

**BOROUGH OF GREEN TREE  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
NOVEMBER 11, 2009**

**CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Green Tree Borough Council met on Wednesday, November 11, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sycamore Room of the Green Tree Municipal Center, 10 West Manilla Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15220.

**ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:**

Rino Lindsey, Chairman  
Cheryl Bakin  
Rebecca Chembars  
Ed O'Donnell  
Leon Young

**Also Present:**

Louis A. Casadei, P.C., Borough Engineer  
Deborah N. Gawryla, Stenographer

**Absent:**

Marguerite Canonge

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**July 22, 2009**

**Motion:**

Mr. Young made a motion, seconded by Ms. Chembars, to approve the July 22, 2009 minutes as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

**HEARING OF THE CITIZENS**

There was no one present who wished to be heard.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Mr. Lindsey**

Mr. Lindsey had nothing to report at this time.

**Presentation and discussion of the development of Green Tree Borough's Comprehensive Plan.**

Mr. Ed O'Donnell and Ms. Cheryl Bakin, Planning Commission representative on the Comprehensive Plan Committee, said that the Borough has hired Mackin Engineering to help with the development of the comprehensive plan. Initial discussions began in May 2009 and it is scheduled to be completed within 12 months. Mr. O'Donnell estimated that the committee is about halfway through the process. Planning Commission will have to review the final comprehensive plan for recommendation to Council, so the purpose of this meeting is to inform Planning Commission of the direction of the comprehensive plan discussions so they are up to date with its development. The committee has also recommended revision of the Borough's zoning ordinances and Planning Commission would be involved in that process.

Mr. O'Donnell said that besides he and Mrs. Bakin, some of the other committee members include Mr. Ed Schenck and Mr. Art Tintori from Council, Mr. Tad Patera, Mr. John DeSantis, Mrs. Irene Bocchino and others.

Mrs. Bakin said that Mackin had met with members of the Historical Society to get an overview of Green Tree's origins and also met with business owners and developers to get a feel for where Green Tree is headed in future development. There had been discussions questioning why a lot of business has been heading to Robinson Township. Mr. Lindsey commented that Robinson Township has the room to grow and everything is new there, which is attractive to business.

Mrs. Bakin said that Allegheny County has had a steadily declining population as has Green Tree Borough and the Keystone Oaks School District. There is a chance that Green Tree's local elementary school, Aiken School, might be closed due to declining enrollment and the Comprehensive Plan Committee has agreed that something must be done to try to keep the school in the Borough.

Mrs. Bakin and Mr. O'Donnell said that the Comprehensive Plan Committee had discussed traffic and parking issues in the Borough. The committee had discussed the problem of some of the storefronts along Greentree Road that have parking that requires vehicles to back into the road to exit. Discussion took place regarding the possibility of tearing down some of these storefronts to make room for safer municipal parking. Discussion took place regarding the history of some the buildings along Greentree Road. Ms. Chembars commented that if too many buildings are considered to have historical significance it will often slow or stop development of an area.

Mr. O'Donnell said that Mackin Engineering has determined that Green Tree Borough has too many zoning districts and they will be reviewing them as part of the comprehensive plan and making recommendations for changes. Discussion continued regarding various zoning districts, their history, development and suggestions for possible changes.

Mrs. Bakin said that the committee is looking at the parks in the area as well as vacant and underutilized properties, such as the railroad property, and discussing possible new directions for development. She said discussion had taken place regarding the lack of parking in the Rook area of the Borough. Mr. O'Donnell said the comprehensive plan would also be taking a look at recreation facilities and cemeteries in the Borough.

Mrs. Bakin said that the committee had discussed the problem of Parkway Center Mall. Even though the mall is located in the City of Pittsburgh, many people think it is in Green Tree, and it is considered part of the community. Ideas for the mall include the possibility of annexing it from the city or suggesting that the owners make it into an office building. Discussion continued regarding the mall and the adjacent proposed City Vista project. Mrs. Bakin said that one of the concerns with the City Vista project was the size of the proposed buildings. The application had been withdrawn from the City of Pittsburgh and the developers are currently moving forward with development of a modified format.

Mrs. Bakin said there had been committee discussion regarding mixed-use housing. Mr. Casadei said one suggestion was to rezone Residence A to a multiuse residential district. Mrs. Bakin said that with the exception of the proposed City Vista development, there is no place in Green Tree for any type of multi-family or mixed-use housing and upscale professionals looking for condos

or other types of mixed-use housing tend to bypass Green Tree when considering a place to live. Older residents, who do not want the responsibilities of owning a home and want to downsize but remain in the community, also do not have anywhere to go. Many stay in their homes as a result and this slows the ability for new residents to enter the community. Discussion continued regarding residential zoning and different types of housing.

Mrs. Bakin said that there had been a public meeting on the comprehensive plan for all interested residents or businesses. Approximately ten people attended and she said that either the residents do not understand the purpose of the comprehensive plan or are not interested.

Mr. O'Donnell stated that the comprehensive plan committee is also looking at greenspace locations in the community. He said that all Borough parks are currently located in Residence A and this will be considered as part of the revision to the zoning code. The comprehensive plan should be a roadmap and not a law. A good comprehensive plan will help the community move forward and assist in obtaining grant monies in the future.

Discussion took place regarding the railroad property and how it has become a busier area for the railroad than it was five years ago. Mr. O'Donnell said that rules governing the railroads and their property are different than other areas. Railroads have restricted access and often only need to report to the federal government, leaving the Borough unable to take action with these areas.

Mr. Lindsey left the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Mr. O'Donnell said that although some sort of multi-family housing is desirable, consideration must be given to quality of life issues. Ms. Chembars agreed that while smaller units are desirable for retirees to move to, the income strata must be maintained. Mr. O'Donnell noted that there are a lot of rentals in the areas adjacent to Green Tree, such as Crane Village, Hyland Hills and Carriage Park. Although they are not located in Green Tree, they are about as close as you can get. Planning Commission continued to discuss the pros and cons of multi-family housing and City Vista in particular.

Mr. Young said that the Comprehensive Plan Committee members had provided a good overview of the plan thus far. Planning Commission agreed. Discussion continued regarding many of the comprehensive plan ideas.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting ended at 8:10 p.m.

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Rino Lindsey, Chairman

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Leon Young, Secretary