

# Commission undecided on zoning proposal

By Anita Modi  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

After about an hour of discussion, the State College Borough Planning Commission did not reach a decision on a potential new student housing unit on Beaver Ave. at its meeting last night.

But members did request a draft of an ordinance to change standards for the RO zoning designation — the same designation landowner Henry Sahakian is seeking for the 254 Beaver Ave. property.

The property currently stands as an R2 zone, meaning that it may host fraternity housing, single family dwellings, elderly housing, churches, daycares, commu-

nity centers, offices, nursing homes or private schools.

An unoccupied fraternity house currently occupies the site.

Sahakian, the landowner and proposed developer of the site, requested the property be rezoned to allow for residential housing and commercial retail space. Though he originally presented an eight-story building design including 42 four-bedroom units of new student housing, the commission has since downgraded the plan to four floors and 26 units. The commission discussed rezoning 254 E. Beaver Ave. as RO, which would allow it to host residential and professional office space, among other uses.

In the case of the Beaver Ave. property, the commission consid-

ered insituting an overlay, which would allow the building to open retail businesses and restaurants on the first floor. That wouldn't normally be possible under RO zoning requirements.

Ron Madrid, a commission member, suggested the overlay be mandated for all RO-designated buildings in State College to streamline the look of the borough.

If the mandate is passed, RO property owners considering redevelopment in the future would need to consider reduced building height and commercial use on the ground floor, among other changes to the present standards, Evan Myers, Planning Commission chairman, said.

The commission decided to

draft an ordinance detailing the overlay's proposed changes to RO standards and ask for the opinions of current property owners at its next meeting on Thursday, Oct. 21.

In addition to the overlay, the Planning Commission discussed a variety of incentives meant to encourage aesthetically pleasing and practical building plan in exchange for extra building space.

The RO zoning standards only allow for three-story buildings. But property developers could earn additional stories to build and lease housing units if their plans comply with certain requirements.

Commission member Cynthia Carpenter suggested the commission reward developers for architectural design and green

space, while Madrid suggested underground parking as an incentive.

Some members of the public were displeased with the commission's determination to create incentives for the property developer to increase student housing availability on the property.

Two State College residents submitted letters to the commission that opposed student high-rise development and condoned the student population density in the area. One resident formally voiced his concerns to the commission.

The commission awaits public reaction to the newly drafted ordinance next week.

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## NRT tackles power in play

By Hannah Rishel  
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One set. Two actors. Three acts.

No Refund Theater will tackle a small-scale play this weekend with their production of "Oleanna." The play was performed last night in 111 Forum and will have two more show times at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday in the same room. As with all NRT shows, admission is free but donations are accepted.

"Oleanna" centers on two characters: Carol, a college student, and John, her professor. The play is comprised of three acts, one for each of their encounters, all taking place in his office.

At first John, who is preoccupied with getting tenure and the new house he and his wife are buying, dismisses Carol's complaints about a bad grade she received. She insists that she's done everything he's told her to do, but she doesn't understand what he's teaching and is failing the class because of it.

John offers to start the class over for her through meetings in his office. Their conversation shifts from talking about the subject matter of the class to talking about the institution of college. He complains about the system, despite the fact that he's a professor.

"If you hate college, then why do you teach it?" Carol asks him at the end of act one.



Dana Heller/Collegian

Mike DiLullo (senior-supply chain), left and Hannah Cranville (senior-public relations and theater) act out a scene during NRT's performance of "Oleanna" in the Forum on Thursday evening.

In their next meeting it is revealed that Carol has gone to a "group" on campus for help and complained about John's behavior to the tenure committee, ruining his chances of getting the promotion and buying the new house.

Carol's complaints about his sexist and elitist attitude lead him to his breaking point in their third and final meeting.

Shadé Olasimbo, a NRT member who came to support the group, said that she liked how the characters evolved through the play.

In the beginning of the play John has all the power because he's the authority figure and Carol is submissive, but as the play progresses the roles shift and Carol becomes the dominant one in their relationship.

In the program, the cast challenges the audience to decide who's right: John or Carol? But Olasimbo (junior-broadcast journalism) said she didn't side with either character.

"I ended up disliking them both," she said. "Neither of them are right."

Michael Bones echoed her opinion.

"I don't think either of them are right, but I don't think either of them are wrong either," Bones (senior-English and philosophy) said.

He added the play was a very interesting portrayal of teacher-student relationships and power structures. He said that it would take a little while for the message to sink in.

