

**NORTH EAST BOARD OF APPEALS-
North East Town Hall / 106 South Main Street
Thursday, May 25, 2017
7:00 P.M.**

Chairman Gabrielle Oldham called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Present for the meeting included members, Marian Martino, Peg Hardin, Sonny Tenney and Raymond Mitchell. Also in attendance were Melissa Cook-MacKenzie, Town Administrator, Betsy Vennell, Director of Planning, Lisa Rhoades, Planning and Zoning Assistant and Dennis Clower, Esquire

-MINUTES-

April 27, 2017

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

-COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC-

None.

-OLD BUSINESS-

None.

-NEW BUSINESS-

Public Hearing

Case A-2017-02-SE: Special Exception application from North East United Methodist Church, 308 South Main Street, North East, Maryland 21901, also found on Tax Map 401; Parcel 0315. Applicant proposes to replace existing sign with an electronic sign. Zoning District: V-C, Village Commercial.

Chairman Oldham opened the public hearing at 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Kimberly Dacey, court reporter, swore in Jeffrey Gillespie, applicant, Laura Young and Paul Stark.

Chairman Oldham inquired if the applicant would like the application made part of the record. Ms. Young, a representative for the North East United Methodist Church and Mr. Gillespie, the applicant responded yes.

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie stated that there was a request for an opinion from the Town of North East Ethics Committee regarding Chairman Oldham and Ms. Martino's affiliation with the North East United Methodist Church. The Ethics Committee determined that Chairman Oldham and Ms. Martino could participate in the public hearing regarding the church.

Ms. Young explained that the North East United Methodist Church would like to replace their current sign with an electronic sign. Ms. Young stated that replacing the lettering on the current sign is difficult and the sign case is often full of bugs and spiders. A feature of the proposed electronic sign would be that the messages could be changed remotely from inside of the church. The proposed sign will be the same size as the existing sign and the sign will be able to display either two lines of 5 inch letters or one line of 10 inch letters. Ms. Young added that they intend to use the 5 inch letters for the most part. Ms. Young stated a delivery truck with a crane on the back will lift the old sign off of the base and sit the new sign on the existing base.

Ms. Young reported she had spoken to the sign manufacturer about the brightness of the lettering and has found that the brightness is programmable so that it can meet the North East Zoning Ordinance Regulations regarding lumens. Ms. Young confirmed that the sign manufacturer has reviewed the North East Zoning Ordinance, Article 7 Sign regulations to ensure the proposed sign is in compliance.

Ms. Vennell reported the North East Planning Commission forwarded a memorandum to the Board of Appeals with a recommendation for approval subject to the condition that the electronic sign be turned off between the hours of 9 p.m. to 7 a.m.

Chairman Oldham inquired if the proposed sign would have the date and time displayed. Ms. Young stated yes. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie stated that the time and date displayed 24 hours per day is permitted by right per the North East Zoning Regulations.

Chairman Oldham inquired if the signs message was stationary or scrolled. Ms. Young stated the message will scroll. The Church would like to put messages on the proposed sign such as soup supper, emergency shelter, time of church services and theme of services. Ms. Martino noted the application outlines that the lumens automatically adjust with the time of day. Mrs. Vennell stated that if the Planning Office received a complaint regarding the lighting projected in the sign, the church would be notified. Ms. Young stated if any complaints were received they would be willing to make any adjustments necessary. Mrs. Martino inquired if there would be animation or graphics on the proposed sign. Ms. Young stated the sign will not have either.

As there were no further comments, Chairman Oldham closed the public hearing at 7:17 p.m.

Mr. Tenney made a motion to approve the proposed electronic sign subject to the following conditions:

1. Letter from Mrs. Vennell dated April 12, 2017 to the North East Planning Commission and the North East Board of Appeals.
2. The hours of operation for the proposed Electronic Message Reader Board sign be limited to 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Ms. Martino seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

-REPORTS-

None.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

Mr. Mitchell inquired if there would be a conflict of interest regarding the upcoming Tome School Special Exception and Variance cases as his property adjoins the Tome School. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie replied no.

-NEXT MEETING-

June 22, 2017

-ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Mitchell made a motion to adjourn at 7:35 p.m. Mr. Tenney seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

Respectfully submitted:

Attest:

Lisa Rhoades
Planning and Zoning Assistant

Gabrielle D. Oldham
Chairman