

BOARD OF TOWN COMMISSIONERS

WORK SESSION

February 14, 2023 4:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Commissioner Kevin M. Bianca, Chair
Commissioner Mary F. Chance
Commissioner Paula S. Etting
Commissioner Erin S. Hughes
Commissioner Donna L. Kahoe
Edward Hopkins, Town Administrator
Trish Heidenreich, Director of Economic Development
Stephen Kline, Director of Public Works
Michael Krantz, Director of Administration
Lisa Moody, Director of Finance
Charles Moore, Chief of Police
Kevin Small, Director of Planning
Charles Keenan, Town Counsel
Elizabeth Thompson, Attorney

OTHERS: Joan Suitt, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Chair Bianca called for approval of the agenda.

Commissioner Kahoe moved and Commissioner Chance seconded the motion to approve the agenda as written. The agenda was approved by the Commissioners.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Narva Update

The Town Administrator informed Barbara Tower, liaison for Narva, would like to reinvigorate the committee and work on bringing businesses here or back to Narva. Ms. Tower is hoping to bring a business delegation from Estonia to Bel Air in May. The Town Administrator would like the Commissioners and staff to think out of the box to reenergize our relationship and partnership.

MAWC Water Tower

The Town Administrator and Jesse Bane met to discuss a possible Lions Club project for a logo on the water tower. The Town Administrator knows this has been discussed before and most concern is about long term maintenance cost. The Town Administrator asked for direction.

Chair Bianca also has concern with cost and would like more information on Maryland American covering the upfront cost.

Dave Guzewich, Bel Air Lions Club, feels this is a worthwhile project to pursue and wanted awareness to continue conversations.

The Director of Administration had concern with what may be painted on the tower because of becoming outdated and create ongoing expense.

Commissioner Etting stated we need to be careful on committing a future Board with the funding.

Commissioner Hughes had a conversation with J.W. Walker from Maryland American about the cost of painting a water tower. Mr. Walker informed in the millions. Commissioner Hughes would need hard numbers about placing anything on the tower. Chair Bianca concurred.

The Director of Economic Development advised ECDC looked into this project about five years ago. Getting people to agree on what should be placed there was difficult and the cost was a shock.

Commissioner Hughes notified the water tower in Town is one of the oldest in the Maryland American region.

Commissioner Chance asked if other jurisdictions were contacted to learn about experiences. The Director of Economic Development believes the conversations were only with Maryland American.

The Town Administrator will reach out for more data.

PRESENTATION:

Parking Study

Jaime Kendrick, Mead & Hunt Associates, advised of beginning to put together a set of policy recommendations to test them on some scenarios for future development based on the Comprehensive Plan.

Key points discussed.

Scenario Development

The Comprehensive Plan was used to put together three development scenarios:

- Downtown Infill - number of vacant surface lots or buildings that could be converted to other uses. Identified approximately 180 residential units that could be built in the general downtown area. Recommendation -

1. Extend spaces to all development types.
2. Reduce multi-family parking requirement to below or equal to Aberdeen.
3. Add bicycle parking and electric vehicle charging.
4. Maintain shared parking arrangements.
5. Ease shared parking requirements.

- Four Corners - possible conversion to mixed use. Chart reviewed on possible mixed use parking.

Recommendation -

1. Eliminate parking ratios at shopping centers. Redevelopment subject to master plan and let market determine needs.

- North End -

The Director of Planning advised this area has potential to become more than what it is.

Recommendations -

1. Continue flexible polices to support redevelopment for mixed use.
2. Possibly extend fee-in-lieu process area.
3. Shared parking requirements be less stringent.

Mr. Kendrick advised the Town's parking assessments are in good condition and parking demands will be much lower with a District Court relocation. Mr. Kendrick informed a draft will be completed in three weeks.

The Commissioners had no other comments.

TENATIVE AGENDA FOR TOWN MEETING (February 21, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.)

Presentation:

Certificate of Recognition to Steve Greene

The Director of Public Works informed Steve Greene passed a specialized water/sewer treatment certification and will be recognized for this accomplishment.

New Business:

Ordinance 811-23 Amending Town Code Chapter 165 Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations Part 2 Zoning

Article VII Development and Performance Standards
Article VIII Landscaping Standard
Article IX Special Provisions and Modifications
Article X Accessory and Temporary Uses

The Director of Planning stated Ordinance 811-23 revises 4 Articles that have been talked about at length.

Two previous concerns were:

Accessory Dwelling Units

The Director of Planning advised Accessory Dwelling Units are currently regulated under Cottage Houses with specific performance standards. The Town is looking to change the name to Accessory Dwelling Units in R-1 regulated Special Exception and R-2, R-3 regulated Special Development. The Accessory Dwelling Units would be limited to immediate family members - parent, child, sibling of the owners or caregiver for a person residing in the primary residence. The principal dwelling must be owner occupied and the use shall discontinue as soon as unit is vacated for more than 12 months. The parcel must be 10,000 square feet.

Chair Bianca asked are we being too restrictive with not including grandparent or elderly aunt. The Director of Planning feels it should be more flexible and be outlined more.

Commissioner Etting wanted to know how this is regulated in other municipalities and Harford County.

Commissioner Hughes has no concern with someone aging in place with the caregiver occupying the accessory building. Commissioner Hughes understands there could be issues with verifying the relationship.