Karen Marchuska, who did the lighting for the show, said that she doesn't know whose side to be on because every time she watches the play it changes.

"Each time I watch it I listen to different parts of the dialogue, which changes my opinion," Marchuska (freshman-communications) said. "It definitely gets me thinking."

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## Panel discusses curbing violence

The S-Plan sponsored a discussion on how students can handle violent situations.

"I think we really need to look into our morals."

Travis Salters

(junior-broadcast journalism and African and African American studies)

By Micah Wintner  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Student leaders and university officials delivered a panel presentation on violence to a crowd of about 40 students yesterday in the Thomas Building.

The presentation was hosted at the S-Plan's second event of the semester titled "Crime: Peer-on-peer Violence, Verdict: Guilty."

S-Plan — named for support, survival and success — is a mentoring program directed at black and Latino students. It is designed to help minority students make healthy choices and adjust to college life.

The panelists answered questions about how students can handle violent situations at college and in their lives.

"Being the smallest minority on campus, we can't afford [violence]," Travis Salters (junior-broadcast journalism and African and African American studies), Penn State NAACP president, told the audience. "I think we really need to look into our morals."

Tyrone Reese, S-Plan's graduate assistant, gave a PowerPoint presentation on statistics relating to crime and violence.

"Youth violence is the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10 to 24," Reese said.

Tyrone Parham, assistant deputy of University Police Services, was also a panelist.

Bystanders pose a large problem to violent situations, Parham told the audience. The best thing for a bystander to do is break up a

violent situation immediately, he said. Parham said that the black community's actions greatly affect its reputation.

"Our community is so small that one bad situation looks bad for the whole community," he said.

Panelists also advised that violence can be avoided by staying away from certain places on campus at certain times.

"Everyone should stay away from McDonald's at 2 a.m.," Danny Shaha, senior director of Judicial Affairs, joked. "Nothing good comes from McDonald's."

Other panelists included Stephanie Preston, assistant director of the Paul Robeson Cultural Center; Shadiyah Haines (senior-industrial engineering), National Pan-Hellenic Council president; and Andre McLeod, coordinator of Leonard Life. In response to a question on what student leaders have been doing to curb violence at Penn State, Salters said he and Haines have met for hours all week to plan a course of action to launch an anti-violence campaign. Details of the campaign are still in the works, Salters said.

Katherine Wheatle, the S-Plan's director, said she liked how the event turned out.

"Between the PowerPoint and panelists, I'm very happy with the diverse group of staff and concrete figures we had," she said.

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## Bisexual activist tackles myths

By Alyssa Bender  
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"Professional bisexual" Robyn Ochs wants to eliminate the concept of completely binary sexual orientation in American society.

Ochs, whose resume includes talk shows, books, and a slew of keynote speeches, addressed myths about bisexuality in her presentation Thursday evening as part of LGBTQTA Student Resource Center and UPUA-sponsored National Coming Out Week.

She describes varying sexual orientations as "different but not opposite."

At the beginning of the event, each person shared one thing they had heard about bisexuality, and the responses were quite varied. While some had heard that bisexuality does not exist, others had some knowledge about it on some level.

Other students said they'd heard that bisexuality is a phase or something to get over.

Ochs acknowledged that there are many negative stereotypes associated with bisexuality, such as

promiscuity. "People don't see real bisexuals," she said.

Because of this, many people have skewed views of what it means to be bisexual, she said.

Ochs defines bisexuality as being attracted to members of both genders, although not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree.

Throughout her presentation, Ochs made jokes and sarcastic comments about the absurdity of the need to prove bisexuality, which many students found helpful.

"Humor helps you connect," said attendee Julian Haas (junior-sociology).

Each attendee filled out an anonymous questionnaire, rating themselves on questions about attractions and romantic interests at various times in life.

The surveys were collected and redistributed, and each person took on the identity of the person whose questionnaire they received.

Students then arranged themselves based on the rankings provided and looked at the results.

Rainbow Roundtable President Allison Jones said the exercise was her favorite part of the program because it allowed her to see the spectrum of sexuality in a literal way.

"Language isn't all-encompassing," she said.

Ochs said she thinks the problem lies within society's view of sex and sexuality.

As a culture, Ochs said that we are both obsessed with sex and uncomfortable with it.

