

Planning & Zoning Commission

Minutes

March 3, 2020

The Planning and Zoning Commission for the City of Cambridge met on Tuesday, March 3, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. at the City Council Chambers, 305 Gay Street, Cambridge, Maryland.

Commissioners in attendance: Mary Losty, Chairman, William Craig, Vice-Chair, Hubert Trego, Eugene Lauer, Chan'Tay Nelson, and Jerry Burroughs

Not in attendance: George Breig

Others in attendance included: Pat Escher-City Planner, Patrick Thomas-City Attorney, Dave Cannon-Council liaison.

Chairperson Losty called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and asked for a moment of silence.

Approval of the Agenda

Motion to approve agenda was approved. The motion was made by Comm. Burroughs and seconded by Comm. Nelson to approved.

Approval of Minutes

January minutes were revised and signed

February minutes, motion to accept by Comm. Lauer and second by Comm. Trego. All approved. Abstained by Comm. Nelson.

Old Business

NONE

New Business

PZ 2020-004 2737 Dorchester Square – Concept Plan – Proposed retail at the Metro Building – Deferred by the Applicant

PZ 2020-005 142 Rambler Road – Concept Plan for a restaurant and billiards (vacant property behind the Exxon gas station)

Staff stated that the applicant, Mr. Moody, was the former owner of Great Slates Billiard Café located in Cambridge Marketplace. Mr. Moody will be working with the prospective property owner, Mr. Bell, to construct a billiards hall and café on the vacant lot behind the Exxon gas station. The applicant proposes to provide 16 tables that will be seven feet long for tournaments

and 4 tables that will be nine feet in length for the more advanced players. Staff discussed the site plan and stated that this would be the first commercial project subject to the City's new the commercial guidelines. The applicant met with staff and the chairs of the Commission to get preliminary comments. The current design revised the location of the parking by moving the majority of the parking spaces along the eastern portion of the lot and pushing the building further back into the site to provide for more landscaping in the front of the property. Architectural plans show pillars along the front and sides of the building and a covered walkway on the parking lot side of the building. Building materials are on the podium for Commissioner's review. There was concern expressed about the side elevations since the building is fairly long, with a 120 length. The building's materials have gray tones and are fairly similar, which may create a fairly monotoned structure. Prior to the next submission the applicant, their architect should meet to discuss some alternative colors.

Tom Davis, Engineer of DMS & Associates, gave a presentation. He stated that the applicant wants to build a structure 80 feet wide by 120 feet long, which would be about 9,600 square feet. Mr. Davis stated of that the original design proposed more parking in the front, but they moved the building further away from the road to provide more landscaping relocated more parking spaces to the eastern side of the property. The site is about 1.14 acres of commercial land / access would be from Meteor Avenue. The City code requires 39 parking spaces on this plan, and they have provided 40 spaces, with nine of them located in the front of the building. Landscaping in the front yard will be constructed to provide storm water management similar to the AutoZone across the street. Trash containment and screening will be at the rear of the building. Front of the building will be the café / bar area and the billiard tables will be in the rear of the building. Sewer and water lines have been discussed with the City Engineer, George Hyde and will be connected to the Rambler Road accesses.

John Moody discussed the exterior of the building. Grey tones with a mixed color stones for the bottom of the building, like the AutoZone building. Metal roofing will be metal and a lighter grey tone than the sides. He discussed the lay out of the building and the rational about not including windows on the sides of the building as sunlight would interfere with playing pool.

This is a Concept Plan and the applicant wants Commissioners comments before moving forward.

Comm. Burroughs no questions, and likes the ideas presented so far.

Comm. Lauer and Comm. Nelson also likes the ideas so far.

Comm. Trego wanted to know they will have a beer and wine license? Mr. Moody responded yes.

Motion to recommend this applicant to proceed with plans from Comm. Craig and seconded by Comm. Nelson. All in favor.

Public Hearing

NONE

Discussion Items

CWDI – Waterfront Property Update

Sandra Trippe- Jones – Frank Narr – Daryll Butcher

Ms. Trippe-Jones provided an updated the Commission regarding the progress of the project so far. CWDI has been focused on promoting Cambridge, meeting with developers. The owners of RAR would like to locate a second Brew Pub on the Cambridge Creek. Cambridge Yacht Maintenance would like to expand their facility and there is a senior living developer interested in a portion of the property. The group has worked on finalizing the draft master plan, which the Commissioners have been given a copy. The 12-acre Port property, located adjacent to Cambridge Creek, transferred to the City from the State for the purpose of economic development that would create a mixed-use project.

Ms. Trippe-Jones walked the Commission through the various phases of the development. Phase 1 would focus on the Port property, with the later phases focusing on the hospital and county properties. The Yacht Maintenance expansion would require an additional two additional acres; that when combined with the existing City lease would be a total of 4 acres of City property used for their facility. This expansion would allow them to install a much bigger travel lift, increasing their efficiency and enabling them to work on more and larger boats. RAR is proposing a facility that would use a little under an acre. The proposed Master Plan locates them between the Yacht Maintenance facility and the proposed outdoor plaza area. The existing boat ramp would be reduced in size and provide public restroom area. The latter phases would include improvements to the beach area. They are looking into potential shuttle service during larger venues. They are also looking at play areas with pop-up fountains and other activities. Senior living facility would be located adjacent to existing residential units and need approximately five acres. As institutional uses are currently not permitted, this facility would require an amendment to the overlay zone.

