

Planning & Zoning Commission

Minutes

September 3, 2019

The Planning and Zoning Commission for the City of Cambridge met on Tuesday, September 3, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at the City Council Chambers, 305 Gay Street, Cambridge, Maryland.

Commissioners in attendance: Gene Lauer, Chairman, Hubert Trego, Chan'Tay Nelson, Mary Losty, Jerry Burroughs, Wm. Craig and Marshall Rickert.

Absent: NA

Other in attendance included: Pat Escher-City Planner, Herve Hamon-Planner 1, Patrick Thomas-City Attorney, Dave Cannon-Council liaison

Eugene Lauer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and asked for a moment of silence.

Approval of the Agenda

Motion to approve agenda by Burroughs and seconded by Trego, all favor

Approval of Minutes

July minutes - motion to approval of minutes was Nelson motion and Losty Seconded. All favor.

Old Business

PZ 2019-002 – 816 Chesapeake Drive revised concept plan for industrial building.

Staff reported there has been some changes to the plans, such as new entrance, the site plan shows the existing four lots upon which the development is being proposed, shows the storm water management plan and erosion on the grading permit. Site plan is a good basic plan, proposing the building and greenhouses. Architecturally there were no changes for the building

Chairman Lauer asked about the building. Ms. Escher stated that the building was the same as previously show and depicted in the older report included in the packet. This is an appropriate use, site design and location. The concept plan still needs storm water management, sub-division plat, impervious surface information and parking locations are still needed.

Mr. Hamon had concerns with the location of bio-retention in the rear of the property and a new entrance to property from the rear of the lot.

Chairman Lauer recommends having the applicant to move forward. A motion by Comm. Burroughs and second by Comm. Losty to have them move forward. All favor.

Mr. Escher stated that the applicant can continue with a Preliminary Plan and to come before us again.

New Business

Cambridge Waterfront Development Inc. prepared an update on waterfront property known as Sailwinds.

Sandra Tripp-Jones discussed the Cambridge Waterfront Development Inc. progress. She reviewed the vision for the property, strategy for going forward showed a conceptual site plan and answer some questions.

This Board is made up from members of the City, County and State. Ms. Tripp-Jones described the makeup of the board and its members. She prepared a Power Point presentation that went through the history of the project. It is to be a mixed-use project to use the waterfront, public access to the water front, a public venue and adhere to the 2020 Waterfront Vision. The redevelopment may include a hotel, commercial restaurants, shops, residential, working waterfront (Yacht Maintenance), outdoor recreation, marina and public venue public access to the water front and to have open space.

A strategy is to bring additional properties under our control. Site map showing doctors offices that push into the hospital property, we have made applications by the City to acquire those properties to square it up as much as possible. Neighbors to the property, we have talked to Cambridge Yacht Maintenance and understanding his expansion, Richardson Foundation and have agreements with both to say that before they expand or make any changes that they will console with CWDI and work together.

Master Planning, early contacts with developers do not see this property as ready yet for taking it on from a master development standpoint. All the risk of all the property and the feed back is to have us CWDI act as the master developer and proceed with bring on tenants and purchasers in a phased manner.

Lastly, we need to plan the design and put together the financing for the infrastructure improvements on the site, because as you look at the plans and you see that the front portion of the site will be dependent of a street being put in. The State of MD is wanting us to produce a overall financial performa for the redevelopment of the entire property. We would like to have this Planning Commission work with us, looking for specifics to recognized that the first property will be the pace center for design for the site.

We have a lot of do's and don'ts. We must keep in mind the developers, 2020 Vision, Comp Plan the partnership of the City, County and State are an asset on this project. Burton Bridge Pier to the Richardson Foundation property, access to the entire waterfront is an absolute, protection of the

working waterfront is an absolute as well. The business of the Yacht Maintenance has such valuable input of the overall project with history and maritime feel for that end of the property. Quality and design and financially feasible.

Comm. Craig stated that this group has done some nice work. He questioned where the old hospital in is located in the current building. Ms. Jones said the developer mentioned it would be cost prohibitive to keep the old structure. Comm. Craig asked if the The Pointe property would be used for marine use. Ms. Jones mentioned that the cruise ships and marina business could be located there or a hotel.

Comm. Burroughs asked how we are going to keep the view of that point? Ms. Jones stated that the water view from the boat ramp, Governor's Hall and from the Richardson Foundation. Comm. Burroughs continued to ask about the marina and where will it be located. Ms. Jones said their vision is to have it next to the existing boat ramp.

Comm. Trego stated that Dorchester Ave does need some improvements, that is the roughest road in town. Ms. Jones responded that we are not going to purchase any residential properties, maybe in the future that may change. We have enough property right now for our plans.

