



Commissioners of Leonardtown

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J. HARRY NORRIS
Mayor

LASCHELLE E. MILLER
Town Administrator

Commissioners of Leonardtown
Leonardtown Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting
July 20, 2009 ~ 4:00 p.m.

Attendees: Jean Moulds, Chairperson
Frank Fearn, Vice Chair
Glen Mattingly, Member
Jack Candela, Member

Absent: Heather Earhart, Member

Also in attendance were: Laschelle McKay, Town Administrator; DeAnn Adler, Plans Reviewer; Teri Dimsey, Recording Secretary, Derek Berlage, LUGM, Bob Schaller, SMC Economic Development, John Norris, NG&O. A complete list is available on file at the Leonardtown Town Office.

Chairperson Moulds called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

The meeting minutes for the April 20, 2009 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting were presented for approval.

Member Candela moved to approve the April 20, 2009 minutes; Member Mattingly seconded, no further discussion, motion passed unanimously.

Town Administrator Report – Laschelle Miller

Academy Hills Asphalt Bid – We are moving forward on the bid, there are some streets that have not been paved and the developer has gone into bankruptcy, so we are working with the HOA to try and rectify the situation and hope to get the paving done sometime in August.

Recreation and Park Usage Permit – We are getting more and more requests for events to be held down at the Wharf. A draft of a rental agreement for usage of the public parks has been sent to the Town Council for review.

Water Meter Project: Mr. Wheatley reported on the status of the water meter project for residential homes which is required by MDE. Phase II has been completed and they are now working in Singletree, which is in Phase III, this project is anticipated to be completed by the end of the year and Council has approved the final phases of this project.

Farmers Market - The Town was approached by Amish and Mennonite families requesting to set up a farmer's market one day a week. It was determined to have them set up in Town on Fridays and during special events. They will set up in the square in the open area next to Jeannie's Flowers. If they become popular; we will move them into the environmental parking lot across from Good Earth.

Port of Leonardtown – We awarded an engineering contract for the park portion. The winery is still on track to be open in September for the processing of this year's grape crop.

Chairperson Moulds moved on to the next order of business.

NEW BUSINESS

Economic Development Presentation

Mr. Bob Schaller, Director of Economic and Community Development for St. Mary's County Government stated that he gave this same presentation to the Town Council last week and was delighted to be invited back to present the power point presentation on Economic Development to this Planning and Zoning Commission. He explained that the County is in the midst of updating their Comprehensive Plan and has been holding public hearings to share this information with the residents and businesses. This was the catalyst behind this presentation, to look at the economy of the County, especially the growth areas. Mr. Schaller provided the members with a hard copy of the powerpoint presentation and proceeded with the presentation.

Mr. Schaller's presentation focused on the County's growth, noting the numbers provided by the Census Bureau. He provided information on St. Mary's County growth compared to the surrounding counties and the state of Maryland. He also detailed the transportation, traffic and housing concerns and the types of industry within St. Mary's County and explained how these concerns all affect the County and the three surrounding counties.

Mr. Derek Berlage, St. Mary's Land Use and Growth Management Director, remarked that this is his first appearance before the Leonardtown Planning and Zoning Commission and looks forward to having a very close and cooperative relationship with the Town.

Mr. Berlage remarked that his presentation is regarding the Comprehensive Plan for St. Mary's County. They are in the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan that was adopted in 2002 and are focusing on fine tuning the plan. He noted their focus is on how the vision of the 2002 plan will be carried forward into the 2010 plan. He spoke about some of the successes that have been implemented to date and some of the present and future challenges.

Member Candela remarked that we need to save the rural atmosphere. "While driving around the county, I see many falling down barns and overgrown fence lines, not through the fault of the owners, but to me that is not my idea of a rural atmosphere". He feels we need some type of program in the County that would help our property owners to clean up of some of those blighted areas to make our county more attractive.

Chairperson Moulds mentioned that one of the unique things in St. Mary's County that should be preserved is the fact that we have the Amish and the Mennonites and their buggies. With our increased traffic issues this should be addressed to help preserve their lifestyle.

Mr. Schaller and Mr. Berlage noted that they are both excellent points.

Member Mattingly commented that he was happy to see traffic management as one of the key challenges.

Mr. Schaller stated that the third and last of the Planning Commission's public hearings will be held on Monday, July 27 at 6:30 p.m. at the Governmental Center.

Mr. Berlage remarked that the update to the Comprehensive Plan is in process. There will then be a series of work sessions in August and the update will go to the County Commissioners in September with the goal being to take final action on it by the end of the year.

Member Mattingly brought up the subject of a potential major connector between Rt. 235 and Rt. 5 and Rt. 4 and remarked that he does not feel that a major connector south of Leonardtown would be a good idea.

Mr. Berlage responded that he has not yet formed an opinion on that subject, but would love to hear Member Mattingly's comments.