Pursuant to the transfer agreement, the first phase, the Port property, requires State approval. CWDI would like to get the Planning Commission's approval prior to going to the State.

There were questions from public about the boat ramp being relocated and about the plaza area.

Comm. Craig asked about the proposed marina area as DNR has stated that there will be no more marinas along the river. Ms. Jones stated no they have not talk to DNR yet but will when the plan becomes more finalized and they can have a water taxi without a marina.

Comm. Lauer asked if the land is being leased or sold to the developers. Ms. Jones said those they would like to purchase the land, but CWDI is leaning towards leasing the land. Comm. Lauer also asked about if CWDI is going to be the developer of all the plans and retain control. Ms. Jones stated that a management group is in discussion about that process. He wanted to know what the public investment will be for the development of Phase 1. Ms. Jones stated the City Engineer, George Hyde estimated between 5 to 8 million for the infrastructure, walkways, landscaping and others. He stated that if they were leases, they would be able to repaying these expenses.

Comm. Nelson, no questions as of yet.

Comm. Trego asked about the interest from other buyers? Ms. Trippe-Jones stated that State of Maryland has been a great support with developer contacts. Mr. Trego stated he had concerns about the assisted living developments are not always very well maintained.

Chairperson Losty thanked the group and all their hard work. She asked about the institutional use in this area from the Planning and Zoning viewpoint. Chairperson Losty asked which way the assisted living facility will be facing? Ms. Jones stated it would face Byrn Street and Dorchester Ave. Ms. Losty also asked about the assisting living facility's time frame. Ms. Jones responded they are doing their due diligence at this time. The Yacht Maintenance needs to get Core of Engineers approval with the larger boat lift, so that will take some time to go through that process. Ms. Losty asked, why put an assisted living in the area where it so much activity, when the City has other areas that would be quieter.

Comm. Lauer asked about the developer of the assisted living and whether the State sent them to the group or did CDWI reach out to them directly. Ms. Jones responded that originally the group looked at perhaps repurposing the hospital building and convert it to an assisted living facility. It turned out that conversion was not economically feasible. She indicated that Dorchester County does not have any facility of this scale for assisted living and it is a needed use.

Comm. Craig asked staff that if we do change the code for the institution, is it a text amendment or a zoning change. Staff stated it would be a text amendment, institutional uses are permitted in some of the Downtown Waterfront Districts, but the Commission specifically incorporated language into the overlay to prohibit institutional uses. So, changing the code would require a text amendment to the overlay zone.

Comm. Trego responded that with regards to the assisted living facility, is a use and not an end user. Make sure the use is what we feel comfortable with the use and not the company.

Ms. Jones wanted to thank the Commission for listing and helping with the project.

Working Waterfront Plan – areas for adoption, not adoption and discussion.

Comm. Lauer agrees with the Comprehensive Plan and recommend Long Wharf suggestions go forward.

Staff went through the Plan, with recommendations to adopt some page, not adopt other and others to defer to the Comprehensive Plan process, that will need to be update in the next year or two.

Motion from Comm. Lauer go forward with staff recommendation to City Council as stated in the current document and second by Comm. Craig. All approve.

Property at 120 Choptank Ave – Historic Commercial property

Staff introduced Mr. Brian Roche and his property at 120 Choptank Avenue, which was never used as a single-family property. Historically it was a commercial store on the ground level and

apartments above. The property is located on a corner lot and pursuant to the UDC, properties within the NC zone districts, can be converted back to their historic use with a Special Exception. The store has long been removed and the lower levels were converted into apartments. There was a fire and as the property owner did not have insurance, the building has been vacant for numerous years. The Commission needs to concur that this was a historically commercial property and recommend to the BOA that a Special Exception should be granted to allow the building to be used as it had been in the past. Staff presented pictures of the property's exterior and interior.

Mr. Roche stated that the building was a store on the first floor and two apartments on the second floor. In 2002, he purchased the building and there were two apartments upstairs and two apartments downstairs. Staff showed pictures of the fire damage in the rear of the building. Most of the damage was water damage due to the efforts to put out the fire. Mr. Roche restored the front of the building, but the rear required much more work. He wants to have two apartments upstairs and one large apartment in the downstairs with storage front room and have the façade be designed to appear from a store.

Staff recommends that this Commission document that Mr. Roche came to the PZ Commission and has agreed to define his property being a corner commercial lot. He then can proceed to appear in front of BOA and get the Special Exception.

Comm. Burroughs made the motion to give a positive recommendation to the BOA for this project and the motion was seconded by Comm. Trego. All in favor.

Refinement to the sign ordinance, mural vs. sign

Staff gave the Commission information regarding mural as staff begins to prepare some guidelines to clarify the difference between signs and mural. This matter came the City's attention when a local business put a sign on their property and stated it was mural and not a sign. This occurred in the historic district and went through a process with that body and the BOA.

Comm. Lauer stated we need to protect the historical areas of town with the murals on these historical buildings. Staff stated that the owner of Blue Ruin did not come to the City to get permission first and that is why there were issues due to its lack of conformance to the sign code.

Comm. Burroughs asked who decides what is a mural or sign right now? Staff said that signs are a staff review, but the sign in question on the Blue Ruin did submit the required permit and just put it up with no City review.

Comm. Lauer stated that the Blue Ruin mural advertises the business and has writing on it.

Scott Shores with the City's GIS Division - presentation about digital information available through GIS was not presented at this meeting.

Chairperson Losty asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Unanimously moved.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Escher

Mary M. Losty

Mary Losty, Chair

May 5, 2020

Date Approved