

BOARD OF TOWN COMMISSIONERS

WORK SESSION

February 1, 2022 5:15 P.M.

PRESENT: Commissioner Kevin M. Bianca, Chair
Commissioner Mary F. Chance
Commissioner Paula S. Etting
Commissioner Erin S. Hughes
Commissioner Donna L. Kahoe, Vice-Chair
L. Jesse Bane, Town Administrator
Stephen Kline, Director of Public Works
Michael Krantz, Director of Administration
Lisa Moody, Director of Finance
Charles Moore, Chief of Police
Patti Parker, Community & Public Relations Manager
Angela Robertson, Economic Development Coordinator
Kevin Small, Director of Planning

ABSENT: Trish Heidenreich, Director of Economic Development

OTHERS: Joan Suitt, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER:

The Director of Administration instructed to use the teleconference protocol for the meeting.

The Director of Administration conducted the roll call. Those present are listed above. Joining the teleconference was Elizabeth Janney from the Bel Air Patch and another person who did not identify themselves.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The Town Administrator requested additions or corrections to the Agenda. The Agenda was approved as written by the Commissioners.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

The Town Administrator informed Harford County has lifted its requirement on masks and asked the Commissioners to make the

decision if future Town Board meetings will be in-person or virtual.

The Town Administrator advised questions were raised on the status of a House Bill requiring candidates of municipalities running for public office to submit financial reports. The Town Administrator stated if MML supports this, the Town does not have to go along. The Town can be in opposition but would need direction from the Commissioners to do so.

The Town Administrator recommends scheduling a retreat in the near future to discuss the Commissioners' budget priorities.

TENATIVE AGENDA FOR TOWN MEETING (February 7, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.)

Presentations:

Certificate of Appreciation - Joseph Bragg

The Economic Development Coordinator advised Joseph Bragg is a local businessman who reached out to the Town to find space for his train garden as part of the Winter Wonderland celebration. There were over 4,800 visitors attending the train garden. Mr. Bragg will be recognized at the Town Board meeting February 7th.

Commissioner Chance stated the display was phenomenal and enjoyed by many.

Gift Basket - Michael Blum

The Economic Development Coordinator informed Michael Blum has coordinated the 4th of July Parade and the Christmas Parade for many years. The Christmas Parade was a huge success with many people attending. Mr. Blum will be recognized and receive a gift basket during the Town Board meeting February 7th.

New Business:

Ordinance 807-22 Amending Town Code Chapter 397 - Sewer Article I. Sewers and Sewage Disposal §397-18 Sewer Service Rate Determination - Adding Sewer Base Meter Sizes

The Director of Finance advised this Ordinance will change the Code by adding an 8" meter size. When preparing the January sewer

billing, it was found 60-70 accounts were billed incorrectly because of their meter size. The current Code only goes to a 6" meter. The Town spoke to Maryland American Water Company, and it could not provide a date when changes occurred but found the majority are on new properties. The Director of Finance informed the 60-70 accounts received a letter with their bill explaining the situation and that no back billing will occur.

The Director of Finance advised the Town is authorized to do a CPI increase once per year effective July 1 and this will bring things up to the FY22 amount. The Ordinance will be introduced at the Town Board meeting and a Public Hearing scheduled for February 22, 2022.

Commissioner Etting asked if there are a number of properties with an 8" meter. The Director of Finance advised not many, but answers are still needed from Maryland American Water Company.

Commissioner Etting inquired about the flat rate. The Director of Finance stated these properties have wells and sewer.

Chair Bianca requested the Commissioners be kept informed concerning the volume of complaints received.

The Director of Finance notified the Town will be auditing the meter size at least once per year.

Resolution 1179-22 Comprehensive Plan Introduction

The Director of Planning notified the Resolution will be introduced during the February 7th meeting. The public hearing will be scheduled February 22nd or March 7th.

STAFFING UPDATE:

The Director of Administration reported:

- Part-time Dispatchers - still recruiting
- Deputy Chief - job ad concluded - applicants being processed
- DPW - Laborer, Equipment Operator, Construction Worker - positions posted on-line, and the Town has received applications

CALENDAR:

The February, March and April, 2022 calendars were sent. Additions or corrections should be directed to the Administrative office.

