

## 2017 ANNUAL REPORT PLANNING AND ZONING BUREAU

The following describes the activities of the Planning and Zoning Bureau in 2017.

### Planning Commission

The Planning Commission held nine (9) meetings to review:

- three (3) major land development plans
- two (2) combined major land development and subdivisions
- three (3) amendments to the Zoning Ordinance
- two (2) street vacation request by Peron Armory, LP and Bethlehem Redevelopment Authority to vacate a portion of Filbert Street between Rauch Street And Second Avenue and a portion of the west side of Second Avenue between Prospect Avenue and a point south of Filbert Street
- seventeen (17) vacant property review cases
- three (3) site plan reviews
- one (1) curb and sidewalk deferral request.

The most significant of the Land Development reviews include:

1. **STERLING APARTMENTS** - 1620 Catasauqua Road - proposes the construction of two (2) 3-story apartment buildings, containing 44 dwelling units and a clubhouse, on a 10.8 acre lot presently containing 121 multi-family dwelling units.
2. **MANUFACTURING BUILDING** – 1125 Easton Road – proposes the construction of a 121,033 sq. ft. manufacturing building and parking lot on a 13.65 acre lot. Proposed future development consists of a 78,842 sq. ft. expansion.
3. **DUNKIN DONUTS** – 920 Hellertown Road – proposes the construction of a 4,000 square foot building consisting of a Dunkin Donuts use with a drive-thru at front, and a second restaurant use at rear.
4. **MAJESTIC BETHLEHEM CENTER – EASTERN PHASE** – 3905 Commerce Center Boulevard – proposes the consolidation of 2 lots and construction of two (2) warehouse buildings, a 300,000 sq. ft. building on Lot 6 and a 450,660 sq. ft. building on Lot 7, on a 43 acre lot.
5. **WAREHOUSE AND MANUFACTURING BUILDING, MAJESTIC BETHLEHEM CENTER** – 3769 Commerce Center Boulevard – proposes the construction of a warehouse/manufacturing building containing 508,821 sq. ft. with employee and truck parking areas on a 26.70 acre lot.
6. **SOUTHSIDE COMMONS – LEHIGH UNIVERSITY** – 440 Brodhead Avenue – proposes the construction of a 5-story dormitory containing 426 beds, gymnasium, and office for Lehigh University students.

7. **SWIM SCHOOL FACILITY- 3055 LINDEN STREET** – proposes the construction of a one story 9,012 sq.ft. swim school facility with 79 parking spaces on a 1.3 acre lot. This site was previously approved as a personal care facility in 2015.

The Planning Bureau also reviewed an additional three (3) minor land development plans, five (5) minor subdivision plans, and four (4) site plan reviews.

### **Zoning Hearing Board**

The Zoning Hearing Board held 14 meetings in 2017 and heard 43 appeals. Two (2) appeals necessitated additional or special meetings because of the volume of testimony and/or the number of objectors. Significant Zoning Hearing Board appeals include:

1. 2470 Ringhoffer Road. Appeal of UGI Energy Services, LLC, for a Special Exception for a Liquefied Natural Gas Facility on the premises. The applicants also requested dimensional variances for the height of the tank and the maximum impervious coverage. After four (4) hearings, spanning from April until July, the Special Exception and Dimensional Variances were granted. The Decision was appeal by Lower Saucon Township. Since the appeal, the applicants have changed their plan to eliminate the need for the both dimensional variances. Neither a land development plan nor application for permit has been submitted to date.
2. 345 2nd Avenue. Appeal of Peron Armory, LP for a Special Exception and 11 Dimensional Variances to construct an addition to the existing armory building. The applicants proposed to construct a four-story building containing 70 residential units. After three hearings, held between October and December, the plan was approved with 12 conditions. The use of the armory building will need to be presented to the Zoning Hearing Board at a later date.

There were eight (8) use variances and nine (9) Special Exceptions granted during 2017. The remaining hearings were for dimensional variances, with 31 being approved and two (2) being denied.

The Zoning Office approved 147 Commercial Certificates of Occupancy, in which 18 of the permits were for new restaurant-type businesses in the City. In addition, 43 restaurants which transferred ownership kept their establishments in the City. Thirty-seven (37) permits for Home Offices were also issued.

Finally, the Zoning Office is now reviewing all mobile vending applications issued through the Bureau of Health for special events. There were 533 permits issued for special events in 2017.