Comm. Losty asked what part of this site is in the opportunity zone. Ms. Jones said all of it is.

Chairman Lauer asked staff what portion of this property is in an overlay zone. Phasing will be important. Ms. Escher discussed that Master Plan of the property is mentioned in the overlay information.

Comm. Craig commented on sidewalks and other issues will require a right of way with the residents and others. Ms. Jones mentioned that improvements of the walkway from the visitor's center over to the boat ramp and then beyond.

Comm. Burroughs asked about the Franklin St Dentist office, can you acquire that property. Ms. Jones stated that the dentist wants to stay where he is and the assessment of the property is really high. We will work with developer to work around him.

Comm. Burroughs asked about the nurses building and other doctor offices. Ms. Jones responded that those buildings are part of the DGH property.

Ms. Escher spoke more about the overlay includes the bridge and does not include the Richardson Foundation.

Public Hearing

TA 2020-003 Amend § 6.4 General Building Design Standards to provide clearer direction to applications about building design standards that will create buildings that incorporate architectural elements relating to Cambridge.

Staff said that this is to help developers to have a design standard for Cambridge, broad base guidelines

No public comments on this subject.

Comm. Rickert asked that if we recommend to the City Council, that they adopt this as a text amendment. Ms. Escher responded this will be the first reading for them and then they have a month to follow up.

Comm. Craig questions section b under general standards, a lot of language that appears to be crossed out and then reinserted. Ms. Escher responded that they have been relocated elsewhere in the document.

Motion by Comm. Rickert, to recommend that the Planning Commission provide a positive recommendation to the City Council for review and approve, second by Comm. Nelson. All in favor.

Discussion Items

Update from Shore Rivers – Matt Pluta

Cambridge Clearwater Advisory Committee- members are Matt Pluta (Choptank River Keepers with Shore Rivers), Jen Deninger (Univ of MD – Sea Grants Extension), Richard Ball (Dorchester Citizens for Planned Growth), and Allen Gerard (Chesapeake Bay Foundation).

Their plan in 2015, Mayor and City Council adopted a resolution to form this Committee and to advise the City on the water pollution issues and come up with some clean water solutions. The Committee created a plan called “Moving to Clean Water in 10 Years”. It highlights six goals to have ways to address the pollution issues in the local waterways and the Choptank River. The Master Plan, presented by Ms. Jones for the Sailwinds Project is great, but the boundaries of that plan is water. Cambridge Creek on one side and Choptank River on the other side, for that plan to work, we need to make sure that the water quality is good for all those visitors to enjoy the area.

Six goals

1. Reduce the pervious anchor by 20 acres in 10 years.
2. Increase the City street canopy by 500 trees.
3. Institute an urban management plan, residential lawn care.
4. Address downspout disconnections.
5. Increase green space in the right of ways.
6. Implement 40 acres of urban stormwater management practices.

We have developed a Cambridge Creek Watershed Assessment, taking these six goals and pointing out specific properties, parcels and projects within City of Cambridge that can be done to help meet these goals. This plan was developed in coordination with the City of Cambridge with the idea that these projects are ones that the City can do with the Clearwater Committee in addition to residents, churches and communities working all together.

Mr. Pluta stated that the State of Maryland mandated plan to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus and sediment into the local waterways. The whole state of Maryland is under an intense effort to reduce those pollutants from impacting our waterways and they are doing that from the agricultural sector and waste water sector and most importantly the urban sector, which is more costly to do. Our plan is a way to help the City of Cambridge reduce those nutrients from our waterways, and the soul focus of this plan. We have identified projects, goals and programs to help meet those goals to help reduce the nutrients that have come off the land and the impact it has on the Cambridge Creek and the Choptank River.

Ms. Escher asked if this plan was formally adopted by Council. Mr. Pluta stated that it was formally presented to the City Council and adopted.

Comm. Rickert stated that this Commission was looking at a proposed plan and it is a NOAA & DNR plan, is this part of that plan or a separate plan. Mr. Pluta responded this is a separate plan and was before completed before their plan. Comm. Rickert continued with what is our role with the DNR plan? Ms. Escher responded we are not working on those plans until this fall.

Comm. Rickert asked about the help of implementing the addition of pervious area, the efforts that we are doing in zoning enforcement and city engineers work where re-development is coming in and held to a higher standard, in terms of stormwater management. Is this included in your overall goal of the 20 acres? Mr. Pluta replied, yes and any reduction in impervious surfaces, when it is through the efforts of this PZ group and our group getting outside funding for projects like the Waugh Chapel parking lot and others.

