

La Plata Planning Commission
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Regular meeting
June 6, 2006, 7:00 PM

Present: Chairman Garyton C. Echols, Jr., Keith A. Hettel, Rich Gilpin, Debra W. Posey, C. Keith Back – Commission members; Cathy Flerlage, Director of Planning and Zoning; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk (Due to the absence of Mr. Rose, Ms. Posey had full voting rights.)

Town Staff: Steven F. Schroeder, Project Manager

Minutes:

Chairman Echols called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and asked Mr. Back to lead the Commission and audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of May minutes

Ms. Posey noted that on page 2, in line three of the last paragraph, the additional word “all” needed to be removed. Mr. Hettel moved to approve the minutes of the May regular meeting as corrected. Mr. Gilpin seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Baldus downtown restaurant site – concept plan review and comment

[A staff report dated June 6, 2006 was included in the Planning Commission’s meeting packets.]

Ms. Flerlage briefly reviewed the staff report and noted that the Planning Commission needs to address improvements to and access to Howard Street, and require that Howard Street become a public right-of-way that is a minimum paving width of 26’.

Rick Baldus, of Baldus Real Estate, presented information regarding this development and responded to questions posed by the Planning Commission. Mr. Baldus referred to the plan as a “restaurant concept plan”, noted that they were dealing with a broker for the restaurant, and advised that there could also be an office building. Mr. Baldus asked for the Planning Commission’s direction on the layout as shown. Items noted by the Planning Commission included the close proximity to the street of the dumpster/service areas, concern regarding buildings at the corners blocking sight lines, and location of the southern entrance off Howard Street.

Arehart property/townhome community – approval of preliminary plan of subdivision

[A staff report dated June 6, 2006 was included in the Planning Commission’s meeting packets.]

James Erdman, Carl Baldus and Mike Mohler presented information regarding this subdivision and responded to questions posed by the Planning Commission. Ms. Flerlage briefly reviewed the staff report. It was noted that one townhouse has been deleted due to the swale

being too close, leaving 19 units proposed for this subdivision. It was also noted that encroachment issues have been remedied.

Mr. Gilpin moved to approve the preliminary plan of subdivision. Mr. Back seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Emergency access

Chairman Echols remarked that the Planning Commission has consistently asked developers of subdivisions to provide a second means of access for emergency vehicles. Chairman Echols advised that a Hickory Ridge resident informed him that the emergency access connection between Hickory Ridge and Agricopia has been blocked by a vehicle parked on the Agricopia end of the access. Chairman Echols recommended that the Town declare that emergency access area a fire lane. Mr. Schroeder responded that he would take care of it.

Sidewalk construction

Chairman Echols remarked that in the past the Town collected money to build sidewalks, citing as an example that the developer of the Social Services Building on Kent Avenue was required to pay for sidewalk on Kent Avenue. Chairman Echols further noted that the Town has not done anything with that and is not requiring installation of sidewalk when residences are converted to offices, citing as examples the conversions on St. Mary's Avenue and Washington Avenue. Chairman Echols noted that the Town is losing opportunities to have sidewalks installed at the expense of the developers rather than at the Town's expense.

Willow Woods – review of preliminary plat

[A staff report dated June 6, 2006 was included in the Planning Commission's meeting packets.]

Ken Crouse and Scott Burroughs, of Lorenzi, Dodds, and Gunnill, presented information regarding this subdivision and responded to questions posed by the Planning Commission. It was noted that the developer has agreed to a 50/50 cost share with the Board of Education to patch and overlay Willow Lane, from Charles Street to the Board of Education property, and to dedicate the road to the Town. It was also noted that the developer plans to abandon the excess curb cuts, and to repair and install curb line in place of the excess curb cuts. Ms. Flerlage briefly reviewed the staff report.

Mr. Gilpin moved to approve the preliminary plat, with the condition that the road ownership issue be resolved. Mr. Hettel seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Other business

Ms. Flerlage explained she included a copy of the "Boxcar Blues" article with the Planning Commission's meeting packets to provide information regarding how other jurisdictions have handled this railroad issue.

Chairman Echols reminded all that the July meeting has been rescheduled from Tuesday, July 4, to Wednesday, July 5, and that there would be no meeting in August.

Ms. Posey advised that solar energy information is available via a link on the Charles County Government web page.

There being no further business, Mr. Gilpin moved to adjourn at 8:22 PM. Mr. Back seconded the motion and it carried.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk