

La Plata Planning Commission
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Regular meeting
December 6, 2005, 7:00 PM

Present: Chairman Garyton C. Echols, Jr., Keith A. Hettel, Rich Gilpin, Mark Rose, Debra W. Posey, C. Keith Back – Commission members; Cathy Flerlage, Director of Planning and Zoning; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk

Town Staff: Steven F. Schroeder, Project Manager

Minutes:

Chairman Echols called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM and asked Mr. Back to lead the Commission and audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of November minutes

Mr. Hettel made a motion to approve the minutes of the November regular meeting. Mr. Gilpin seconded and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Public hearing: Ordinance 05-17 Traditional Neighborhood Development – Garage Parking Spaces
[A staff report updated December 6, 2005 was included in the Planning Commission's meeting packets.]

Chairman Echols called the hearing to order. Ms. Flerlage entered into the record the Certification of Publication that the notice of the hearing was properly advertised in the November 18, 2005, edition of the Maryland Independent newspaper, and explained the proposed amendments covered in the ordinance.

Chairman Echols asked if anyone in the audience wished to speak for or against the ordinance.

Zak Krebeck, who gave his residence address as 306 Alder Court, La Plata, and his business address as 102 Centennial Street, La Plata, and testified as a Town resident and on behalf of Somerset Development Company, provided written testimony and a drawing titled "TND Parking Amendment Analysis", sheet 1 of 1, prepared by Bolton & Associates, LLC, dated October 7, 2005, which were entered into the record. Mr. Krebeck spoke in support of the amendment, with the exception that the 10' apron "be allowed to be reduced to 6 to 8 feet when a full off street parking space is not provided."

Ken Crouse, of Lorenzi, Dodds and Gunnill, Inc., 3475 Leonardtown Road, Waldorf, representing Lenhart Development/Steeplechase, spoke in support of the amendment, with the exceptions that the 10' apron be reduced to 6' or 8' and that the 18' width of an alley be reconsidered to a lesser width that still allows for public safety and utility vehicles.

There being no other speakers, Chairman Echols closed the hearing at 7:19 PM.

Public hearing: Rosewick Crossing Annexation – zoning recommendation

[A staff report dated December 6, 2005 was included in the Planning Commission's meeting packets.]

Chairman Echols recused himself from participation in the public hearing, any discussion and recommendation to the Town Council. Vice Chairman Hettel called the hearing to order. Ms. Flerlage entered into the record the Certification of Publication that the notice of the hearing was properly advertised in the November 18, 2005, edition of the Maryland Independent newspaper, explained that the Planning Commission is charged with making a zoning recommendation to the Town Council if the property is annexed, and noted that the planned shopping center and senior living community uses are consistent with the Town's CH Commercial Highway zoning district.

Thomas F. Mudd, attorney for annexation applicant Rosewick Limited Partnership, called on David Cooksey, Senior Vice President of Loiederman Soltesz and Associates, to provide information in support of the requested CH Commercial Highway zoning.

Vice Chairman Hettel asked if anyone in the audience wished to speak.

Jim Goldsmith, 805 Washington Avenue, spoke in support of the annexation, which he stated would increase the Town's commercial tax base.

Kathleen Vinson, one of the owners of residential property included in the petition, stated their residential properties are surrounded by commercial uses and that they want the Commercial Highway zoning so they can move on as no one wishes to live where they have all of the businesses around them.

Patty Simpson, 110 Quail Court, asked if the applicant had any other options for water and sewer and asked the Planning Commission to carefully consider the impact studies done by the Town regarding the wastewater treatment plant, which she stated was prepared for existing property in Town.

Gene Ambrogio, Mayor, 305 Queen Anne Street, reported on the unanimous action this morning of the County Commissioners to not support the change of land use for this property, which is zoned by the County as BP Business Park.

Patty Simpson, 110 Quail Court, asked why zoning is discussed before annexation. Mr. Back explained that it provides a safeguard for what is planned on the property.

Don Simpson, 110 Quail Court, remarked that there are 60 acres of commercial in Heritage Green and that the senior housing community along Washington Avenue was changed from commercial to residential.

James Street, 9590 Kathleen Place, one of the owners of residential property included in the petition, explained his property is now on the corner with a 4-lane highway on one side, which is 10' from his property, and a 2-lane highway in front. Mr. Street is concerned for the safety of his 4-year old son. He asked that the Town not leave these properties as Rural Residential and expressed concern that they would not be able to sell because of all of the businesses and roads around them.

During the discussion which followed, the Planning Commission asked about points in the Extension of Services Report which related to water and sewer, in particular that it is uncertain that the wastewater treatment plant has the capacity for the project, versus information provided in the sewer study. Mr. Back noted he believed that the sewer report refers to build-out of all development in Town. Ms. Flerlage advised that she would obtain clarification on this issue.

In closing remarks, Mr. Mudd stated he was surprised that Mayor Ambrogio came before the Commission, and noted that the Town solicited the County's input in writing and the Town will receive a written response.

There being no other speakers and no further discussion by the Planning Commission, Vice Chairman Hettel closed the hearing at 8:10 PM and called for a 5-minute break. The meeting reconvened at 8:15 PM.

Hawthorne Greene Section 2 – Special Exception

[A staff report dated December 6, 2005 was included in the Planning Commission's meeting packets.]