### **Historic Review Boards**

There were 34 appeals before the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) and 42 appeals before the Historic Conservation Commission – South Bethlehem and Mount Airy (HCC) in 2017.

In 2017 Bethlehem was awarded a Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant in conjunction with Allentown and Easton to schedule a regional training session for historic review boards. Because Bethlehem is a CLG, review board members are required to attend annual training in historic preservation and historic review board matters. This training is scheduled for March of 2018.

## **Special Projects**

**South Bethlehem Greenway** – In 2017, design and engineering work for Phase 5 of the Greenway is nearing completion. Phase 5 creates a connection between the newly constructed Phase 4 of the Greenway trail and the ball fields at the northern end of Saucon Park off of Millside Drive. Construction Phases 5 of the Greenway Trail will occur in 2018.

**South Side Vision 2020** – The Bureau continues to work with the Community Action Development Corporation (CADCB) to provide staff support for the South Side Vision 2020 plan. Specifically, the Bureau assists in project implementation through the Development subcommittee. The City issued an RFP for the redevelopment of a few of the underutilized industrial properties in the Eastern Gateway neighborhood. The City and the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley won the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Award for Excellence in Revitalization for the Hayes Street Housing and Corridor Improvements. The Hayes Street Tree Planting Project will be completed by the fall of 2018. The City was awarded a Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) - grant for the north/south streets in this neighborhood to improve lighting and walkability. The Bureau continues to assist in the coordination of additional projects in the Eastern Gateway related to street trees, facades and streetscape enhancements.

**Wayfinding/Signage Project** – The City contracted with a sign manufacturer in 2016 to implement the signage design and location plans. Phases 1 of the signs were installed in 2017. The City plans to install future phases of this sign program in 2018.

**Grants** – In 2017 the Planning Bureau submitted a few successful grant applications. A Northampton County Open Space grant and a PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) grant will be consolidated to enhance the Monocacy Way trail north of Schoenersville and around the Monocacy Park Complex on Illick's Mill Road. An additional (TASA) grant award is for the installation of upgraded sidewalks, new handicap ramps and enhanced crosswalks in South Bethlehem on the north/south streets.

**Streetlights on West Broad Street** – The City was awarded \$200,000 in Multimodal Transportation Funds for the extension of pedestrian streetlights along West Broad Street. Acorn-style pedestrian lights were previously installed from the Route 378 on-ramp to West Broad Street and from downtown to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue on West Broad Street as a part of the prior Elm Street program. This funding will extend the pedestrian lights from 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. These lights are scheduled to be installed in 2018.

**Greenway/Hobart Street Extension** – The City was awarded a grant from the Northampton County Gaming Authority to create a connection from the Greenway to Hobart Street. This connection will generally be located across Daly Avenue from the Sands and will create a direct connection from the Greenway to the Eastern Gateway neighborhoods in this area. Construction began in 2017 and will be completed in early 2018.

**Blighted Property Review** – The City has increased its efforts in attacking blighted properties in recent years. In 2016 the process for certifying properties as blighted was updated. There continues to be a significant increase in the number of blighted properties presented to the Planning Commission for certification.

**Boards and Committees** - Planning and Zoning Bureau staff continue to support and participate in a variety of regional and local boards and commissions, including Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Lehigh Valley Transportation Study, South Side Vision 20/20, South Side Arts District, Lehigh Valley Greenways, Lehigh Valley Section of the Pennsylvania Planning Association and others.

**Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance** - The Bureau has been drafting updates to the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) over the last few years. Funds have been allocated in the 2018 budget to update the (SALDO) with the assistance of a consulting firm.

