

La Plata Planning Commission
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
September 3, 2002, 7:00 PM

Present: Chairman Raymond J. Becmer, Keith A. Hettel, C. Keith Back, Roy G. Hale - Commission Members; Douglas R. Miller, Town Manager; Patricia L. Bembe, Assistant Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier

Guests: (See roster.)

Minutes:

Chairman Becmer called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and read the agenda. Chairman Becmer asked Mr. Hale to lead the Commission and audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of August minutes

Mr. Hale made a motion to approve the minutes of the August meeting. Mr. Hettel seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Building Reviews - Mr. Miller remarked that these were for the Planning Commission's advice and comment.

Dash In - Mr. Miller remarked that the Design Review Board has reviewed this building plan.

Lock Wills presented a site plan and front elevation for the Dash In he is rebuilding. He advised that the building size is 3200 sq. ft. and the art deco design is compatible with the new design of the Port Tobacco Players Theater across the street from the Dash In. He plans to have an expanded fuel facility which will have four multi-product dispensers that will serve eight vehicles at one time. He is providing sufficient parking, green space and landscaping. He hopes to have the building complete by Christmas. The Planning Commission commended him for his landscaping plan and noted he had a good building design.

CVS - Mr. Miller briefly explained that CVS plans to relocate to property located at the northeast corner of Rt. 301 and Hawthorne Drive.

Ken Crouse, of Lorenzi, Dodds and Gunnill, presented a site plan and described the building as 10,800 sq. ft. in size, with an all brick exterior and a double drive-through prescriptions pick-up on the rear side. He noted they would have a full commercial access on Rt. 301 and an access point on Hawthorne Drive. He also noted there would be an underground stormwater management facility and bio-retention plantings for surface drainage. They hope to be complete by the end of the year. Mr. Back noted that Safeway also wants to build an access point off Hawthorne Drive, and voiced his concern about having two access points off Hawthorne Drive going into two shopping centers.

La Plata Plaza - Mr. Miller reminded the Commission of their review of this project in August and their concern that Shining Willow Way be constructed from Rt. 301 all the way through to Washington Avenue. He noted that the developer has spoken to the La Plata Volunteer Fire Department about completing the road through their property on Washington Avenue. Mr. Miller also acknowledged receipt of a letter from neighboring property owners regarding impact of this development on their properties.

John Bessey, Gore Bolton and Jack Shahey presented information regarding the Safeway project. Mr.

Bolton presented a revised site plan, noting they had addressed site issues regarding completion of Shining Willow Way and the landscaping along the street. Mr. Bolton submitted for the record a copy of a letter dated August 23, 2002, from Luther Della, President of the La Plata Volunteer Fire Department, to the Town Manager, in which the Fire Department indicates their agreement to dedicate their portion of the right-of-way for construction of Shining Willow Way by Phillips Edison. Mr. Bolton also pointed out that the last page of the site plan package displays the landscaping changes made to address issues raised at the August meeting.

Jack Shahey displayed new building elevations showing the addition of more brick and a new side elevation showing more design work to add visual interest.

Chairman Becmer asked Mr. Bolton to address issues contained in a letter dated September 1, 2002, from neighbors whose properties abut this development to the Town Council and the Planning Commission. Mr. Bolton addressed the issues and also responded to a question from one of the neighbors, Jim Goldsmith. In his response, he advised that the stormwater ponds will be fenced and they could meet with the neighbors to determine the type fencing which would be agreeable to them. He also noted that there will be three stormwater ponds for this 27-acre commercial site: two will be dry ponds and one (on Hawthorne) will be a feature pond in which the water will move and be aerated. Regarding the lighting concern, the developer will make sure the lights are shielded and don't point to the neighbors' properties. Regarding retention of existing trees, it was noted that all interior trees will have to be removed for construction on the site, and that the buffer would be 30' deep with a 5' high berm, upon which will be planted canopy trees.

Mr. Goldsmith asked that the Planning Commission not make a decision on this project to allow time for the neighboring property owners to meet with Mr. Bessey and Mr. Bolton. Mr. Bolton noted his strong objection to this suggestion. The project representatives and the neighboring property owners left the meeting at this point to meet in the conference room to discuss their concerns.

Title Professionals - Mr. Miller noted that the Town plans to extend Centennial Street to Maple Avenue, and that Nancy Gasparovic, owner of Title Professionals, has been working with the Town regarding this street extension.

Nancy Gasparovic and Lisa Holmes, project architect, displayed elevations and floor plans and a preliminary site plan for repairing and adding to the Title Professionals building on La Grange Avenue. Ms. Gasparovic described her plans to add a new wing which would house a conference room on the ground floor and a studio apartment on the upper story, and noted that the plans have not yet been reviewed by the Design Review Board. Ms. Gasparovic and Mr. Miller briefly described the on-site parking, future angle parking on La Grange Avenue, and a cross parking easement Ms. Gasparovic is working out with the neighboring property owner, Charles Stuart.

