

NORTH EAST BOARD OF APPEALS
North East Town Hall / 106 South Main Street
Thursday, July 14, 2016
7:00 P.M.

Chairman Gabrielle Oldham called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Present for the meeting included members Sonny Tenney, Peg Hardin and Marian Martino. Also in attendance were Melissa Cook-Mackenzie, Town Administrator, Betsy Vennell, Director of Planning and Lisa Rhoades, Planning and Zoning Assistant. Dennis Clower, Esquire was present.

-MINUTES-

January 28, 2016

Ms. Martino made a motion to approve the minutes as presented with minor corrections. Mr. Tenney seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

-COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC-

None.

-OLD BUSINESS-

None.

-NEW BUSINESS-

Public Hearing

Case A-2016-02-SE: Special Exception application from Emily Gillis, Esquire, 144 Elk River Lane, North East, MD 21901 for a proposed professional law office located at 22 North Main Street, Suite 1, North East, Maryland 21901, also found on Tax Map 400; Parcel 0088. Zoning District: "VC" Village Commercial. Applicant proposes to provide attorney services. Property owner Dominick DiPatre.

Chairman Oldham opened the public hearing at 7:06 p.m.

Ms. Kimberly Dacey, Court Reporter, swore in the applicant, Ms. Emily Gillis, Esquire, 144 Elk River Lane, North East, Maryland. Chairman Oldham inquired if Ms. Gillis would like to have the application made part of the record and Ms. Gillis stated yes.

Ms. Gillis reported that this location provides a handicap access ramp into the building and handicap accessibility inside of the building. Ms. Gillis stated this was not only necessary for her but also for her potential clients. Parking is available onsite as well as street parking within close proximity. Ms. Gillis stated she would like to add a law office sign to the existing sign post and one window decal sign. Ms. Gillis stated she does not feel that her law office would create any traffic issues as she would be seeing one client at a time. The hours of operation will be 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Ms.

Approved
April 27, 2017

Gillis wants to provide comfort and convenience to her clients by offering some evening hours and wants to take an active part in the North East community. Ms. Gillis stated she feels her law office would be an asset to the town.

Mr. Tenney inquired if Ms. Gillis would be the only lawyer in the office and whether there would be any other office staff. Ms. Gillis reported she would be the only lawyer in the office and there would always be one other person with her as she requires some help throughout the day.

Ms. Oldham asked for comments from the Planning Office. Ms. Vennell reported that the Planning Commission heard this Case and forwarded a recommendation of approval to the Board of Appeals. The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area had no comments as there was no increase in impervious surface. No members of the public were present to speak regarding this Case.

Ms. Martino inquired why the use of a law office required a special exception and asked if there other law offices in North East. Ms. Cook-Mackenzie explained that this property is zoned "V-C" Village Commercial, which allows either a residential or a commercial establishment. Recognizing that some uses may generate an unusual amount of traffic and/or noise or could be intrusive to an adjoining residential property, the special exception allows the Planning Commission and/or the Board of Appeals to impose conditions on a use for items such as signs, building materials, time of operation, paving, landscaping, lighting, etc. Regarding another law office, Kirsh Title is located on Cecil Avenue.

Ms. Gillis stated that she will be operating a general practice. Any case work and criminal law will be done by meeting the clients at the jail. These clients will not be coming to the law office. Ms. Gillis closed by stating that this location would be a perfect location for her law practice.

Chairman Oldham closed the Public Hearing at 7:42 p.m.

After minor discussion, Mr. Tenney made a motion to approve the use of a law office at 22 North Main Street, North East, Maryland. Ms. Martino seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

-REPORTS-

No comments.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

Ms. Martino commented that she has heard positive comments on the restaurant which just opened at 26 South Main Street.

-NEXT MEETING-

Chairman Oldham has cancelled the August 25, 2016 meeting, as there are no agenda items.

Approved
April 27, 2017

-ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Tenney made a motion to adjourn at 7:55 p.m. Ms. Martino seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

Respectfully submitted:

Attest:

Lisa Rhoades
Planning and Zoning Assistant

Gabrielle D. Oldham
Chairman

Approved
April 27, 2017