The Director of Planning reminded the Planning Commission will not meet February 3rd.

The Community & Public Relations Manager informed the Community Clean-up is scheduled for Sunday, March 20th at 10:00 a.m.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Comprehensive Plan Update

The Director of Planning advised the public hearing for the Comprehensive Plan has not been set because of advertising needs and comments from the State Department of Planning have not been received. It is likely the public hearing will occur March 7th.

The Director of Planning continued reviewing the Comprehensive Plan.

Existing Land Use

Land use of Greater Bel Air was displayed, and percentages given for:

- Low, Medium and High Density - residential
- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Institutional - government buildings

The Director of Planning advised there are some small properties. Staff is proposing to change the land use plan to promote growth, reflect the existing growth, and eliminate conflicts. The Director of Planning reminded the Commissioners this is a 10-year plan.

Ellendale Area

Proposed Changes - Commissioners would have to make decisions on:

- Williams and Maulsby Streets - two single family homes and one single family home behind. May have potential to grow into mixed use. Maulsby is basically a commercial street.
- Broadway and Williams Streets - two parcels currently residential and vacant. If the Town does not show the parcels as commercial there is less opportunity for rezoning. Residential is near to the parcels.

Commissioner Kahoe asked if the corner of Broadway and Williams would have restrictions if changed to commercial. The Director of Planning advised it could be a building with commercial use. Commissioner Kahoe inquired about height restrictions. Currently, it is zoned residential and would restrict the developer getting close to Williams.

The Director of Planning requested the Commissioners email their opinions on this corner.

Commissioner Etting wanted to know if this area is what the Town wants to rezone or are the owners interested. The Director of Planning stated this will open the potential for the landowner to submit a rezoning application. If the land use does not change and stays residential then the landowner's argument is less.

Commissioner Etting inquired if the adjacent property owners are notified of changes. The Director of Planning advised they would be notified of rezoning but not changes to the land use plan.

Commissioner Chance asked has the owner of the Broadway/Williams property come to the Town for a different use. The Director of Planning stated no but, in the past, there has been talk about accommodating parking.

Gateway Drive

- In 2016, a portion of the corner of Gateway is shown residential because there was a plan submitted for this. The strip center was never redeveloped and will reflect the existing use of commercial.

Broadway and Hickory Avenue

- Some changes are reflecting the existing development, and some are not. In 2016, the area of East Broadway is shown in yellow and is Medium Density Residential. Most uses on Broadway are commercial/office and we decided to reflect mixed use on the land use designation. This runs on Broadway and a small portion of Hickory. In 2022, it will all change to mixed use and reflect the current uses.
- Land parcel behind Shop Rite, shown as mixed use, will change to commercial. Shop Rite landowner wants to expand into that parcel.
- Area of an Assisted Living and Harford Chabad are shown as mixed use and we are proposing a change to commercial. There is potential for a lot of growth.

Downtown Edge

- In 2016, the area of Archer and George Streets are shown as Medium Density Residential and the zoning reflects that with a transition overlay. It allows office use in that area. The staff is proposing to show this as mixed use but there is a lot of residential especially backing up to Western Alley. When designating mixed use, it does not obligate to change zoning because it is residential and commercial. The Director of Planning informed this area is in transition.

Commissioner Kahoe asked about the tan triangle change. The Director of Planning stated that was previously yellow and changed colors to be more reflective of the use. The Commissioners may want this to stay Medium Density Residential and not become mixed use.

The Community & Public Communications Manager asked for percentages of residential vs. office space. The Director of Planning stated most of the area along George and Thomas Streets are office and the rest residential. The Director of Planning will notify of the percentages.

The Director of Planning stated items can be changed even after being introduced.

Goals and Objectives

- Encourage technology-based uses.
- Target specific areas in Town for redevelopment and infill of underutilized properties.
- Develop 'back door' business opportunities along Main & Bond Streets.
- Shield existing residential areas from the incremental incursion of commercial uses through examination of transition overlay and residential/office districts.
- Strengthen coordination with the County, State, and other municipalities.

Municipal Growth

Several parcels are developed, and some are not.

