

Planning & Zoning Commission

Minutes

January 7, 2020

The Planning and Zoning Commission for the City of Cambridge met on Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. at the City Council Chambers, 305 Gay Street, Cambridge, Maryland.

**Commissioners in attendance:** Gene Lauer, Chairman, Hubert Trego, William Craig, Vice-Chair, Chan'Tay Nelson, Mary Losty and Jerry Burroughs

**Others in attendance included:** Pat Escher-City Planner, Patrick Thomas-City Attorney, Dave Cannon-Council liaison, and City Council Comm. Steve Rideout.

Chairman 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 was approved with changes; wanting to postpone the elections until the month of February.

**Approval of Minutes**

December minutes were approved with corrections. The motion was made by Comm. Craig and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Comm. Losty. All approved and Comm. Craig abstained as he was not in attendance of the December meeting.

**Old Business**

NONE

**New Business**

NONE

**Public Hearing**

NONE

**Discussion Items**

**Working Waterfront Plan** – This is a discussion for the Planning Commission to decide which portions of the plan should be adopted or not.

Chairman Lauer discussed staff's memo and wanted to add some comments for the record. Comm. Rickert, Lauer, Craig, and staff met with staff from DNR and discussed the plans and some of the concerns that they had before recommending various sections of the Plan for adoption.

Chairman Lauer had concerns that were generalized as follows:

1. The scope of the Working Waterfront Plan exceeded of what was originally envisioned, as it does not solely deal with enhancing and creating businesses on the creek .
2. He was not sure of the feasibility of some of recommendations in the plan, such as constructing a pathway under the creek's bridge. He thought that some ideas of this plan are being reviewed by others, such as CDWI.
3. Since the City will be going through the Comp. Plan update in 2022, some of these items should be deferred to that review process. There needs to be more discussion, ideally when we revisit the Comp. Plan. In fact, this plan was sent to the City Council at one point, but there was no action taken on it. It has just been sitting here for about two years. The Plan does have a number of good ideas and some of those we can recommend the Council to adopt. In some instances, priorities have changed or been overtaken by other more immediate proposals regarding rehabilitation and accessing the downtown. For example, the Packing House as well as improvement of Dorchester Ave to the new Sailwinds/ Hospital area development under planning and subsequent development.

Staff wants the Commission to review various sections of the Plan to see if there are sections the Commission wants to recommend for adoption, defer to the Comp Plan or just not adopt at this time. Staff supports most of the way finding and signage sections.

Comm. Burroughs responded that he had gone to a meeting in town with Secretary Holt. The secretary discussed the Waterfront Project and stated that the hospital will be torn down and may become a senior care center. When we started this Comp Plan years ago, we did have a Working Waterfront 2020 Plan and that process took at least two months of discussions.

Staff wants to look at three portions of the Working Waterfront Plan:

1. Long Wharf enhancements– there was a Long Wharf Advisory Committee that looked at the Long Wharf area and created a master plan. It was presented to the City Council and was adopted. The current Plan just has proposed landscape/trail enhancements to the previously approved plan. Staff recommends that the Commission vote on adopting portion of the plan.

Comm. Trego stated that they kept the dog walk area. The Plan does mention that Water St. floods. Is there a way to keep the flooding from happening? Staff stated that the City was looking for a grant to research sea level rise and methods that may help with the flooding. Comm. Trego discussed the possibility of a kayak area. Staff stated that the City was looking for a grant for a kayak launching site and would continue to explore that possibility.

Comm. Burroughs asked Comm. Rideout to speak about the pending study. Comm. Rideout stated that the flooding on Water St. is an issue and the City did apply for a grant to evaluate sea level rise. He did not have any concerns about the proposed refinements to the adopted the Long Wharf plan.

Comm. Craig said that he thought they could adopt the Long Wharf portion of the plan as is, which would help the State to get started on this project. The flooding on the street should not stall this portion of the plan and wanted to move ahead on this.

Motion made by Comm. Craig to accept this portion of the Long Wharf Plan as is, which was seconded by Comm. Burroughs. All approved.

