

NORTH EAST PLANNING COMMISSION
North East Town Hall Meeting Room
106 South Main Street, North East, Maryland 21901
Tuesday, February 5, 2019
7:00 P.M.

Chairman Mark Dobbins called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Present included Commissioner Raymond Mitchell and members Valerie Combs, Judy Duffy and Mike Nair. Also present were Chris Mink, Town Engineer; Betsy Vennell, Director of Planning and Zoning; and Lisa Rhoades, Planning and Zoning Assistant. Melissa Cook-MacKenzie, Zoning Administrator, was absent from the meeting.

-MINUTES-

January 8, 2019

Ms. Duffy made a motion to approve the January 8, 2019 minutes. Mr. Nair seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

-OLD BUSINESS-

None.

-NEW BUSINESS-

North East Gateway

Amy DiPietro, MRA, 3445A Box Hill Corporate Center Drive, Abington, Maryland 21009 Mike Wilson and Jeff Holcomb Trammell Crow Company, 300 Conshohocken State Rd, Conshohocken Pennsylvania came to present the North East Gateway Preliminary Landscape Plan for the proposed 716,490 square foot cross dock facility and the architectural designs for the North East Monument.

Landscape Plan

Ms. DiPietro reported that the Landscape Plan, Buffer Plan and street tree plan for North East Gateway had been submitted to the Chris Mink, CNA; and the town's horticultural consultant for review and comment. Ms. DiPietro reported they have received a comment letter dated January 31, 2019 from CNA and reported that they agreed to the requirements contained within the letter, however, desired to discuss the following items:

Number 6 and 7: Requiring the request to provide screening fence to buffer the residential properties from the development. Mr. Mink replied that a shadow box privacy fence is being requested to provide a visual buffer between the residential properties and the industrial site.

APPROVED

March 5, 2019

Ms. DiPietro stated that they are required to provide fencing around the stormwater management pond and inquired if it would be acceptable to the Planning Commission if the privacy fence could be installed along the property lines of Parcel 88, Lots 203, 210, 211, 212, 217 & 218 up to the stormwater management split rail fence. The Planning Commission concurred.

Number 10: Ms. DiPietro inquired what the intent was regarding the request to provide fencing on Nazarene Camp Road. Mr. Mink stated that there is limited to room to provide a bufferyard from the abutting residential property, therefore a fence would provide a visual buffer for the residential properties on the other side of Nazarene Camp Road. Ms. Duffy inquired if there has been any outreach to the community and Ms. DiPietro replied no. Mr. Nair stated that he would prefer to see additional landscaping and trees if possible versus having the residents looking out their window seeing a fence. Mr. Mink stated that the requirement is a densely planted area which is not feasible with this amount of land however, the addition of trees and bushes as opposed to a solid privacy fence would be acceptable. Mr. Holcomb stated that there was one row of trees on the current Landscape Plan and they could add a split rail fence with some bushes and one additional row of trees. The Planning Commission and Town engineer concurred that this would provide an acceptable buffer yard.

Chairman Dobbins inquired what type of security is proposed for the North East Gateway site. Mr. Holcomb replied that there is a fence around the site, shown on the plan as well as security cameras. Any additional security will be at the discretion of the end user for this property.

Waivers-“HCOB” Highway Corridor Overlay District:

Mrs. DiPietro submitted a waiver request from the HCOB pursuant to The North East Zoning Ordinance, Section 5-16.8:

Waivers of Corridor Requirements: The Planning Commission may waive one or more of the specific requirements of the Special Overlay District upon a showing by the applicant that these corridor regulations impose an undue hardship due to the peculiar configuration, topography, or location of the tract, or that the proposed project demonstrates the use of highly innovative architectural, site planning, or land use techniques. The Commission may approve any waiver to the minimum extent necessary to allow the project to be constructed. The applicant for any such waiver shall have the burden of showing that the proposed project, with such waiver granted, will be as good or better than a project developed in compliance with the District regulations in terms of environmental protection, aesthetic enhancement, land use compatibility, and traffic considerations. The grant or denial of a waiver by the Commission pursuant to this section may be appealed to the Board of Appeals.

Waiver request #1: Section 5-16.3: Tree Protection. Mrs. DiPietro justified her request indicating that strict compliance with this section would render the site plan unattainable if they were restricted from removing trees with a diameter of 8 inches or larger.

Waiver request #2: Article 12. 11.1-3. Bufferyards. Mrs. DiPietro justified her request due to the significant grade change assisting as a visual barrier, and the fact that they are meeting the intent of Buffer Yard D.

Mrs. DiPietro outlined the following will be provided pursuant to the waiver request:

1. Additional plantings within the HCOD in addition to meeting the requirement.
2. Improving the appearance of the State Highway Administration right of way.
3. North East Monument.

