

Planning Commission – September 21, 2016

PLANNING COMMISSION

SEPTEMBER 21, 2016

Mr. Jeff Grotzky, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. In attendance were Commission members David Bowering, Morgan Ellis, Robert Fordi, Jane Richman and Paul Showalter, Kees de Mooy, Zoning Administrator and guests.

MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Mr. Grotzky asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the meeting of June 15, 2016. **Mr. Showalter moved to approve the minutes as presented, was seconded by Mr. Bowering and carried unanimously.**

LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT/PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN – DIXON SQUARE APARTMENTS – SCHEELER ROAD AND HAACKE DRIVE

Mr. de Mooy stated that the proposed development area was annexed into Chestertown in August, 2016. Mr. Kevin Shearon of DMS & Associates was present for the application, along with Bryan Matthews of KRM.

Mr. Shearon gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining the plans for an apartment complex proposed for part of the annexed area located off of Haacke Drive and Scheeler Road. He said that KRM was working with Urban Design Associates, which was a world-renowned urban design firm.

Mr. Shearon stated that the automated warehouse would be moved to the back of the annexed property and the corporate center would be located more prominently on Rt. 213. The project this evening was for 6 apartment buildings, each containing 29 individual apartments (2 studio apartments, 6 one-bedroom, 18 two-bedrooms, and 3 three-bedrooms) bound by Scheeler Road to the south and Haacke Drive to the west.

Mr. Shearon showed a division line running along the north side of the proposed apartment building complex which will delineate the RB Zoning District to the south and the LI-2 Zoning District to the north. He said that the applicant was proposing a lot line adjustment that will create 13.554 acres of RB Zoning where the apartment buildings will be built. Mr. Shearon stated that the site is currently vacant farmland.

Mr. Shearon stated that per code, parking requirements were broken down by bedrooms for apartment buildings. The requirement is for 324 spaces and the site layout had a total of 351 to allow for visitors.

Mr. Shearon stated that the master plan called for Haacke Drive to be extended into and connect all the way through the business park and out to

Rt. 213. There were 2 entrances to the complex off of Scheeler Road and 1 on Haacke Drive. The 3 buildings to the right of the plan would be built as the first phase and if market conditions are favorable, the other 3 will be constructed.

Mr. Shearon stated that the parking lots were designed so that residents of the apartments would not have far to walk to their front door.

Mr. Shearon showed proposed storm drain lines that will connect inlets and said that stormwater management will use Environmental Site Design allowing for infiltration and water quality. There will be dry wells or small bio-retention areas in front of each building. Impervious pavers would be used where the 3 driveways come together.

Mr. Fordi asked if there was access from the rear of the building. Mr. Shearon stated that there were covered entrances in the back of each building.

Mr. Bowering asked if the dry wells would be visible. Mr. Shearon stated that the dry wells would be underground and not visible.

Mr. Shearon stated that that a landscape plan was included in the drawings and screening would be created at the corner of Haacke Drive and Scheeler Road to block the view of the commercial areas to the west. Street trees would be planted on both streets to create a rhythm for the development. Trees will be planted in the parking lots and bio-retention areas will be planted as well.

Mr. Shearon stated that placeholders were on the plan for site lighting and an electrical engineer will be hired to design the lighting before the final plans are presented to the Town.

Mr. Showalter asked about timing for the project. Mr. Shearon stated that he would hope to return for final approval in November and said that they were anxious to begin. Mr. Grotsky asked when the warehouse would be built. Mr. Shearon stated that he was not sure which project would be first but would like to have the apartment complex approved. He said that roads had to be designed through the site for access to the warehouse and permits are needed from State Highway for access to Route 213.

Mr. de Mooy asked about sidewalks and pedestrian connectivity. Mr. Shearon stated that sidewalks were along all parking lots and connect to the buildings. Mr. Fordi stated that he thought there should be sidewalks on Scheeler Road and Haacke Drive. Mr. Grotsky agreed, stating that sidewalks were called for in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. de Mooy stated that people would want to walk to the shopping centers. Mr. Shearon stated that pedestrian links would be created throughout the site.

Ms. Ellis asked if the pervious pavers proposed factored into the required stormwater drainage. Mr. Shearon stated that they were using the pervious pavers as part of the storm water requirements. He said that the site drains to the storm water management pond located at the Village at Chestertown and

from the corner of Scheeler and Haacke to the step pool conveyance on Rt. 213.