Targeted Properties with most chance to annex:

- Parcel #1 - Vale Road - portion to become a park.
- Parcel #5 - Moores Mill Road - likely to become residential.
- Approached by owner of a small group of single-family homes along Tollgate Road.
- Parcel #9 - along Tollgate Road, South of US 1 - approached about annexing and will likely be commercial.

The Director of Planning stated the rest are potentials.

Goals and Objectives

- Extending Bel Air corporate limits in a fashion that makes sense based on transportation network, utility infrastructure, natural features, and existing development.
- Create a policy for acquisition of land consistent with the vision for Greater Bel Air.

Commissioner Etting questioned why businesses want to be annexed into Town. The Director of Planning advised the Town has a little more Urban regulations that allow more density, fewer parking requirements, and more services.

Development Regulations

- Eliminate cumbersome regulations.
- Procedures - make sure they are measured and not burdensome for developer.

Goals and Objectives

- Promote Economic Development with flexible Code requirements.
- Investigate compact developments through examination of building height, parking, and setbacks.
- Adjust the regulations to reflect sustainable goals of the Town and encourage green development.

Temporary Signs

Related to an open Court case and the Town is looking into this. Construction and realtor signs are associated.

- Sandwich Boards - will come before the Commissioners to keep the size restriction but no longer require a permit of the owner.
- Electronic Messaging - not permitted in the Town. These would be hard to restrict and enforce. Majority of residents want to maintain the small-town character.

Commissioner Kahoe asked about the one electric sign in Town. The Director of Planning advised this was in the County and approved before it was annexed into the Town. This is a non-conforming sign but with any changes to the property it would have to meet Code.

Way Finding

- Park Identification - in good shape
- Gateway
- Building ID including Town, County and State - ID sign in front of Town Hall will match design.

Technology

- Communication Towers - change in Town's Code. It has been superseded by Federal code.
- Changes from COVID-19 - parking requirement for offices because of less people working in building. Restaurants with drop-off/pick-up reduce parking because of this component. There are many more.
- Use of GIS - review and apply.

Definitions

- Substantial Changes - need to review.
- Recreational Cannabis - nothing in the Code.
- Halfway House vs Large Group Home - conflicts in Town.
- Cottage Housing - currently for close relatives - may want to allow by making it more flexible.

The Director of Public Works asked who would monitor this. Currently this goes to the Board of Appeals. Zoning violations would be reported to the Planning Department.

- Parking - looking at electric vehicles, hybrid, drop-off/pickup.
- Project Area - define the project area and an example on how the Mall is divided was given.
- Temporary Use - needs to be defined.
- Stream Channel - in and out of the floodplain - make sure to provide buffering.

Adequate Public Facilities

- Traffic Review - to review relative to how traffic enforcement is done.
- Passive and Active Recreation - make sure this is unquestionable.

County Coordination

- Bike/Ped Connections - make sure the Town coordinates with County.

- Parking - review what County provides.
- Development Review - parcels near the Town.
- Liquor - to define the same as the County.

Commissioner Kahoe would like to coordinate with the County on a better use of the property at Hays and Thomas where equipment is being stored. The Director of Planning would like to make jersey barriers illegal in the Town. Commissioner Kahoe inquired about plans for the property. There has been talk about the old Health Department parcel.

The Department of Public Works advised the County does not have a source where projects can be staged close to the Courthouse.

Commissioner Kahoe would like to know the timing because it looks terrible. The Director of Planning thought the Town could require screening. Commissioner Chance stated it is horrendous and feels screening should be required. The Director of Planning stated this has become more prevalent in the last few years. The Director of Public Works stated we need to approach the County with the concerns from the community of Bel Air.

Development Review

- Peoples' Counsel - possibly used in annexations and could explore opposition.

Commissioner Kahoe stated it would be a great benefit for residents. Chair Bianca agrees but has concerns that it would have a major negative budget impact.

The Director of Public Works asked will the Peoples' Counsel only be for development reviews. The Director of Planning sees it applying to rezoning and annexations but not for permits. The Director of Public Works stated the Town needs to be strict on what it applies to. Commissioner Kahoe thought it was adverse impact on the resident. The Director of Planning stated that would have to be proven and wants to avoid when one person has a problem with an adjacent use. This is where a committee would review.