2. The recommendations for the areas that we can discuss and adopt at this point. Giving us direction to move forward on the Comp. Plan, because these are broad recommendations and not too specific.
  - Improve the marina dock, slips and other facilities.
  - Reinforce the breakwater and other means of protection.

Chairman Lauer stated that some recommendations are more specific than others and we need to discuss some of these and bring it back to the next meeting. Staff will make the recommendations for the Commission to consider.

Comm. Losty asked if the new Economic Development Director, Carol Richardson, could provide recommendations on the financial portion of the Plan, with a list of priorities for commerce in this area. Also, she requested that Ms. Richardson focus on transportation and water depended businesses recommendations and their incentives.

City Council, Comm. Rideout suggested this P&Z Commission could recommend adoption some of the basic recommendations and have the others to be held for more discussion.

Staff will bring this section back for refinements.

3. Sections to not be adopted at this time, like the Cambridge Creek section, as it needs more review.

Chairman Lauer stated that some residents may feel that their property may be restricted or imposed upon with some of these recommendations and need a lot more review and public discussion.

Staff wanted to focus on the signage/wayfinding. Comm. Craig wanted to know when the State was going to report back to NOAA and if we can adopt sections of the Plan prior to then.

We will discuss more of these ideas, recommendations and adoptions in the next few months.

The City's UDC is silent to taxicab use. Staff stated that this is not the first request for this type of use. We had a code enforcement issue with regard to taxi cabs several years ago, because it was not one or two vehicles, but four to five vehicles lined up on the street. This is a request to get some direction as to where to locate smaller taxicab companies in the City, and if the larger ones need to be in our commercial zones. If this is a home occupation, as stated in this letter, do we need to regulate to have one or two cars? Is this something this Commission wants to address and start the text amendment process.

Chairman Lauer asked since that this use was in the prior UDC, why was it not included into this current UDC, was it an error or omission? Staff said she thought the intent of going from the 2003 code to the current code was to lessen the uses, make the code more user friendly and as a result of this effort sometime errors and omissions arise. This is one of those cases, which if we want to have taxi cabs in the City, is something the Commission should regulate.

Comm. Craig stated that the previous UDC was three times as thick and we directed staff and the consultant to reduce and/or remove some of the sections. The newer Land Use Table removed/consolidated some uses from the older code. Taxis are addressed in the City Charter, section 10-6, so the City can amend the City Charter. It was asked what is the difference with having construction trucks, and others park in residential zones? Staff explained that these are personal vehicles, which are also their business vehicles. We can suggest amending the City Code and not the UDC.

Chairman Lauer responded that a dispatching service to the taxi or others in larger cities have a central dispatch for the companies with several taxi cabs. In Cambridge, they operate more of an Uber type of taxi cabs, where there is a phone number to call for the cab and they operate more as a personal service type of use.

Comm. Trego asked what are the licensing fees for a taxicab? City Council, Comm. Dave Cannon stated that it was a state regulated issue and each vehicle has a separate fee for their license and special tags are needed on each vehicle.

Comm. Burroughs asked about vehicles that deliver food, like Dominoes, Grubhub, prescriptions and others? Staff said those commercial operations, based in the commercial zones.

Comm. Trego said that he has not been in one of the local taxi cabs, but he has seen how the driver helps some their clients with their packages, help the person get in and out of the car. They are providing a service to residents of the City.

### Elections

Staff stated that Marshall Rickert has resigned from the Commission and we need to recognize him for his long service with this Commission and have a plaque prepared and presented.

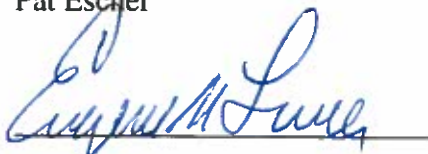
Elections will be held in February for the officers of the Commission.

Comm. Trego asked about the Chick-fil-A, when is it opening. Staff stated not opening until February. Also, the Wendy's signage permit has been approved. Comm. Burroughs stated that the opening of the Goodwill is also coming up in February.

Staff responded that the hospital building's architecture has had some more refinements. The building will take about 16 to 18 months to complete.

Comm. Lauer asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Unanimously moved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pat Escher

  
Eugene Lauer, Chair

3/3/2020  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