Mr. Schaller stated that in relation to the Amish, this is definitely something to take into consideration, if Rt. 5 is widened in the future and does not contain any shoulders wide enough for buggy travels. He noted how the Three Notch Trail has become a side road for the Amish and these are issues to incorporate into both the St. Mary's County and the Town of Leonardtown's update of their Comprehensive Plans.

Chairperson Moulds thanked Mr. Schaller and Mr. Berlage for their presentations and moved on to the next order of business.

OLD BUSINESS

Case #49-08 St. Mary's Hospital – New Medical Office Building Annex – Request for Final Site Plan Approval

Ms. Adler reported that the hospital is adding a new annex with a total square footage of 28,789 (First Floor: 14,541 s.f./Second Floor: 14,248 s.f.). The hospital annex will be located adjacent to the northeast corner of the hospital. It will be visible from Rte. 245, Doctors Crossing Road and Miss Bessie Drive. The first floor of the annex will house the St. Mary's Cancer Care (5,100 s.f.) and Outpatient Radiology (5,180 s.f.). The second floor will house the financial and accounting departments and shelved space for future use.

This Medical Office Building Annex is the first phase of a new expansion project, planned by the hospital, which will continue for a number of years into the future. St. Mary's Hospital received concept approval for this Annex on June 16, 2008 and is coming back today for final approval.

There was a change to the original building design -the plans submitted in June of 2008 showed a *three* story annex (2 stories and a third floor shelled space) with a total square footage of 22,740 (this square footage did not include the third floor shelled space in the calculations). Today's plans show a *two* story building with a total square footage of 28,789 s.f.

Project plans have been submitted to the various governing agencies and are awaiting approvals from DPW, Soil Conservation, Fire Marshall and State Highway.

Mr. Frank Fearn and Mr. John Norris are present today to answer any questions.

Action Needed Today: The applicant is requesting final site plan approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission. This approval would be conditional, pending receipt of approvals from DPW, Soils Conservation, Fire Marshall and State Highway. The Planning and Zoning Commission can vote to approve with conditions, deny or delay a decision.

Mr. Norris presented a drawing and briefed the members on the project. The building does have a slightly larger footprint as it was originally a three story building and is now a two story building.

Member Mattingly inquired about the approval from State Highway.

Mr. Norris noted that there are traffic control concerns around the hospital.

Ms. McKay commented that State Highway requested to review the plans, as they have not seen anything about the future expansion plans for the hospital. SHA have received copies and updates of all the development plans of Leonardtown over the years, so they can see the big picture. There was discussion about the importance of obtaining a traffic study, not to hold up what the hospital is requesting today but to have a comprehensive look at how traffic on Hollywood Road will be affected by all of the additional projects planned nearby such as the jail expansion, the Hayden Farm planned development and the CSM Wellness Center addition. SHA will not do the traffic study, but they may require one once they review the plans. The Town has discussed this, and we may need to have a traffic study done sooner rather than later.

Chairperson Moulds stated that a request for a traffic study could be added to the final motion.

Mr. Fearn interjected that we started this process over a year ago, we came before the Town, and asked for the Town's concerns and we addressed all of the concerns. I am a firm believer in a traffic study and believe we need to do one at a later date, but not at this time. I respectfully ask this Board not to delay this project.

Chairperson Moulds responded that she understands his points and noted that we need to get it in writing that the Town expects a traffic study.

Member Candela noted that he believes that a traffic study is not necessary at this particular phase of this project, as it is not increasing the number of employees of the hospital, but when the next project moves forward and the population at the hospital complex does increase, the Board will require a traffic study at that time.

Mr. Collier inquired, from the audience, what would fill the space in the main building of the hospital that is being vacated? What types of trucks will be driving along Miss Bessie Drive. Is the road capable of handling the weight of the commercial trucks?

Mr. Fearn remarked that they are renovating that space to create more room for the IT department. The plans for trucks are for them to come in along Drs. Crossing right to the loading dock and Miss Bessie Drive has the same pavement and has been carrying the same weight sufficiently for the last twenty years.

Member Candela stated his concern about increased commercial traffic along Miss Bessie and Moakley Streets that would affect the residents living off of those roads.

Member Candela moved on Case #48-08 New Medical Office Annex to approve the final site plan subject to the permits still to be received from DPW, Fire Marshall and SHA and soils; seconded by Member Mattingly, no further discussion, motion passed unanimously with Member Fearn abstaining from the vote.

Mr. Norris stated that if the Planning Commission would like to make a recommendation for traffic signals along Rt. 245 and Rt. 5 to the SHA that would be helpful.

Chairperson Moulds remarked that it would be beneficial to write a letter of request to the SHA.

Review of Monthly In-House Permits – No comments

Review of Approved Town Council Meeting Minutes – No comments

Member Mattingly moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m., seconded by Member Candela, no further discussion, motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted:

Teri Dimsey, Recorder

Approved:

Jean Moulds, Chairperson

Frank Fearn, Vice Chair

Jack Candela, Member

Heather Earhart, Member

Glen Mattingly, Member