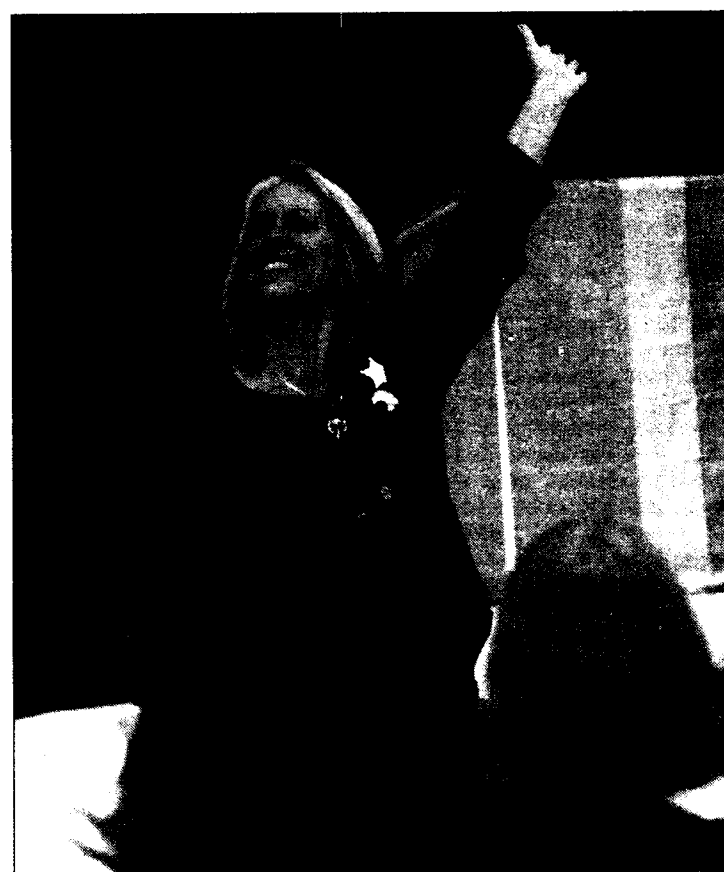
Ochs added that the lives of members of the LGBTQTA community are highly sexualized.

"We make sense of other people based on what we know about ourselves," Ochs said.

At the conclusion of Ochs' speech, students agreed they learned a lot about what it means to be bisexual and that gender isn't always black and white.

Bisexuality is an important subject to address because it isn't talked about a lot and there are negative stereotypes that need to be broken down, Jones said.

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Kelly Rootes-Murphy/Collegian

Robyn Ochs delivers a presentation about bisexuality myths and realities in HUB Heritage Hall Thursday night.

## Penn State doctoral programs excel in national rankings

By Sarah Peters  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

A number of Penn State's doctoral programs were recognized as some of the best in the country in a report released by the National Research Council (NRC)

Eberly College of Science Dean Daniel Larson said he was "pleased and delighted" the college performed so well in the rankings, which he said also have an impact on undergraduate students.

"It's a testimony to the quality of our faculty and students," Larson

said. "Even though these are graduate programs that are being ranked, it measures the quality of the faculty and the quality of research going on, and that's also very important for the undergraduate students," he said.

Faculty research — such as publications, citations and grants — was a major factor in the rankings, Regina Vasilatos-Younken, senior associate dean of The Graduate School, wrote in an e-mail.

"Penn State has stellar faculty who are leading their fields of study with respect to cutting-edge

research and scholarship," Vasilatos-Younken wrote. "The current assessment now confirms this with 'hard data.'"

She also credited Penn State's ranking to its "commitment to being a student-centered university," citing grant writing workshops, a "vibrant" Graduate Student Association and a graduate writing center, among other assets.

Unlike in its 1995 report, the NRC declined to assign a specific ranking to the programs, instead opting to assign ranges, Vasilatos-Younken wrote.

Vasilatos-Younken wrote that the high quality of Penn State's programs wasn't necessarily recognized in the 1995 rankings because of the methodology used and because Penn State's programs are continually improving.

The NRC takes into account 20 factors in the ranking, such as research activity of the faculty, student support and outcomes and diversity of the academic environment, an NRC press release stated.

Renata Engel, associate dean for academic programs in the College of Engineering, said she's

pleased each of the college's programs had recognized strengths, overall or in the dimensional characteristics used in the rankings.

"Certainly, I wasn't surprised to see where we showed strengths," Engel said.

Engel said the report provides opportunities to see what the college has done since 2006, when the data was collected.

"I know where we are increasing those strengths or building upon what we already have," she said.

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