Dr. Jenkins - Mr. Miller conveyed an apology from Dr. and Mrs. Jenkins regarding their inability to attend this and previous meetings. Mr. Miller displayed building elevations and advised that the building is to be rebuilt on the same footprint, with one story added.

Facchina Building South - Mr. Miller noted that this proposed development is located on the site of the temporary office trailers across from the Facchina building under construction.

Phil Mueller, of the Facchina Group, displayed site layout and building elevations for "South Centennial Project," which proposes to develop four separate buildings in a four-phase construction process.

He described the buildings as being two stories each, 7500 sq. ft. each floor, with one elevator and two sets of stairs per building. They will be “for sale products.” He described the design as being like the look of old town Alexandria or Annapolis.

Hawthorne Green final plat

Mr. Miller referred to the subdivision review report dated September, 2002, noting that the sidewalks must meet the new requirements in the Town Code.

Tim Lessner, of Lorenzi, Dodds and Gunnill, provided copies of the final plat and a written statement regarding tapering the new 5' wide sidewalks and green space where they tie into existing 4' wide sidewalks and green space. Regarding item #14 on the subdivision review report, Mr. Lessner advised that they will replant with native evergreen species the trees removed from the Town's property abutting the southern end of Hawthorne Green. He also noted they will comply with the new regulations regarding width of sidewalks and green space.

John Sites displayed elevations of the duplexes, triplexes and three different single family detached dwelling units planned for Hawthorne Green, and noted their prices range from \$170,000-\$180,000 to \$250,000. They hope to be under construction with the clubhouse by January, 2003, and hope to have some dwellings ready to show by Spring of 2003.

Following a brief discussion, Chairman Becmer asked for a motion on this final plat. Mr. Hettel offered a motion to approve the Hawthorne Green final plat. Mr. Back seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

King's Grant Section 8 final plat

Mr. Miller discussed the items and deficiencies listed in the subdivision review report dated September, 2002. Gore Bolton acknowledged he had reviewed the report and discussed the items listed. It was noted that the Planning Commission has allowed the old 4' wide sidewalk in previous sections for consistency with the other sections of King's Grant, but that the Planning Commission's guidance was needed as to whether this section should meet the new 5' wide sidewalk and planting strip regulation.

If the Planning Commission approves this final plat, Mr. Miller advised that approval should be contingent on providing: (1) uniformity with existing sidewalks and planting strip widths; (2) required deed restrictions; (3) MDE approval of the pump station design; and (4) resolution of 32 stormwater issues noted as item #6 in the September, 2002 subdivision review report.

The Planning Commission agreed to allow 4' wide sidewalks and planting strips in order to be consistent with the rest of King's Grant.

Chairman Becmer asked for a motion on this final plat. Mr. Hale offered a motion to approve the final plat of King's Grant Section 8, contingent on the provision of the required deed restrictions, MDE approval of the pump station design, resolution of the 32 stormwater issues, and uniformity with existing sidewalks and planting strip width. Mr. Back seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Agricopia Master Site Development Plan

Mr. Miller advised that mixed use development regulations require an additional approval step of obtaining Planning Commission approval of the basic land use shown on a master site development plan, which shows areas of various density. He noted there were minor draft issues which can be worked out with the engineer and should not hold up approval.

R. J. Earnshaw and Gore Bolton displayed the master site development plan for Agricopia, which they advised was developed using the new regulations. They described the densities in the pods, noting there are 760 dwelling units, including 2- and 3-story garden style condos on the approximately 5 ac. pond. They also noted there would be two inter-parcel connectors with the Davis tract.

If the Planning Commission approves this master site development plan, Mr. Miller advised that approval should be contingent on resolving the drafting issues.

Chairman Becmer asked for a motion on the Agricopia master site development plan. Mr. Back offered a motion to approve the master site development plan as shown, contingent on correcting the drafting issues noted by the Town Manager. Mr. Hale seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Other business

In response to Chairman Becmer's question, Mr. Miller advised that La Plata has not yet needed to enact water restrictions.

In response to Mr. Hettel, Mr. Miller advised that slow progress is being made on restoring three of the homes damaged by the tornado, whose owners were contacted by the Town due to inaction. He noted that there still has been no activity on one in Clarks Run. In response to Chairman Becmer, Mr. Miller advised that SHA and RC&D are helping the owner of the Chapman property clear trees.

In response to Jim Goldsmith's question, Chairman Becmer advised the Planning Commission made no decision on the La Plata Plaza/Safeway project and encouraged the neighbors and developer to work out their issues.

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith T. Frazier