

**JESSUP BOROUGH PLANNING  
COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
August 26, 2020**

A regular meeting of the Jessup Borough Planning Commission was held on Wednesday, August 26, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held via telephone conference for the third time. Mr. Maurice McGheehan coordinated.

Chairperson Paula Ralston Nenish called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and all participated in the pledge of allegiance.

The following planning commission members were present: Chairperson Paula Ralston Nenish, Vice Chairperson Sarah Helcoski, Sam Sabastianelli, Robert Wasilchak Jr., Secretary Steve Esgro, James Moran and Ron Kordish. The Jessup Borough engineer, Tony Grizzanti, and the solicitor, Attorney Christopher Szewczyk, were also present at the meeting. Dominic Perini was absent. Ninth member of JPC still pending and to be selected by Council.

Meeting minutes from the July 22, 2020 were presented. Motion to approve by Jim Moran and seconded by Sarah Helcoski. All in favor.

Communications: none from Attorney Szewczyk or from Engineer Grizzanti.

Officer/Committee Reports: none to report from Secretary or Vice Chairperson. Chairperson Ralston Nenish reported the SALDO review will be performed by a consultant selected by Council. JPC members may send comments or concerns to share with the consultant.

Under old business:

\*Proposed Amendment to Update the Zoning Ordinance's Noise Limitations. Mr. E Carr Everbach, an acoustical engineer from Swarthmore College and head of Everbach Acoustics Consulting shared his expertise. He regarded the Jessup ordinances were antiquated but improved in the last few years. He explained sound in scientific terms (referring to much of his May 10, 2020 letter to the borough) but gave a very layperson example: a house fan with Lo/Med/Hi settings has 5 decibels of difference between each setting. There were quite a lot of questions from JPC members on the newly proposed sound tables and Mr. Everbach was very knowledgeable in answering.

Commissioner Esgro Q: Why were industrial zones increased while the residential

areas lowered, plus does distance play a role? A: Industry may require higher levels to bring their business to the Jessup parks while the residential areas have a more peaceful setting. Distance drops when doubled to about 6 decibels and that is meaningful when property lines are considered.

Vice Chairperson Helcoski Q: What are the effects on wildlife habitats? A: Greatly affected as animals use sound to communicate but unfortunately “animals have no votes essentially”.

Commissioner Kordish Q: When carnivals, fireworks and other events create loud noises what enforcements can the borough carry out especially with the proposed lower standards? A: Such events usually call for a special permit for a period of time. Permitting such activities falls ultimately to the JPC and council.

Commissioner Kordish expressed his dismay with the lower standards for residential zones. He and Professor Everbach had a lively discussion about their shared love of music. Ron felt that some folks might complain about impromptu jam sessions in neighborhoods.

Commissioner Moran Q: Who specifically enforces the rules for aforementioned noises or even loud car stereo music? A: Police officers with metering devices possibly are given the job. Car stereos are under a mid-frequency standard. Usually by a third event, a fine of up to \$250 deters the offender. Professor Everbach feels that borough police have much more pressing needs in the community. People should try to work things out amicably.

Commissioner Sebastianelli Q: What are pure-tone effects? A: These are “cut through” sounds such as a French police siren or an amplifier feedback. Sam commented that we have a zoning officer in charge to handle those instances as we are really moving through changes in the borough.

Commissioner Wasilchak commented that he uses a decibel app on his cell phone. The problems are not with the new buildings in the industrial zones but with the ever increasing truck traffic. How do you monitor trucks that come and go? Brake retarders can be a real problem. Reply: Agreed that vehicle noise for a single-event is tough to catch. Consistent traffic from a set source can be monitored. The use of sound barriers that utilize absorbing materials rather than deflecting sound are a solution.

Chairperson Ralston Nenish Q: Day and Night schedules are at set times. Can these be changed? A: Time intervals can vary but these are general and it's best to stick with a simple plan. He added that it would be appropriate to address the concerns raised at

tonight's meeting in the ordinance.

Public Comment:

Jeff Smith applauded Professor Everbach's presentation. Jeff is all for keeping things simple while permitting for special events.

Engineer Grizzanti Q: The R1 had M1 grow up near it. Can we enforce the business to comply especially if a building changes hands? A: Yes and enforceable. It will require zoning officers to keep up with the standards.

Commissioner Moran commented the concerns are not with traffic and business but with the quality of life.

Chairperson Ralston Nenish noted that with this pandemic, borough residents are doing improvements around the house while their neighbors are working from home. The noise level changes show.

Motion to recommend adoption of an Ordinance Amending the Jessup Borough Zoning Ordinance, As Amended, To Update The Zoning Ordinance's Noise Limitations made by Jim Moran. Seconded by Sarah Helcoski. Six for with one opposed, Ron Kordish. Motion carried. The Commission makes this recommendation with the suggestion that Council allows permits for special events that may produce noise in excess of the limitations set forth in the proposed ordinance.

New Business: None

Meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m. Motion by Sam Sabastianelli and seconded by Steve Esgro. All in favor.

The next meeting is slated for 7:00 p.m. September 23, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Esgro, Secretary  
Jessup Borough Planning Commission