Comm. Rickert stated that other counties in Maryland are working to reducing the stormwater runoff. Are these building code enforcements or DNR enforcements for new structures? Ms. Deninger spoke that those homes and buildings after a certain date, is State Law for redevelopment to a percentage of the site.

Chairman Lauer stated that is this plan strictly deals with nutrients, so it does not deal with oil and others that go into the Cambridge Creek from storm drains? Mr. Pluta responded correct.

Comm. Rickert asked if this group worked with County parks and other areas? Do you help with grants for the City, looking for help with the projects? Mr. Pluta continued with yes, we do help with grants and have worked with the City Eng. Dept with grants. We help with funding and working with the community.

Mr. Gerard – Resources and tools to help with all the clean water issues the City’s limited staff.

1. Cambridge is a partner with six other jurisdictions throughout the Eastern Shore in what is called the Healthy Water Working Group. What their challenges, technical assistance, Tom Lee, a circuit writer that services Cambridge, Talbot County, Easton, Oxford, Queen Anne County and the City of Salisbury in a shared arrangement and paid by Maryland Dept of Env and through the EPA and by the City of Cambridge. He looks at plans, advises on and how to get them off the ground and help designing projects to help overall cost to be lower.
2. Other program that we are partners in with the Cambridge Residential Stewardship initiative, where we help them fund a matching grant, to help residents in Cambridge deal with stormwater on their properties. There are about 10 new projects to help residents with the water run-off on their properties right now, from outside funding. Second round of funding helps with the assistance of the Univ. of MD and Env Finance Center, they are bringing to this City and meeting with those concern with flooding, stormwater irrigation and identifying what the resource needs are for City wide to address these issues.

Comm. Craig asked about the second round of funding, will it cover rain gardens? Mr. Gerard responded yes, those projects help to educate the public, with workshops, apply for funding on their projects. Rain gardens, rain barrels and others for homeowners. Comm. Craig continued by informing all that there is a lot of water surface flow from the YMCA to the Choptank River and it runs through his backyard. Mr. Gerard responded that we have about 20 to 30 persons at each of their workshops and there is an interest by the residents of Cambridge and then implement those projects themselves.

Ms. Deninger informed this Commission that she is available for a lot of things, education for homeowners, kids projects at the library and site visits. Nanticoke Watershed Alliance is another partner with our projects. She helps with the rain gardens and rain barrels and how they help all involved.

- An issue that the City Engineers brought to her was the challenges with leaf litter and yard waste in the storm drains and other residents have express a concern with it also. The City has an ordinance that prohibits residents from putting their weed clippings and yard debris in the streets, but it is seen so often around the City. One of the partnerships will help with the City would like to do to manage that problem, there is a fine with the violation, but is there not enough enforcement, we can tackle this problem with education. The Planning Committee can help with these environmental challenges and you are not sure of the solutions or education that exists, we can help with this. She had some general information for this group, Extension report from 2018, that covers what the MD Extension office has done for Dorchester County and the cities and town in the county. The Backyard to our Bay booklet, which we give to Real Estate offices to give to new residents, so they understand how they can help us retain out landscape and keep it that way.

Mr. Hamon asked about pollution coming from the boats in the creek or river? He is a swimmer and has been behind a boat and gotten in the oil slicks. Mr. Pluta responded that is something for DNR and the Coast Guard enforce.

Comm. Trego informed that some of the small creeks in the County, you can find many a thing in the water that have been discarded by watermen.

Comm. Lost loved this presentation and the information that you have given tonight.

Chairman Lauer asked about the updated projects that were mention here tonight. Mr. Pluta informed on the website shorerivers.org / technical documents.

Ms. Escher requested that they give two copies of all the report, one to Planning Dept and the Chairman.

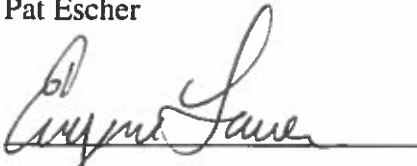
Comm. Burroughs questioned how can we make the neighborhoods stop putting the yard debris in the streets? Ms. Deninger said that she could have more workshops, door hangers and some other ways.

Comm. Craig informed that some storm drains need better maintenance and better design to keep large items out of them.

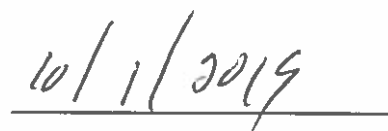
Comm. Lauer asked for a motion Comm. Burroughs second by Comm. Craig to adjourn the meeting. Unanimously moved.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Escher



Eugene Lauer, Chair



Date Approved

