

**Meeting Minutes**  
**State College Borough Council**  
**Public Meeting**  
**May 13, 2005**  
**12:00 p.m.**

The State College Borough Council held a public meeting on Friday, May 13, 2005 in the State College Council Room, 243 South Fraser Street, State College, Pennsylvania. Mr. Slaybaugh called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

Present:	Thomas E. Daubert, Council President
	Catherine G. Dauler
	Craig R. Humphrey
	Jeffrey R. Kern

Also present: Herman L. Slaybaugh, Zoning Officer/Planner; Joanne Lopinsky, Zoning Enforcement Officer; Cynthia Hanscom, Recording Secretary; and other interested members of the public.

Mr. Slaybaugh made introductions and showed a short presentation on the Commercial Incentive District. He explained the purpose of meeting is to provide information on the proposed district, take comments and answer questions.

Mr. Bill Long, 477 E. Beaver Avenue, Uni-Mart Corporation, asked what bonuses would be available for a developer if a building is setback 25 feet. Mr. Slaybaugh explained a bonus could be obtained for an increase in height by 1 story and a 20 percent reduction in parking.

Mr. Cliff Kanz, 415 Martin Terrace, asked if the height factor of the Penn State's Information Science & Technology (IST) building had been taken into consideration when developing zoning standards for this area. Mr. Slaybaugh explained the height limits were increased to accommodate the development occurring at Penn State. Mr. Kanz asked if the IST building was in the proposed district. Mr. Slaybaugh explained it was outside the proposed area to the north. Mr. Kanz suggested the height of the IST building be the standard; other buildings on west campus should be considered when factoring in the maximum height. He noted the 100 block of Atherton Street could become a dark canyon if taller buildings were permitted.

Mr. Kanz also suggested that street-level commercial uses should be required rather than an incentive. He suggested another incentive for street-level development could be outdoor seating. This increases the activity level. A building could be setback further to create a vibrant street-level area. A third item for street-level incentives could be public art. Mr. Slaybaugh indicated the Planning Commission debated on including a street level plaza as an incentive but the issue was dropped; the Downtown State College Improvement District (DID) advocated that plazas could become dead spaces. An example of this is the Rider II building at the corner of Beaver Avenue and Burrowes Street. The rationale for increasing the setback was to encourage the plaza concept. Mr. Kanz noted that plazas have not been successful in cities where the lighting is not right or where vibrant first floor retail is not provided. He again advocated the outdoor café as a way of guaranteeing the use of a plaza.

Mr. Kanz indicated this ordinance would be a great opportunity to create language for transferable development rights. It would take some coordination but it could be done.

Mr. Kanz noted that some areas of town should not require parking. Shared parking garages could be used to meet the needs for more than one building. Mr. Slaybaugh explained that is the rationale for the 10,000 square foot exemption in parking requirements.

Mr. Kanz noted that the Atherton Street/College Avenue intersection is a gateway into State College. Requirements could be added that a "landmark building" be built. A definition for a landmark building could be provided by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The appearance of any redevelopment should be the focus. Incentives could be applied for a nice looking building. Mr. Slaybaugh said that the Planning Commission had discussed design issues and the difficulty in applying them to a point system.

Mr. Kanz suggested all sides of buildings be treated with the same materials rather than only the street facing walls.

Mr. Kanz also suggested incentives apply for affordable housing units. For example, for every 12 units, 1 should be occupied by an employed individual that meets low-income requirements. In most cases, upscale units would not translate to affordable and this would be a way to address the issue of affordable housing in the Borough.

Mr. Kanz noted that in Boulder, Colorado, there was a limit on chain stores. This is a very controversial issue. Commercial spaces should not be 100 percent chain store occupied. This is

language that could be added to accommodate the local business owners. This would also allow for different types of businesses.

Ms. Dauler said Council wanted to encourage people to work and live in the Atherton Street corridor but needed to address how to get them across Atherton Street. Although the bridge at the IST building could be used, it would not be feasible for some sections of this corridor. Mr. Slaybaugh agreed that higher density units could create pedestrian movement problems. Mr. Humphrey noted that it was only half of a block to the corner of Atherton Street and College Avenue where pedestrians could cross. Ms. Dauler agreed, but believed that students would try to cross mid-block. Mr. Kern noted that Penn State has been successful with bushes and fencing along College Avenue; that could be done here as well.

Mr. Kern noted the Allenway building at 333 South Allen Street, with the mixed uses, open space and courtyard, would be something that he would like to see built in this corridor,

Mr. Slaybaugh indicated that there were four policy questions that seemed to come out of the discussions on the Commercial Incentive Zoning. They were:

- Is 95 feet too high? If no, then no change. If yes, the cap in the incentive rule should be change
- Is the 10,000 square foot parking exemption enough (12.5 spaces) and should it be for commercial/residential? If yes, no change. If no, address how much relief there needs to be and change the base zoning rule.
- Should an increase in FAR for non-owner occupied housing be allowed with the use of incentives? If yes, no change. If no, the tables need to be adjusted to eliminate or reduce the FAR bonus for all incentives except owner-occupied housing.
- Do the incentives provide enough return to encourage commercial/retail development? If yes, no change. If no, more incentives need to be created or greater bonus returns for commercial/retail.

Mr. Slaybaugh believed Council should address these questions. It was clear that floor area ratio could be increased for student housing if the building is green certified and parking is provided underground. He questioned whether this was something that Council really wanted to do.

Mr. Kern asked why area 7 and 8 were being considered for this zone. There were other areas of the downtown that may be more successful for retail and high-rise development, especially with the pedestrian issues that exist in the Atherton Street corridor. Mr. Slaybaugh indicated the eastern section of the downtown is a student center. Area 7 and 8 were listed in the downtown vision plan as a possible location for owner-occupied housing. To encourage this use, the zoning ordinance needs to be modified, which is what this ordinance attempts to do.

There being no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 1:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Cynthia S. Hanscom  
Assistant Borough Secretary