The Director of Planning advised extended family could be used with definitions of family members. The Director of Planning informed Aberdeen does not restrict and Harford County does not have restrictions on relationships.

Commissioner Etting agrees with extending the definition.

The Town Administrator concurs with expanding the definition of caregiving to have a more diverse elderly friendly community. The Town Administrator also reminded the Fire and EMS calls are mostly from seniors who have no support in managing needs.

The Director of Planning advised this can be changed to extended family with definitions and will send an email to the Commissioners.

Short Term Rental

The Director of Planning informed the Town is proposing Short Term Rentals be Special Exceptions in R-1, R-2, R-3 and Special Development review in all other districts.

The Director of Planning advised Harford County allows Short Term Rental everywhere. Havre de Grace had a moratorium but recently passed legislation to allow in certain zones with performance standards. Aberdeen regulates as a Bed & Breakfast.

Commissioner Etting opposes having short term rentals in residential areas. The Director of Planning advised there are several currently in Town but have only located three. No complaints have been received. Commissioner Etting was contacted by a resident who does not want short term rental in her neighborhood.

Commissioner Chance asked how short term is determined. The Director of Planning advised 30 days or less. The Town is proposing restrictions in some zones.

The Director of Economic Development notified the Market Study showed there is a demand that will not go away and recommends finding something that works now.

The Director of Planning will revise and send to the Commissioners. The Ordinance will come before the Commissioners in two weeks for introduction.

Chair Bianca reminded there were some concerns about structured parking. The Director of Planning advised of concerns about a 5 story building next to a 1 story residential. Heights were further reviewed by the Director of Planning.

The Director of Planning informed of items on the agenda for the February 21st meeting:

- proposal for annexation of 3 lots on Tollgate Road
- new annexation petition for Williams Subdivision

The Planning Commission has reviewed the annexation on Tollgate Road and will be discussed during Closed Session.

Shamrock and Gateway Sanitary Sewer Pump Station Upgrade Design Contract

The Director of Public Works notified the Shamrock and Gateway Sanitary Sewer Pump Station design and drawings contract will piggyback on Howard County and not exceed \$240,000.

Sidewalk Tripping Hazard Removal Contract

The Director of Public Works advised the sidewalk tripping hazard removal has been done for several years. This year 557 cuts will be completed in Homestead Village with the cost of \$41,000 that was budgeted.

Appointment to the Historic Preservation Commission

Commissioner Hughes informed Cpl. Keith Smithson expressed interest in becoming a member of the Historic Preservation Commission. Commissioner Hughes advised Cpl. Smithson is involved in the community and will be a good appointment to the Commission.

STAFFING UPDATE:

The Director of Administration informed:

- Environment Stormwater Tech position is posted.

CALENDAR:

The February and March, 2023 calendar was distributed. Contact Ruth Seitler with additions or corrections.

Meetings during February will be held at the Bel Air Library.

Meetings during March will be held at the McFaul Center.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Storm Water Management Update

The Director of Public Works reported some residents on McCormick Street were experiencing water issues up to the garage area. An audit of the area found the stormwater pipe in this vicinity not up to current standards. After the audit, the decision was made to contract with George W. Stephens and Associates to complete a design for \$53,200. Unfortunately, the company went out of business and the Town has paid them approximately \$7,800.

The Director of Public Works understands this company completed about 70% of the work. The Town recently received the document but currently could not open. The plan is to use the document information and contract with another company.

Discussion on discontinuing pre-paid parking meter Smartcards

The Director of Finance notified there is a significant decrease in the use of Smartcards. This was discussed during the parking meeting and recommendations are to discontinue the Smartcard program on May 1st.

Chair Bianca requested the Town reach out to the current users. The Commissioners had no opposition in discontinuing the Smartcards.

Discussion Regarding Amending Town Code Chapter 165 Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations Part 2 Zoning

- Article VII Development and Performance Standards
- Article VIII Landscaping Standards
- Article IX Special Provisions and Modifications
- Article X Accessory and Temporary Uses

Tabled to another Work Session.

Discussion on Maryland State Senate Bill 516 Cannabis Reform

Commissioner Etting sent Senate Bill 516 to the Commissioners.
Important points:

- Monetary sharing - to share 1½ % of the 6% sales tax with the local jurisdiction.
- Funds received will not cover the increase in law enforcement.
- No provision for local control other than prohibit on-site consumption.
- Can put restrictions on the use of cannabis in a public place.

Commissioner Etting advised if the Bill remains as drafted, the Town needs to make decisions. Commissioner Etting is hoping jurisdictions will have local control. Commissioner Etting advised MML would support the Bill with amendments. Commissioner Etting recommends the Town opt out.

CLOSED SESSION:

At 6:00 p.m. Commissioner Kahoe moved and Commissioner Chance seconded the motion to go into Closed Session to discussed the proposed annexation of Tollgate Road properties.

Ayes: Commissioner Chance, Etting, Hughes, Kahoe and Bianca

Nays: None

The motion carried.

The meeting reopened at 6:40 p.m.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

APPROVED: March 6, 2023

Signature on file

Kevin M. Bianca, Chair

Board of Town Commissioners

Signature on file

Michael L. Krantz, Town Clerk