- Repetition of Requirements - making sure the same requirement is not in two parts of the Code.
- Expansion - currently when expanding building 5% it goes to Planning Commission. Looking to change to 10% with a square footage minimum.
- Process - making sure the Town is hitting the right points.

Sustainability

- Renewable Energy - make it as easy as possible.
- Urban Farming - will review.
- LEED Buildings - required to meet standards.
- Tree Canopy - will look at this in another 2-3 years.

The Director of Public Works informed of a student in Harford County who did a study on tree canopy last year. This study needs to be compared with the Town's as we move forward.

Stormwater Management

Drive aisles should be landscaped, not striped.

- Impervious Surface - reduce the amount.
- SWM Fee-in-Lieu - allow this for stormwater management but it is now restricted by the State.

The Director of Public Works would like the fee-in-lieu numbers adjusted to the amount the Town is currently paying to treat stormwater management.

Source Water Protection

- Overlay Districts - did not do much in 2016 Plan and will be a priority. Watershed for Winters Run and two wells around Maryland American Water Company. Will need cooperation of the County.

Incentives:

- Waiver vs Variance - not have to go to the Board of Appeals.
- Courtesy Review - before going to the Planning Commission.
- Bonding of Improvements - require bond for improvements.

- Use of Public Parking - whether on-street parking is allowed for private development as a way of compensating requirements.
- Vacant Property - look into an Ordinance to fine if property has been vacant for a long time.

The Community & Public Relations Manager recommends looking at properties that are dangerous/not maintained and pose a threat. The Director of Planning stated this goes along with Property Maintenance and needs to be stepped up. The Chief of Police advised there are violations of criminal laws that can be pursued if it gets out of control.

Commissioner Chance asked does property maintenance include commercial and residential. The Director of Public Works informed most residential issues are high grass. Commissioner Chance notified it is not just high grass in residential areas and asked if there are boundaries.

Commissioner Etting inquired about how public parking works especially for businesses on Main Street. The Director of Planning advised the Code was changed in 2016 saying they do not have to provide parking for retail service uses. When residential is added, parking would have to be provided depending on use.

Commissioner Etting asked about Townhouses. The Director of Planning informed 2.5 spaces per dwelling and parking could go off-site. The Director of Planning stated this has been the requirement for years and one change was allowing Townhouses to count their garage as part of the parking. Parking for Townhomes will be looked at.

- Temporary Use & Occupancy - to define correctly.
- Property Maintenance - examine and enforce aggressive maintenance.

Parking

- Minimums vs Maximums - County has maximum parking requirements.
- Downtown Requirements - expand to accommodate fee-in-lieu.
- Metered spaces - some metered spaces no longer needed. Looking at kiosks.

The Director of Planning notified there will be another Work Session to discuss specific items.

Commissioner Kahoe thanked the Director of Planning for his hard work.

FY23 Commissioners Budget Priorities

The Director of Finance received some feedback from Commissioners and asked for other concerns. Commissioner Etting would like to look at the recurring flood issues.

The Director of Public Works wanted to know if engineering studies should be performed on the flood incidents. Commissioner Etting questioned the cost and advised the main concern is water coming into a home or car.

The Town Administrator will be meeting with the Director of Finance regarding the ARPA funding. The priority listings will be presented to the Commissioners for input. The Town has two budgets, one based on fiscal year and one on ARPA funding.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS:

Commissioner Kahoe attended the Cultural Arts meeting, and the members are planning project ideas for 2022. The Commissioner will be working with art students from Bel Air High School on a project near the school. The Cultural Arts Commission is sponsoring "Ain't Misbehavin'" Big Band and Comedy Shows on March 30th, 7:30 p.m. at the Armory, tickets \$10.

Commissioner Kahoe advised the Bel Air Arts and Entertainment District is having Family Fun at the Armory, February 26th, March 5, 12, and 19th. Doors open at 10:30 a.m. and shows are 11:00 to noon. Tickets are free but you have to reserve your space.

The Town Administrator advised if there is a need for any publicity to contact the Community & Public Relations Manager.

The Town Administrator reminded the Commissioners and Department Heads about the issue on masks. Please respond by email.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Approved: February 7, 2022

Signature on file
Kevin M. Bianca, Chair
Board of Town Commissioners

Signature on file
Michael L. Krantz, Town Clerk