers from 4 – 7 p.m. It is the same sort of drop-in workshop format that we had on October 23rd. Again, that will be focused on bicycle transportation and how to improve it. It will focus on site and locations where people identify where there are problems with bicycling and what they like and dislike about bicycling in Newark and problem areas.

Another development we have had with the Comprehensive Plan is, we are applying to WILMAPCO for assistance. WILMAPCO has money to help us with technical support for our Comprehensive Plan. With it we are going to hire the Institute of Public Administration (IPA). They are a firm under the University of Delaware, and they will help us with technical support and most importantly, with mapping. They can

provide excellent mapping resources for us so that we can have some really good maps that will be clear visually and more reader friendly. They will also provide outsider third party workshop facilitation. They have access to that and they can help us set up some of our workshops and do outreach and, with an intern, help us with other kinds of technical support. We will have access to all their expertise on all of this.

This is what we have completed so far. We did the Newark Day Kick-Off, Community Day, we adopted the “Plan for Planning,” and we had our first workshop on October 23rd. We are going to postpone the neighborhood meetings until after the holidays. We are going to cover them in January doing a similar format as our previous workshop. We are also going to do a community vision profile and we will get a facilitator to help us do more visioning. Once we have all the preliminary themes from our public meetings and workshops we have had, we could bring these in. We will invite the stakeholders and we will start to refine the vision and then we will go through each of the elements of our Comprehensive Plan step-by-step until we get a completed plan. The target date is around June and will have something to adopt around September 2013.

We are doing things on Twitter. We are having a webpage set up. The City has a new web format page now. We have been waiting until November for that to kick off. We are going to have our own page. We have the SWOT analysis and we have things that people can go in and write what they like and dislike about Newark, and they can tell us what the strengths and weaknesses are. It is on the web right now. It is our community bulletin board. I encourage you to go on there because you are stakeholders, too, and you get to participate in that sort of thing. You can go on there and take a look. I don’t think there is anything written on there right now but I hope to drive traffic there soon.

Ms. Feeney Roser: People were Tweeting during the Comprehensive Plan Open House.

Mr. Fortner: Actually, Dana has some ideas for our next workshop. There may be some sort of live Twitter thing going on. I don’t quite get it, but it sounded pretty cool.

Ms. Feeney Roser: It is another way to reach out to people.

Mr. Fortner: And you have a written record of what they say.

Mr. Bowman: Does anyone on the Commission have any questions for Mike?

Mr. Hegedus: Thank you for the report. I am glad to hear that so many people came. That was great. Did you capture any information about who came?

Mr. Fortner: Everyone signed in. I got to talk to all of them.

Mr. Hegedus: What area would they categorize themselves as – business person, related with the University? Did you capture anything like that?

Mr. Fortner: What I captured was their name then they signed up for the email if they wanted to. I did talk to them so I could quantify it all. It wouldn’t be that hard, but I didn’t make them fill out anything describing themselves.

Ms. Feeney Roser: It seemed like a real diverse group, though. I don’t think we could say that the majority was business owners or University types. There were residents, landlords and business people. The people who attended that I knew, came from various walks of life and careers.

Mr. Hegedus: One of the reasons I was asking is because when you get to the stakeholder meeting and you want to bring in representatives that have these different voices, you have already found some active people who might be those voices because they came out to this thing. It would be cool to say, we gathered information from a representative sample of 15 people that were University and 12 people that lived in downtown Newark. It would just help solidify . . .

Mr. Fortner: Are you suggesting a one page survey to take down their demographics? Right now I would be able to go through and tell you. As it goes on, I could also lose track.

Mr. Hegedus: When you go to January and you have your neighborhood meetings, if you capture just a little bit about the people that are there and how they characterize themselves for what they represent in our community, that might be smart.

The ideas where people were putting their dots, did you give them the initial list and then they could add to it or was the list all generated by people that walked in that evening?

Mr. Fortner: The SWOT analysis was a blank slate. It was all generated by the public. The likes and dislikes and businesses and challenges, those started out as categories. We did a Resident Survey years ago and there was an open ended question – What three things do you like about living in Newark, 1, 2, 3. People wrote these down. Then I did an analysis and categorized them into different sections such as people liked living in a university town. If someone from the UD wrote college, this all fit into this theme and I grouped them. From that I created this bulletin board that had these boxes. What do you like about Newark? I would say college, University, downtown Newark was a big one. So, they put the dots. If it wasn't on there, then they had a place that they could list it and started their own category based on that.

Ms. Dressel: As a comment, our family has started using the Newark Train Station in the last two months and using it regularly. It is such an asset to this community. And I can't believe that it is kind of hidden and a lot of people don't know about it, but there are a lot of trains that come in from Philadelphia. It is fabulous.

Mr. Fortner: You can tell your family members that they can come to the Transit Workshop on the 27th. They can just drop in or listen. We would like to have their input. I think the best way to get the word out about this is by word-of-mouth. You can hang posters or do newspaper articles or post the meetings. It is only going to do so much. What I am trying to do is collect emails of people that are interested. You keep emailing them and keep them in the loop and building on the base. I have a base of about 90 people right now and I keep building, but you can help me with that base when you are in the community telling people you know that this is important. I can take their email and give them a newsletter and they can come to the meetings and get caught up on it and be familiar with it. When I email you, pass it on to whoever you feel would be interested.

Ms. Dressel: We have always known there was a train station but the stories that you hear is that there is only one train a day that stops in Newark. Septa has really improved that.

Mr. Fortner: MARC will soon be connecting with us as well and you will be able to go south to Baltimore.

Ms. Dressel: That is great.

As there was no further business, the Planning Commission adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth Dowell
Secretary to the Planning Commission