Mr. Shearon stated that they were in the process of a sewer flow study and calculating the anticipated flows from the site once built out. He said that the hope was that the development would not require an additional pump station.

Mr. de Mooy asked if access for emergency vehicles has been incorporated into the plans. Mr. Shearon stated that as part of the building permit process, the plans will be reviewed by the Fire Marshal but all specifications have been met for road widths and fire hydrants.

Mr. Fordi moved to approve the lot line adjustment as submitted, was seconded by Ms. Ellis and carried unanimously.

Mr. Fordi moved to approve preliminary site plan with the condition that sidewalks be added along Scheeler Road and Haacke Drive and that a full lighting detail plan accompany final site plan, was seconded by Mr. Showalter and carried unanimously.

WATER STREET TOWNHOUSES – RAMUNNO – PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN

Mr. Scott Lobdell of Van Cleef Engineering presented. Mr. Lobdell stated that the plan for the 3 townhouses was approved by the Historic District Commission in August. The plan has been scaled back from the originally proposed 4 townhouses to 3 townhouses.

Mr. Lobdell stated that the site was .3 acres across the street from the Scott's Point townhouses on South Water Street. He said that the site was currently an open area with trees deemed appropriate for removal.

Mr. Lobdell stated that as part of the project a stormdrain pipe would be removed from the property and relocated to a proposed one-way road from Water Street to Queen Street which will be deeded to the Town. Mr. Lobdell stated that signage will be added on the road so that people would know that it was a one-way road.

Mr. Lobdell stated that each townhouse will have 2 parking spaces in the rear of the property. The parking area was designed so all vehicles will have sufficient turning room.

Mr. Lobdell stated that stormwater management was minimal on site and raingardens would be proposed for runoff. He said that a landscape plan would be part of the final review. He said that that the elevation on site ranges from 6' to 8' so the foundations would be between 2' to 3' above the existing ground elevation.

Mr. Fordi stated that screening issues were addressed in a planning meeting held in 2014 and asked how that would be addressed. Mr. Lobdell stated that screening would be used and will be shown in the final site plan. He noted that careful detail was paid to all facades of the townhouses as the project would be visible from several streets and Wilmer Park.

Mr. de Mooy had renderings that were shown to the Historic District Commission that he showed to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Dan Stargatt, resident of South Water Street, stated that he did not receive any notice of the plans and assumed that they were okay. He said that he saw the plans that were presented to the Historic District and there was an easement through his property to get to the parking lot. He said that was not shown as part of the plans presented this evening which relieved him.

Mr. Stargatt stated that a storm drain line was replaced on his property and it took almost 8 or 9 months to have it completed to where his property was returned to the condition in which it was found. He said that he had to get Mayor Cerino involved to get the job done.

Mr. Stargatt stated that it was his understanding that the one-way road would be used for emergency vehicles and said that he sees a large amount of traffic come down the street and turn around to get back out. He said that he thinks some are going to Wilmer Park and don't realize the streets do not connect. He said that he was concerned about the traffic issues off of Water Street, noting that signage at the Fish Whistle and signage on Queen may be necessary to deter through traffic. Mr. de Mooy stated that there has been no discussion of the road being used for emergency vehicles only.

Mr. Grotzky stated that when plans were completed the Town could work on signage.

Mr. de Mooy asked if sidewalks were proposed for the project. Mr. Lobdell stated that sidewalk exists in front of the property and was in good shape. He said that if anything was damaged or buckled when the homes were built it would be repaired.

Ms. Ellis moved to approve preliminary site plan as submitted, was seconded by Mr. Showalter and carried unanimously.

WASHINGTON COLLEGE (CROMWELL HALL) – 215 WASHINGTON AVENUE – EXPANSION OF PARKING LOT

Mr. Kevin Shearon of DMS and Associates was present for the application. He said that he discussed the additional parking earlier in the day with Mr. Reid Raudenbush who could not attend the meeting this evening due to a conflict. Mr. Shearon stated that the College was looking to add 10 parking spaces overall. He said that the parking lot was supposed to be part of the second phase but in an attempt to curb tensions with neighbors in reference to parking they would like to build the second phase now. Mr. Shearon stated that the original property had an enormous amount of impervious cover and both phases of the project resulted in a dramatic reduction of impervious cover. Although there was no stormwater management required, the College added 2 bio-retention systems. There will be some landscaping that would have to be done over as a result of the expansion of parking and 2 or 3 new pole lights will be installed.

