

La Plata Planning Commission
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Regular meeting
November 4, 2003, 7:00 PM

Present: Chairman C. Keith Back, Garyton C. Echols, Jr., Robert W. Thompson, Zakary A. Krebeck, Roy G. Hale – Commission members; Douglas R. Miller, Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk (Due to the absence of Mr. Hettel, Mr. Krebeck had full voting rights.)

Town staff: Patricia L. Bembe, Assistant Town Manager, Steven F. Schroeder, Project Manager

Guests: (see roster)

Minutes:

Chairman Back called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and read the agenda, to which an item was added: Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND). Chairman Back asked Mr. Hale to lead the Commission and audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of October minutes

Mr. Thompson made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 7 regular meeting. Mr. Hale seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Hale made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 20 joint work session with the Town Council. Mr. Krebeck seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Recommendation: Ordinance 03-13 Sign Regulations

The Planning Commission acknowledged receipt of the October 29, 2003 memorandum to the Planning Commission from Patti Bembe, Assistant Town Manager, and discussed the nine issues listed in that memorandum that the Town Council is considering amending in Ordinance 03-13. Following this discussion, Mr. Thompson made a motion to recommend that the Town Council adopt Ordinance 03-13 with the amendments listed, and as modified and added to by the Planning Commission. Mr. Echols seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote. [Note: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION.]

1. Eliminate the five year time period to bring all existing signs into compliance with the new regulations.

2. Eliminate the regulation of flagpole heights REGARDING AMERICAN AND GOVERNMENT FLAGS ONLY.

3. Eliminate the requirement that window signs cannot be illuminated.

4. Allow roof signs provided they do not extend over the highest peak of the roof.
5. Increase freestanding sign heights in CH from a maximum of 12 feet to a maximum of 20 feet, MEASURED FROM THE CROWN OF THE ROAD MOST ADJACENT TO THE SIGN LOCATION.
6. Increase freestanding sign square footage in CH from a maximum of 50 square feet to a maximum of 70 square feet.
7. Clarify that existing freestanding signs in CH that list multiple tenants do not have to comply with the new master sign plan regulations if a sign panel listing a tenant changes, BUT MUST COMPLY WITH THE NEW MASTER SIGN PLAN REGULATIONS IF AT ANY ONE TIME FORTY PERCENT (40%) OF SIGN SQUARE FOOTAGE CHANGES.
8. Amend window signs in the various zoning districts so that it is consistent with the definition in Section 191-61.
9. Clarify sign height computation. MEASURE MAXIMUM HEIGHT ALLOWED FROM THE CROWN OF THE ROAD MOST ADJACENT TO THE SIGN LOCATION.
10. HOME OCCUPATION SIGNS SHALL NOT BE ILLUMINATED.
11. TEMPORARY SIGNS BE ALLOWED SIX (6) TIMES PER YEAR, WITH A DURATION OF TWENTY-ONE (21) DAYS EACH TIME.

Traditional Neighborhood Development

Mr. Miller explained that Jerry Lenhart, developer of Steeplechase, is interested in using the parameters set forth in Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND), and is asking the Town to amend Chapter 191 Zoning to include TND as an overlay zone within the Mixed Use District only. Mr. Miller briefly discussed his report "TND Overview" with the Commission (copies provided to each member).

Mr. Lenhart and Ken Crouse, of Lorenzi, Dodds & Gunnill, provided copies of their "Proposal For A Zoning Code Amendment To The Town of La Plata Zoning Ordinance To Include The Traditional Neighborhood Development" and limited copies of depictions of dwelling types, and discussed their proposal for using TND in Steeplechase.

Mr. Miller explained that he was looking for the Planning Commission's endorsement of the overall concept of TND, before starting the process to amend Chapter 191, which would include having public hearings by the Commission and the Town Council.

During the discussion on this proposal, some of the remarks included that age-targeted (for seniors) dwelling units include handicap/accessibility provisions, that subjective decision-making regarding what is quality be eliminated, and that the proposed TND specify a required

percentage mix of dwelling unit types to address the issue of maximum density being obtained by having only one dwelling unit type, such as only condominiums. It was the general consensus of the Planning Commission to endorse the overall concept and proceed with the amendment process.

Other business (none)

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk