

## **Aspinwall Zoning Ordinance Update Public Meeting**

November 14, 2024, 6:00-8:00 pm

*Saint Scholastica Church*

### **Background**

The purpose of this event was to engage the Aspinwall community in discussions about the zoning ordinance update, building on ideas and values established in the 2022 comprehensive planning process. Zoning establishes and regulates building types, sizes, and uses, serving as a key tool for communities to guide development. Residents were asked to reflect on their vision for future land use and development to help shape policy decisions in the updated ordinance.

Jenni Easton, Pashek + MTR, began the meeting with a presentation on the project's status and an overview of what zoning is and what it can do for Aspinwall. The zoning update is an opportunity to modernize regulations, preserve the borough's character, and plan for future needs. Key themes of the meeting included strengthening neighborhoods and business districts, preserving neighborhood character, and addressing parking challenges.

Participants were then asked to circulate three stations around the room and provide input on the following topics:

- Aspinwall's zoning district boundaries
- Existing conditional and permitted by-right use table for residential, civic, and commercial uses
- Residential districts, including housing options, limiting lot sizes, and the definition of a "family" in the ordinance
- Commercial districts, including business mix, first-floor uses, and a form-based code for the A-1 district
- Parking supply and demand, guided by findings from the parking study
- Standards for lot and building sizes and placement in residential and non-residential areas

### **Meeting Results**

The following summarizes the feedback received from participants at each station during the meeting.

#### *Zoning District Boundaries/Use Standards*

- Firemen’s Park should be A-CD; Rename the park to recreational A-CD; Change parks to AC-D
- Rezone A-CD
- How can we ensure we are preserving historic charm?; How to preserve for new and renovated changes?
- Limit height or AR-4 to align with other AR areas
- Create a new zone near Freeport (currently AR-3) that can be triplex or fourplex by right. Aspinwall can be transit oriented!
- Change all AI-1 to conditional
- Commercial constraints for landowners to redevelop (designs would go through council) in AC-1
- Creating/parceling out the railroad; Changing it to AI-1 “Railway Facilities + Terminal”
- X-ing in the top right A-CD for quiet zone application
- Limit adult use businesses, oil&gas development, drive-thrus, and dispensaries

### *Commercial Districts*

- Participants were split on whether future office space should be limited to second floors in AC-1 district, with shops/other commercial on the first floor). Some approved/felt there were too many first floor offices, others did not want to make it difficult to fill space or felt a varied streetscape had a charming feel.
- Some were interested in smaller format microbreweries and others would rather not see microbreweries and would rather see family-oriented businesses.
- Generally, businesses willing to provide a positive impact to the community would be beneficial – health related, willing to have clean/environmentally friendly building standards
- Discourage businesses with age restrictions (18+/21+) – reduces crime/increases property value
- “Encourage businesses that support teenage space for a growing younger population”
- Not supportive of making the business district have a uniformed look or specifying what trees/plants to use
- I would not do this [form-based code] because it seems overly controlling and stifling in a neighborhood that does not have an HOA
- “Form-based code would help make development quicker and easier”
- Consider adjusting maximum lot coverage with appropriate stormwater controls

- “Stormwater control/storm-related flooding in the business district (specifically Brilliant Ave)”

### *Residential Districts/Parking*

- Participants were split on whether to allow conversions from large houses to apartments. Some wanted to stop it from happening all together, others did want to limit it because it felt restrictive, and others wanted to put some restrictions on it (such as requiring property manager to upkeep/maintain the property/require limited tenants)
- Prefer to leave the maximum lot size as is
- Maybe limit lot sizes for apartment buildings
- Limit/control empty lots for storage or business
- Keep the definition of family (only three unrelated people living together) as is/don't change the ordinance to allow non-traditional families
- Strictly enforce/confine businesses to business district/stop businesses from migrating into residential district
- Control overnight parking in alley/permit requirements
- Promote home ownership
- “I live in a multi-family building that was grandfathered in re:parking spaces. And I don't have a car. This should be allowed! I couldn't afford to live in a homeowners-only Aspinwall. This town has never just been for the rich...don't start now.”
- Expand AR-1
- “Change the definition of family – not sure how that is still allowed”
- Limit number of parking spaces/permits per house.
- Many participants were interested in understanding the results of the parking study. “What percentage of households are actually registered with a permit?”
- “How many people with garages don't use them and still park on the street?”