Mr. Shearon stated that lighting has been an issue for neighbors and the

College was going to install dimmers. Mr. Bowering stated that as a neighbor of the building, he met with the College today and was told that all lights would have dimmers installed which could reduce the lights by 25%. The College would run tests to see where lighting was acceptable to the neighbors. Dimmers may be installed on the exterior fixtures installed on the building or they may be replaced altogether.

Mr. Bowering stated that the lighting was supposed to go off each evening at 9 p.m. However, various sections of the lighting were computer controlled and some sections were motion controlled. If motion is detected, lights are supposed to come on but it is not working properly. Lights were coming on at all times of the night. He said that there were no shades on the building and when the lights came on it was intense.

Mr. Bowering stated that construction had damaged ceilings and walls in his house and the College was quick to make repairs at their expense. He said that the College has been good about working with the neighbors.

Mr. Chris Kelch and Ms. Barbara Kelch, adjacent neighbors on Washington Avenue, were present to discuss the proposed project. Mr. Kelch stated that he was concerned over doubling the parking lot and how it would affect his property. He said that it was not that he did not want the College to build, but he did want serious thought put in to security.

Mr. Kelch stated that a security gate to keep cars out at night was needed as the students have already started using the parking lot to attend parties on Washington Avenue. He said that when the parties end and the students return to their cars, they are right under their bedroom window. He said that at 3 a.m. nobody appreciates that type of noise.

Mr. Kelch stated that he has had to call the police already this school year and said that regardless of the current situation with lighting, it was pitch black when lights are off. The area behind his shed and the rest of the parking lot is now a place to go and park. He said he was concerned about security, noting that a simple chain across the property may stop the problem. He said that ultimately a magnetic parking permit system would solve the problem and provide security for the neighborhood.

Mr. Bowering stated that he raised the same issues at his meeting with the College this afternoon and the idea of a security barrier was well received. Public Safety has been given instructions to police the parking lot and if there are vehicles parking in the lot they were going to tow them away.

Mr. Kelch stated that he would like to see signage addressed in the parking lot as well. He said that students and tradespeople were parking along the driveway, making it difficult for him to park and there would be no way an emergency vehicle to get past his property under those circumstances.

Mr. Kelch stated that the vibrations from the compaction of the first parking lot caused a tremendous amount of damage to the walls in his house and he was concerned about the damage of a second parking lot. He asked if someone would look into a way to mitigate compaction on site.

Mr. Fordi stated that there were conditions on the original application so that the Kelch's would have access to parking in the rear and it sounds as though there needs to be plans in place to restrict access for parking, suggesting yellow curbs and signage.

Mr. John Massey, resident of East Campus Avenue, stated that he understood when the first plan for Cromwell Hall came in there was a variance received for parking. Mr. de Mooy stated that there was no variance for parking at this location. Mr. Massey stated that he did not think there was ever going to be enough parking on site.

Mr. Shearon stated that by providing the extra parking lot now they will alleviate parking on the street but parking will have to be monitored.

Mr. Grotsky stated that issues brought up at this meeting were serious quality of life issues for the residents. He thought that approvals should be held off until there was someone from the College present to discuss what was going to be done to reassure the residents that additional parking was not going to make problems worse than already exist. The Commission agreed.

Mr. Fordi stated that the College could use the extra month to work with the neighbors to come to a resolution of problems with the neighbors. Mr. Fordi stated that the idea for this building was that students would be walking and that the failure of that experiment can't be the burden of the community.

Mr. Showalter moved to table discussion regarding additional parking at Cromwell Hall until a representative of the College could be present with solutions to the problems addressed at this meeting by the Commission and residents, was seconded by Ms. Richman and carried unanimously.

There being no further business, Ms. Ellis moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m., was seconded by Mr. Showalter and carried unanimously.

Submitted by:

Jennifer Mulligan

Stenographer

Approved by:

Jeffrey Grotsky

Chair