

NORTH EAST PLANNING COMMISSION

North East Town Hall Meeting Room
106 South Main Street, North East, Maryland 21901
Tuesday, September 6, 2016
7:00 PM

Chairman Mark Dobbins called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M. Present included Commissioner Eric Braley, Valerie Combs, Michael Nair and Judy Duffy. Also present were Melissa Cook-Mackenzie, Town Administrator, and Betsy Vennell, Director of Planning. Lisa Rhoades, Planning and Zoning Assistant was absent due to illness.

-MINUTES-

July 5, 2016

Ms. Duffy made a motion to accept the July 5, 2016 minutes, as presented. Mr. Nair seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

-COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC-

Chairman Dobbins requested that comments from the public regarding the North East Commons traffic impact study be heard after the project is presented by the applicant.

-NEW BUSINESS-

None.

-OLD BUSINESS-

1. North East Commons - Traffic Feasibility Study: Subject property can be found on Tax Map 25, Parcels 453, 591 and 272. Zoning District: "HC" Highway Commercial District.

Mr. Brandon Freel, Caves Valley Partnership, representing the Owner and Mr. Mark Keeley, Traffic Concepts came to present the May 2016 North East Commons Traffic Feasibility Study.

Mr. Keeley reported that his company utilized the State Highway Administration 2014 and 2015 project counts already on file, and used the developments in the background, and included a growth rate, representing traffic which moves through the area, along with regional traffic flows. They also looked at proposed future trips. Mr. Keeley indicated this report is a "traffic brief". Mr. Keeley reported that they looked at the current movement in the intersections, comparing the background service levels with the proposed level of service.

Mr. Nair asked specific questions pertaining to the report which were answered by Mr. Keeley. Chairman Dobbins reported that the 'study' has been forwarded by Traffic

Concepts to the State Highway Administration, who in turn will submit a comment letter. After the comment letter from the State Highway Administration is received by the Town, the Town will then have their consultant review the Traffic Feasibility Study in conjunction with the State Highway Administration's response.

Comments from the Public with regard to North East Commons Traffic Feasibility Study:

Mrs. Muriel Wetzel and Mr. Thomas Wetzel, 246 North East Road, North East, Maryland. Mrs. Wetzel reported that she and her husband, along with her son, Steve Stiles from 248 North East Road, own homes across from the proposed site. Mr. and Mrs. Wetzel submitted a comment letter regarding their difficulty of ingress and egress to their property to/from Route 272. Mrs. Wetzel reported that one of these homes is a historical home, constructed in 1788, with another home built approximately 16 years ago.

Mrs. Wetzel inquired if the Planning Commission would be changing the zoning for the proposed cross dock facility and asked Mr. Keeley whether the majority of the proposed traffic would be from I-95 and what the tractor trailers would be carrying.

Mr. Freel outlined the difference between a Cross Dock Facility which is currently not permitted by right and a warehouse which is permitted by right in the current Highway Commercial Zoning District. Mr. Freel indicated he is not looking for a rezoning, but for a Cross Dock Facility to be a permitted use in the Highway Commercial Zoning District. Mr. Keeley reported that the majority of the tractor trailers would be coming from and going to I-95, however, a portion would be traveling to/from Route 40.

Mrs. Wetzel reported that if the cross dock facility is permitted, that she is requesting signs which state "no jake breaks". Mr. Stephen Stiles inquired whether the widening of the road is proposed on his side of the road, and Mr. Freel stated that the proposed widening is on the west side of North East Road (Route 272).

Chairman Dobbins explained that the proposed cross dock facility use generates a different type of traffic versus the traffic which was proposed for the retail site plan, and inquired what type of goods the trailers would be carrying. Mr. Freel indicated that typically they are carrying goods for different retail establishments and types, Mrs. Wetzel stated she was concerned about the trailers carrying hazardous material.

Chairman Dobbins indicated that they will be looking at all the different factors, understanding that any development will increase the traffic at some point or another. Chairman Dobbins reported that no decisions regarding the addition of a cross dock facility to the Highway Commercial Zoning District Regulations will be made this evening. The Planning Commission will await the comments from the State and the Town's consultant before continuing discussion on this matter.

2. Waterfront North East-Discussion:

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that she sent to the Critical Area Commission with regard to the proposed walkway and has received a letter back dated September 2, 2016 from Alexandra DeWeese, Critical Area Commission. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that the Commission did not believe a Comprehensive Plan revision was required in order to proceed with a walkway, as long as the Comprehensive Plan references a walkway”.

The Planning Commission remained concerned about:

- maintenance of the walkway
- private property owners in disagreement about the ‘walkway’
- the lack of an attractive view from a walkway in the proposed area vs. the walkway in Havre de Grace and Chesapeake City.

Commissioner Braley inquired if the promenade in Havre de Grace has been utilized by the North East Planning Commission, and suggested the Planning Commission note the difference between the view from the promenade in Havre de Grace, and the view from the proposed walkway, stating that they are completely different, and expressed concern as to what the Town’s proposed walkway would provide.

-NEW BUSINESS-

None.

-REPORTS-

Route 272/Amtrak Bridge:

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that there is no new update to the Route 272 project over the Amtrak Bridge. Ms. Cook-MacKenzie reported the State Highway Administration has been keeping their website updated regarding this project she will email the link to the Planning Commission.

Ridgely Forest Phase 2 and Phase 3:

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that the Town has called in five bonds for Ridgely Forest Phase 2 and Phase 3 Master Planned Community. A Complaint has been filed, and a meeting with the residents was held at the Town Hall on August 31, 2016 to review the status of the development. Approximately 65 residents attended the meeting.

Heron Cove:

Mrs. Vennell reported that there have been no submittals or correspondence regarding the proposed Heron Cove Development.

State Highway Administration Church Street to Irishtown Road Sidewalk project:

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that the State Highway project of installing sidewalks between Church Street and Irishtown Road has been stalled due to a redesign of the storm drain. A new 24 inch storm drain pipe will be installed between the island between Mauldin Avenue and South Main Street, and the landscape will be removed and re-installed.

State Highway Administration Route 272 North Bound sidewalk project:

Mrs. Vennell reported that the State Highway project which is proposed north of Route 40 on Route 272 adjacent to Walmart is scheduled to begin at the end of 2016.

C and S Warehouse

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that the C and S Warehouse on Lums Road has re-opened and is working with a limited staff.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

None.

-NEXT MEETING-

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled on October 4, 2016. Mrs. Vennell reported that the Planning Office has not received any applications or agenda items. The Planning Commission determined they would like to meet on October 4, 2016 at the North East Town Park to perform a site inspection of the proposed walkway phase 1.

-ADJOURNMENT-

With no further business, Ms. Duffy made a motion to adjourn at 8:43 p.m. Ms. Combs seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

Respectfully submitted:

Attest:

Betsy Vennell
Director of Planning

Mark Dobbins
Chairman