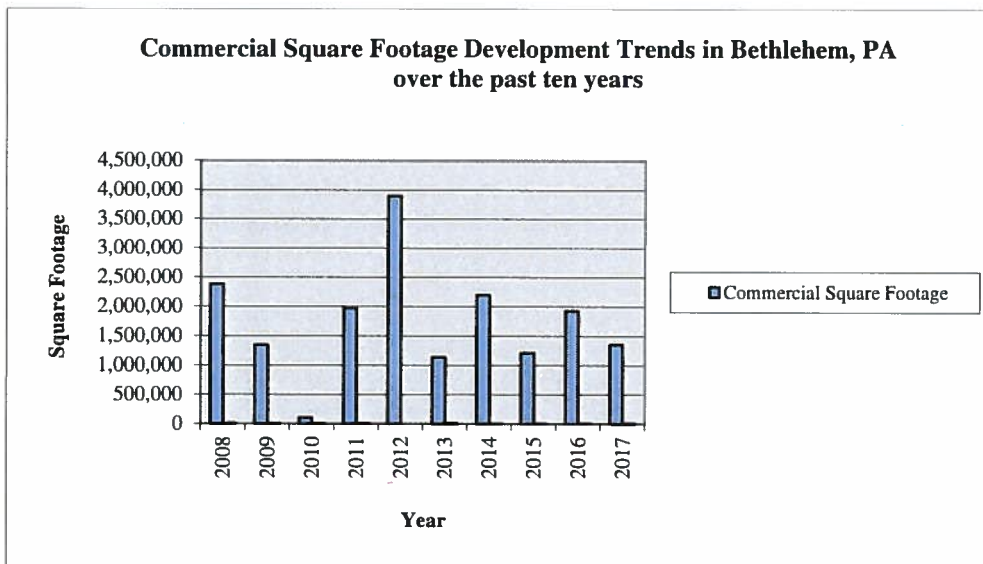
**Development Trends**

The following charts and graphs depict development trends in Bethlehem for the past 10 years.

The commercial square footage totals reflect mostly warehouse and medical office development.

Commercial Square Footage totals over the past 10 years.

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
2,378,224	1,347,481	102,342	1,967,900	3,892,217	1,132,254	2,195,142	1,210,854	1,924,765	1,351,335

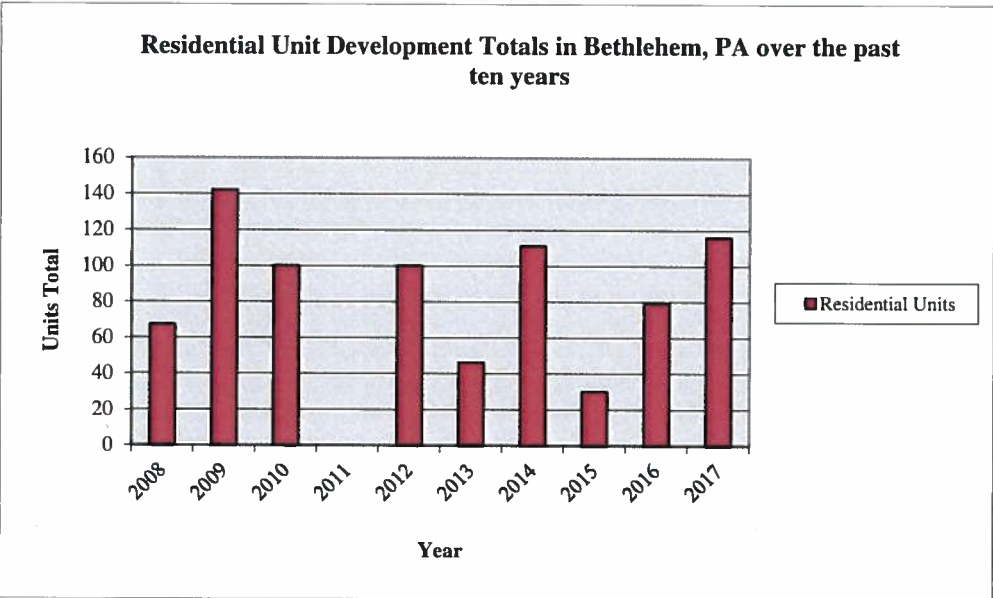


\*2012 includes the Majestic Bethlehem Center

Over the last several years, the demand for new housing has transitioned from condominium type development to market rate rental apartment units. This trend is confirmed through the recent proposals for market rate rental units, such as Greenway Commons, Chelsea Commons, the Wilbur Mansion Development, and the Sterling Apartments.

Number of residential dwelling units approved by year

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
67	142	100	0	100	46	111	30	79	116



The final chart shows the total number of plans submitted by year.

**Total number of subdivision and land development projects**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Land Development	12	13	8	4	13	10	11	8	8	9
Subdivision	5	3	3	1	2	1	0	1	5	6
Minor Land Development	4	7	9	2	4	2	0	7	2	3
Minor Subdivision	4	7	9	2	8	7	2	8	7	5

