

CITY OF BETHLEHEM

Department of Community and Economic Development

Interoffice Memo

TO: Adam Waldron, City Council President

FROM: Darlene L. Heller, Director of Planning and Zoning

RE: **ZONING MAP AMENDMENT** – Proposal to rezone multiple parcels fronting on Blake, Linford and Decatur Streets from RS – Single Family Residential to RG – Medium Density Residential

DATE: September 26, 2019

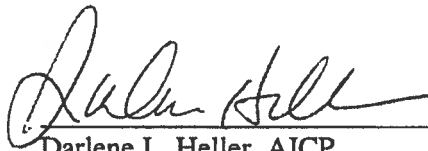
At their September 26, 2019 meeting the Planning Commission voted 4 – 0 to recommend approval of the above referenced zoning map amendment.

The memo to the Planning Commission from the Planning Bureau dated September 20, 2019 is also attached for reference.

This information is forwarded for inclusion and reference at the October 1, 2019 public hearing on this matter.

CC: City Council Members
Mayor Donchez
A. Karner
W. Leeson
T. Samuelson
J. Spirk

DATE: September 26, 2019



Darlene L. Heller, AICP
Director of Planning and Zoning

CITY OF BETHLEHEM

Department of Community and Economic Development

Interoffice Memo

TO: Planning Commission Members

FROM: Darlene L. Heller, Director of Planning and Zoning

RE: **Proposal to rezone multiple parcels fronting on Blake, Linford and Decatur Streets**

DATE: September 20, 2019

Attached is a map and rezoning appeal submitted by the property owners to rezone four separate parcels (or portions of parcels) from RS – Single Family Residential to RG – Medium Density Residential.

Background

This appeal is submitted by four separate, abutting property owners. The appeal includes rezoning only a portion of three of the properties. The City does not typically approve split zoning parcels so, if the rezoning is to be considered, each of these 3 parcels will need to be subdivided.

Discussion

The immediately surrounding area includes a mix of zoning districts. The RG zoning district exists on the north side of Blake Street. The RS zoning district exists to the immediate east, west and south of these parcels. The RT (High Density Residential) zone exists on the south side of Decatur Street.

The combined land area of all of the parcels proposed to be rezoned is 2.51 acres. This lot size currently allows up to 13 single family detached residential units with a maximum height of 2 ½ stories and 35 feet as currently zoned in RS. The requested RG zoning allows singles, twins, townhomes and multi-family dwellings. The maximum number of by-right multi-family residential units that would be permitted is 27. In addition, a maximum building height in RG for multi-family dwellings is 5 stories or 60 feet as opposed to 2 ½ stories and 35 feet permitted in the current RS zone.

The conceptual drawing accompanying the application shows 27 2-story townhome units on a consolidated parcel with one single family detached dwelling at the western end of the development. The developer has indicated that he would include a covenant in the deeds of the parcels to be rezoned requiring a height limit of 2 ½ stories and 35 feet for any future development.

The north side of Blake Street contains the Spring Garden Townhouse Apartments, a large complex of rental townhomes. The vast majority of homes to the east, south and west of the area to be rezoned are comprised of single family detached homes.

Earlier in 2019 the center property, owned by Blake Street Properties LLC, received several variances from the Zoning Hearing Board to allow three sets of twins on 6 subdivided lots. The subdivision and land development proposal for this property was approved at the August Planning Commission meeting.

Blake Street is open from Henderson Street for a length of approximately 470 feet. The remaining approximate 300 feet is unopened and was never developed.

Linford Street is to the east of the properties to be rezoned. Although it includes a 30 foot right of way width, it currently only serves as an alley or secondary street allowing access to garages to the rear of existing single family detached homes. The cartway area is 20 feet wide.

Significant infrastructure upgrades are necessary to both Blake and Linford Streets if the eastern portion of the area to be rezoned is developed.

It also appears that significant extensions to sewer and water infrastructure will be necessary to serve the area to be rezoned. Water and sewer lines need to be extended for development of the properties as proposed.

Conclusion

The Planning Bureau recommends approval of the rezoning of these properties based on the inclusion of the deed covenant offered by the applicant, because of the "transition" that the development would provide and because of the variety of zoning districts already in close proximity to these parcels. However, any future development of the parcels should be in conformity to the surrounding area and supporting infrastructure must be in place to accommodate the new development.

This item is placed on your September 26, 2019 Planning Commission agenda for consideration. The Planning Commission must make a recommendation to City Council for the ultimate Zoning Map revision.

cc: Mayor Donchez
A. Karner
E. Healy
File

DATE: 9-20-19



Darlene L. Heller
Director Planning and Zoning