

La Plata Planning Commission
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
March 4, 2003, 7:00 PM

Present: Chairman C. Keith Back, Walter T. Sollars, Jr., Garyton C. Echols, Jr., Keith A. Hettel, Robert W. Thompson, Roy G. Hale - Commission Members; Douglas R. Miller, Town Manager; Steven F. Schroeder, Project Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk

Guests: (See roster.)

Minutes:

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

Approval of February minutes

Mr. Hale made a motion to approve the minutes of the February meeting. Mr. Sollars seconded the motion and it carried.

Port Tobacco Players Theatre renovation plan

Mr. Miller remarked that the Port Tobacco Players Theatre was one of the treasures in La Plata and they need to expand their building. He noted that this presentation before the Planning Commission was for information only as a project in the commercial district.

Mike Pellegrino, PAS architect firm, and Richard Reckeweg, Port Tobacco Players, were present to discuss the renovation plan for the Port Tobacco Players Theatre building. Mr. Pellegrino displayed a site plan and provided copies of the first floor plan (phase 1, sheet A-2) north elevation (sheet A-6) and the west elevation (sheet A-7.) During his presentation he described the first phase addition to be for set construction, bathrooms and storage, and renovation of the building, which will be a combination of synthetic stucco exterior and stucco on block, in an art deco style. He advised that the building will be brought up to conformance with the current code and that they will be improving and adding egress. Part of the addition will include construction of a 56' high tower. Mr. Miller confirmed for Mr. Pellegrino and the Commission that the Town plans to increase the current 50' maximum height allowed in the C-B Central Business District. Mr. Pellegrino remarked that they plan to build to the lot line along North Oak Avenue and plan to build a sidewalk outside of their property line and within the right of way of North Oak Avenue. Mr. Pellegrino noted that they would have some additional parking in the rear of the property, but that the majority of that area would be for stormwater management.

It was noted that expansion along North Oak Avenue may hinder the Town's plan to make North Oak Avenue a two-way street, especially if sidewalks are installed on both sides of this street. Mr. Miller remarked that the Town's consultants advised that two-way traffic can only be obtained with a sidewalk on one side of the street. Mr. Sollars noted his belief that sidewalks should be

installed on both sides of the street. Chairman Back noted that the Town has been stressing the need to build sidewalks to the Town Code. Mr. Hettel expressed support for one-way traffic on North Oak Avenue with sidewalk on both sides of the street, noting he believed it would be safer for egress at the side door. Mr. Pellegrino remarked that the plans include a protected area with a railing before you reach the street.

Mr. Echols remarked that it was his recollection that the developer/builder of the new Social Services Building on Kent Avenue promised to construct a sidewalk to Charles Street, which he noted has not been done. Mr. Schroeder remarked that the developer set aside money for that sidewalk. Chairman Back asked that this be researched.

Mr. Miller noted that the Port Tobacco Players renovation plan is scheduled for the March 12 agenda of the Design Review Board, who must approve the design before any permits may be issued.

During the discussion, the Planning Commission noted the following issues/concerns:

1. They should fully sprinkler the entire building.
2. Install sidewalk on the Port Tobacco Players Theatre's side of North Oak Avenue.
3. Install parking per Town regulations and obtain joint use agreements for off-lot parking.
4. The local fire chief should review the plans, and his advice and recommendations should be included in the plans.

Preliminary plat: Agricopia

Mr. Miller went over the items in his memorandum to the Commission, dated March 4, 2003, and noted that Mr. Bolton would discuss the tertiary street issue mentioned in that memorandum.

Gore Bolton and R. J. Earnshaw were present to discuss the Agricopia preliminary plat. They also provided draft development agreements to address the issue raised at the February meeting. Mr. Bolton noted the revisions made after the work session held with the Planning Commission, and remarked that they are asking that the tertiary street curve radii be modified from 100' to 20' minimum. Mr. Earnshaw advised that he took Charles County Rescue Squad's largest ambulance through Hickory Ridge Subdivision, whose streets have less than 100' radii, and had no problems.

Regarding the bonus density request for efficient use of public infrastructure and the Town's list of improvements they could make (a well site and improvements to the Willow Lane pumping station), it was agreed that the developer and engineer would need to research and quantify the cost of the Willow Lane pumping station improvements as it relates to the potential financial yield from the additional (bonus) density.

It was the consensus of the Planning Commission that, except for the parking and street

modifications, the preliminary plat as shown is the preliminary plat that will be approved, and that the final preliminary plat approval will be addressed when the bonus density issues, including off-site improvements, can be taken care of.

Mr. Miller asked for clarification and direction, and the Commission agreed that (1) A final plat for phase 1 of Section 3 will be brought to the Commission's April meeting; (2) The Commission is generally pleased with the layout displayed on the preliminary plat; (3) The development agreement should be worked on over the next two months.

Other business

Robert W. Thompson was welcomed as the new Alternate member of the Planning Commission.

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith T. Frazier