

NORTH EAST PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
North East Town Hall Meeting Room
106 South Main Street, North East, Maryland 21901
Wednesday, February 5, 2014
7:00 P.M.

Chairman Brian Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:19 P. M. Present included Commissioner Eric Braley, members Mark Dobbins, Michael Kline, and Ranald Langille. Also present were Melissa Cook MacKenzie, Town Administrator, Betsy Vennell, Director of Planning and Bill Weisel, Planning and Zoning Assistant.

-MINUTES-

The December 4, 2013 minutes were approved as presented.

-COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC-

None.

NEW BUSINESS-

1. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman of Planning Commission

Mr. Kline made a motion to nominate Brian Morgan as the Planning Commission Chairman. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Braley and approved by all.

Commissioner Braley made a motion to nominate Mark Dobbins as Vice-Chairman. The motion was seconded by Mr. Langille and approved by all.

2. North East Zoning Ordinance - Discussion regarding amendments to Article 6-29 Assisted Living Facilities/Group Homes and Article 6-8 Parking Regulations

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie reported that the Town had received an inquiry regarding a residential group home which was proposed as a second residential group home facility within the distance limitations as outlined in the North East Zoning Ordinance. Pursuant to that inquiry, the Town requested Attorney Dennis Clower to research the matter. Subsequent to Attorney Clower's research, it was determined that the Town's Zoning Ordinance should be brought into compliance. Attorney Clower submitted a letter to the Town and Planning Commission supporting his research.

Mrs. Vennell reported that the Town's zoning regulations differentiated between residential (under 9 persons), and small (9-15) or large (16 or greater) assisted living facilities/group homes. The zoning amendment removes regulations pertaining to residential group homes, which are considered a family. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that the amendments also re-direct any reference to signs to Article 7. Signs. Regarding proposed amendments to Article 6-8. Parking Regulations, Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie reported that the Planning Commission previously discussed this amendment during their December 2013 Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Kline made a motion to move forward with the amendment process. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Braley and approved by all.

3. **Pier 1 Restaurant-Parking Lot - Concept Site Plan:** Owners: Vincent and Pamela Cirino. Tax Map 400; Parcel 139 and 371.

Mr. Alan Blomquist, P.E., American Engineering, Elkton, Maryland and Mr. Vincent Cirino, property owner, came to present the concept site plan.

Mr. Blomquist stated that he is requesting Concept Site Plan approval, along with requesting to combine the Preliminary/Final Site Plan for the next submittal. Mr. Blomquist reported that the site plan has received Concept Stormwater Management Approval, and the letter of approval was provided to the Planning Commission. Mr. Blomquist stated that the project has also been forwarded to the Critical Area Commission, and reported he has already received feedback from the Commission. Mr. Blomquist stated that he has requested from Cecil County, that he be permitted to submit a combined Preliminary/Final Stormwater plan, however, he has not received a response yet.

Mr. Blomquist reported a State Highway permit has been issued for the proposed parking lot entrance. Mr. Cirino indicated he would like to have the driveway entrance made as soon as possible, even prior to the approval of the Final Site Plan because the permit expires in April 2014. Mr. Cirino stated that he would like to have stone put down in the area of the proposed parking lot, immediately after the curb cut, to allow more time for the entire site to settle. Mr. Cirino also desired the stone to be installed immediately after the curb cut is complete so patrons could utilize the temporary parking lot, as the curb cut will require elimination of a parking space on Main Street. Mr. Blomquist gave a date of two (2) years for completion of the entire project, including all stormwater management requirements.

Mr. Blomquist stated that there are no designated ADA parking spaces, however they would provide spaces, if necessary. Chairman Morgan stated that to approve any parking request, there would need to be at least one marked space for a handicapped van. Mr. Langille suggested that the ADA parking space be the first spot which would be closest to the handicap entrance to the restaurant. Chairman Morgan reported that compacted stone dust would be acceptable as long as there is grading at 2 percent. Mr. Blomquist stated that his firm would be able to certify the acceptance of the compacted stone dust which would be used until the blacktop is installed.

Mr. Langille made a motion to approve the Concept site plan for the Pier One Parking lot with the following conditions:

- ADA parking provided to meet Federal Guidelines
- approval of combining preliminary and final plan approval process
- approval to create the curb cut as outlined in the SHA Permit, prior to the final site plan
- deadline of 2 years for the completion of the project

Mr. Mike Kline seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

-OLD BUSINESS-

None.

-REPORTS-

North East Commons-

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that the Town received a letter and a conceptual drawing from Caves Valley Partners, one of the owners of North East Commons. The request is for a 600,000 square foot Class A distribution facility. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie stated that Caves Valley Partners has requested that the Town consider a zoning amendment to the "HC" Highway Commercial District to permit bulk industrial, cross docked distribution centers as a permitted use.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that the Planning Commission had previously spent many hours approving a concept plan for this parcel, which included a shopping center, with a portion of big box stores. The shopping center also received concept approval of a nautical theme. That concept approval has since expired.

Chairman Morgan stated that, regardless of any plan, he does not ever want the Town to be in a position to modify an ordinance to favor one parcel. After discussion, about concerns of truck traffic, whether industrial is still profitable, and other locations which are available in Town for cross dock facilities, the Planning Commission was not favorable to the letter of request from Caves Valley Partners or their conceptual drawing.

Route 272 Bridge over the AMTRAK:

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported the most recent status of the State Highway Bridge on Route 272 over AMTRAK. The proposed advertisement date for the project is March 4, 2014, with notice to proceed the end of May, 2014. The bridge construction start date is still tentative, as AMTRAK and the State Highway Administration do not have a construction agreement.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that the re-construction project will include pedestrian sidewalks and pedestrian lighting.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

None.

-NEXT MEETING-

March 5, 2014

-ADJOURNMENT-

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Dobbins made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 P.M. Mr. Kline seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

Respectfully submitted:

Betsy Vennell
Director of Planning

Attest:

Brian Morgan
Chairman