Mr. Mink stated that the Landscape Plan supports the waiver requests and reported that the applicant has met the intent of the regulation. Mr. Mink concurred with the applicant's interpretation of the conditions for the waiver.

After discussion, Mr. Nair made a motion to approve:

1. North East Gateway Landscape Plan, subject to the letter from Chris Mink, CNA dated January 31, 2019, and changes to items 6 and 10:
 - a. Item 6: A shadow box privacy fence shall be installed along the sites western boundary with the rear property lines of Parcel 88, Lots 203, 201, 212, 217 & 218 at which point the privacy fence shall be permitted to tie into the required split rail fencing around the stormwater management pond. The maintenance of the fence abutting the Lots above shall be the responsibility of the property owner of Lot 1.
 - b. Item 10: A privacy fence shall not be required, however, one additional layer of landscape shall be required along Nazarene Camp Road to provide screening for residential properties located across the road from the North East Gateway site.
 - c. Item 10: A split rail fence shall be required, behind the sidewalk, along Nazarene Camp Road to provide additional screening.
2. North East Gateway Waivers of Section 5-16.8. HCOD Regulations, as requested in the January 16, 2019 letter from Amy DiPietro, MRA.

Ms. Duffy seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

Monument Decision on Sign

Mr. Holcomb had submitted architectural designs of the North East Monument for the Planning Commission to choose from. Mr. Holcomb reported that the letters on the sign as well as the compass and lighthouse will be backlit. The sign will be manufactured in Greenbay, Wisconsin and will cost upwards of \$200,000.00. Mr. Holcomb stated that their architects have worked diligently on providing renderings for consideration.

Mrs. Vennell reported that both she and Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie have reviewed the renderings provided and believed that based on the input provided by the Planning Commission, Option 1 best met the criteria.

Mr. Nair preferred Option #3 stating that having not grown up in the area the words “Town of North East” clearly show you are entering the Town of North East, however he was not opposed to Option 1. The majority of the Planning Commission preferred Option 1.

The Planning Commission concluded they would like the Developer move forward with Option #1 sign.

Mr. Holcomb stated that it is his desire to have the sign installed soon after they break ground and would also like to install the landscaping in that area at that time as well.

Mr. Holcomb stated they would like to start grading by April 1, 2019, as contractors will be under contract and ready to start work. The site work shall take approximately 10 months from start to finish and they will work north to south on the site work. Mr. Holcomb reported that the Amazon building was over 1 million square feet and was completed in 10 months.

Ms. Duffy inquired what the phasing would be for the new intersection at North East Gateway, Rogers Road and Route 272. Mr. Holcomb stated that they must be installed simultaneously. The trucks delivering building materials will access the site via the existing Nazarene Camp Road and then enter straight into the site. In addition, they will try to move the majority of building materials during the late evening hours, when possible.

Ms. Vennell inquired when the installing of the new turning lane off of Route 272 would be created. Mr. Holcomb stated the timing of the lane addition has not yet been determined. The traffic signal plan has been submitted to SHA for review and expected comments.

Nazarene Camp Tabernacle

Mr. Nair inquired about the status of Nazarene Camp Tabernacle, the Maryland Historical Trust and the “MOA” Memorandum of Agreement. Mr. Holcomb stated that the property owners are close to completing the agreement. The Maryland Historical Trust is requesting full documentation of the building so that it can be documented, cataloged, memorialized and then it will be demolished.

North East Library

Architectural review: A handout of the library was distributed to the Planning Commission, taken from the Library’s website. Mrs. Vennell reported that the Library, along with their architects and engineers presented the architectural design to the Town Board in January. The Planning Commission concurred that they are not sure that the structure has a Main Street feel and commented that the structure resembles a 1960’s feel. However, the Planning

Commission does concur that the interior is more modern. Chairman Dobbins commented that the architectural design was different than he expected and the terrace area is smaller than expected.

Mrs. Vennell reported that the Library received setback variances for the building and parking spaces from the Board of Appeals, conditioned on requiring additional buffer yard landscape.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

SYE LLC-Proposed Shopping Center

Ms. Duffy inquired about the status of the recently annexed property with a proposed Shopping Center.. Mrs. Vennell reported that the Planning Office has not received any submittals for this project.

-REPORTS-

None.

-COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC-

None.

-NEXT MEETING-

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for March 5, 2019. The Planning Commission concurred that it may be best to conduct two meetings in March since each of the projects coming in (Library and North East Gateway) could potentially take a significant amount of time.

-ADJOURNMENT-

With no further business, Ms. Duffy made a motion to adjourn at 8:20 P.M. Mr. Nair seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

Respectfully submitted:

Lisa Rhoades
Planning and Zoning Assistant

Attest:

Mark Dobbins
Chairman

APPROVED
March 5, 2019