Ms. Flerlage provided a brief overview of the changes which required reapplication for the special exception, noting the property has been reduced in size from 24.6 acres to 19.63 acres, and the number of dwelling units has been reduced. Ms. Flerlage advised that the application meets the requirements for a senior living community, per Section 191-46.2 of the Town Code.

David Hruda, Somerset Development representing Hawthorne Greene, LLC, and Tim Lessner, Lorenzi Dodds and Gunnill, Inc., were present to explain the resubmission of this previously approved special exception, noting that all items previously agreed upon with neighboring Quailwood Subdivision property owners are incorporated in this resubmission. They noted that the original 128 dwelling units have been reduced by 32 dwelling units. Mr. Lessner noted that the previously approved variance to the buffer yard behind Lot 46 was no longer necessary.

Regarding the issue of when the fence would be installed in the buffer yard between this development and the neighboring properties in Quailwood, Ms. Flerlage noted that the mass grading permit they were issued includes a condition that the fence be installed as part of the grading.

Chairman Echols remarked that there is an issue of stormwater eroding Quailwood Parkway. He noted that while the stormwater management for Hawthorne Greene Section 2 has been prepared per Code, it was his hope that the development community would be cognizant of this and other erosion problems "downstream", and noted that the Commission will be looking to developers and the engineering community to help mitigate these problems.

In response to Chairman Echols' invitation, the following members of the audience commented on the project:

Blake Altman, 104 Quail Court, provided a brief history of the project, noted he did not support it then and does not support it now. He urged the Planning Commission to disapprove and ask the developers to meet with the Quailwood homeowners.

Patty Simpson, 110 Quail Court, provided a written copy of her comments and other documents (letter to Planning Commission dated December 6, 2005, a copy of the Resolution signed by the Board of Appeals on June 17, 2004, and “Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Areas: Exotic Bush Honeysuckles”), and asked the Commission to address the issues outlined in the letter.

Carol’s Place Apartments – site plan review and comment

[A staff report dated December 6, 2005 was included in the Planning Commission’s meeting packets.]

Chairman Echols recused himself from participation in discussion of this topic. Vice Chairman Hettel conducted this portion of the meeting. Ms. Flerlage explained that this project is scheduled to be on the agenda of the December 7, 2005 Design Review Board meeting.

Ken Crouse, of Lorenzi, Dodds and Gunnill, Inc., displayed the site plan, provided information and answered questions posed by the Planning Commission. Concern was expressed regarding the number of parking spaces, amount of interior green space, pedestrian linkages, backing out of parking spaces onto the street, and development plans to the south of the property.

Ms. Flerlage advised she would formulate the Commission’s comments, reminded Mr. Crouse she needs the photometric plans, and noted that the Planning Commission would see this project again after it has been to the Design Review Board.

Vice Chairman Hettel called for a brief recess at 9:44 PM. The meeting reconvened at 9:54 PM.

Stagecoach Crossing TND Plan – review and comment

[A staff report dated December 6, 2005 was included in the Planning Commission’s meeting packets.]

David Hruda, of Somerset Development, Gore Bolton, of Bolton & Associates, LLC, and Jay Parker, of Parker Rodriquez, presented information regarding this TND plan, noted they have incorporated staff review comments and asked for the Planning Commission’s approval.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Rose moved to approve the Stagecoach Crossing TND plan. Mr. Gilpin seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Agricopia Section 6 site development plan – review and comment

[A staff report dated December 6, 2005 was included in the Planning Commission’s meeting packets.]

R. J. Earnshaw, of RDR, LLC, and Michelle Bolton, of Bolton & Associates, Inc., presented information regarding how the previous concerns and issues of the Planning Commission have been addressed.

It was the consensus of the Planning Commission that this project be allowed to proceed.

Informational briefing – Ken Goldberg/Uniwest (shopping center)

[A staff report dated December 6, 2005 was included in the Planning Commission's meeting packets.]

Ken Goldberg and Michael Collier displayed what they termed to be very preliminary plans and presented information regarding the plan to develop the combined Monteiro and Baldus properties, upon which it is planned to have a Home Depot store, a grocery store and additional retail space. They advised that Home Depot has approved their location and that they have gotten a good reception from the Maryland State Highway Administration for a full signaled intersection at Route 301 and Glen Albin Road. They explained they hoped to bring a final plan before the Planning Commission at their February 2006 meeting.

Recommendation: Ordinance 05-17 Traditional Neighborhood Development – Garage Parking Spaces

The Planning Commission affirmed the 18' width of an alley and agreed that, due to the waiver issue being part of another section, this issue should be taken up at a later date.

Mr. Gilpin moved to recommend that the Town Council adopt Ordinance 05-17, with an amendment to the size of an apron from 10' to 8'. Mr. Rose seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Recommendation: Hawthorne Greene Section 2 – Special Exception

Mr. Rose moved to recommend the Board of Appeals approve the special exception, with the stipulation that those conditions contained in the Resolution previously granting this special exception and the agreements reached with the Quailwood homeowners at the December, 2004 field meeting apply. Mr. Hettel seconded the motion. In discussion before the vote, Mr. Back stressed to the developer that there be no changes to the notes on the drawings. In response to Mr. Gilpin's question regarding height of the buildings, Ms. Flerlage advised they were Code compliant. Vote on the motion: the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Other business (none)

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 11:20 PM.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk