

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

Chairman Mark Dobbins called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M. Present included Commissioner Raymond Mitchell and members Valerie Combs, Judy Duffy and Mike Nair. Also present were Melissa Cook-MacKenzie, Zoning Administrator, Betsy Vennell, Director of Planning and Zoning, Lisa Rhoades, Planning and Zoning Assistant, Chris Mink, Town Engineer and Jodie Shivery, Ecologically Sound Landscapes.

-MINUTES-

February 5, 2019

Ms. Duffy made a motion to approve the February 5, 2019 minutes. Ms. Combs seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

-REPORTS-

Landscape Horticulturist:

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie reported that Ms. Patti Lemmerman, the Town's Landscape Architect has retired and has moved out of the area and introduced Ms. Jodie Shivery, Ecologically Sound Landscapes, who will be working as the Town's Landscape Horticulturist. Ms. Shivery will work closely with the Landscape Architect from CNA regarding the landscape materials, approvals and inspections.

-OLD BUSINESS-

None.

-NEW BUSINESS-

1. Ridgely Forest Minor Subdivision: "Take Down Plat" for Parcels 2, 3 and 4:

Ridgely Forest Minor Subdivision Plat entitled "Development Parcel Plat Ridgely Forest Take down plat" to create parcels 2, 3 and 4. Developer: WORF, LLC; Owner: 1PH PROPERTIES, LLC; 9616 Belair Road, Baltimore, Maryland. Tax Map 31; Parcels 1355, 235.

Mrs. Vennell reported that the North East Subdivision Regulations permit the combined Preliminary/Final review of a minor subdivision plat at the same time, which is the intention for this plat.

Tom O’Laughlin, WORF, LLC and Jeff Matthai, MRA, came before the Planning Commission to present the Ridgely Forest Minor Subdivision “Take Down Plat”. Mr. Matthai reported that parcels 2, 3 and 4 will be acquired by WORF, LLC from the current owner methodically as each subdivision phase/section in Ridgely Forest is approved, prior to recordation.

Mr. O’Laughlin reported that 19 new townhomes and 11 new single family homes have already been sold in Ridgely Forest and they are very optimistic about the continuing development in Ridgely Forest.

Ms. Combs made motion to approve the Preliminary/Final Minor Subdivision Plat entitled “Development Parcel Plat, Ridgely Forest, Parcels 2, 3, and 4” with the following condition:

- Letter from Chris Mink, CNA dated March 5, 2019.

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

2. Ridgely Forest Final Subdivision Plat, Section 2: 33 residential Lots

Ridgely Forest Final Subdivision Plat, Section 2: 33 single family home lots within the Ridgely Forest Master Planned Community. Developer: WORF, LLC; Owner: 1PH PROPERTIES, LLC; 9616 Belair Road, Baltimore, Maryland. Tax Map 31; Parcels 1355, 235.

Mr. Mink reported that although the comment letter from CNA dated February 4, 2019 referenced the Preliminary Plat it was intended to be the comments regarding the Final Subdivision Plat.

Tom O’Laughlin, WORF, LLC and Jeff Matthai, MRA came before the Planning Commission to present Section 2 final subdivision plat. Mr. Matthai reported that this project has received final approvals Stormwater Management, Sewer, Sediment and Erosion, and Forest Conservation. Mr. Matthai reported that they have received a grading permit.

Mr. Mink clarified his comments regarding item #4 on his February 4, 2019 comment letter. The existing easement as shown on the original plats for Ridgely Forest Phase I, indicate that the easement is over the water main and future right of way. The easements do not match the proposed rights of way for Tilia Drive and Blue Spruce Way. The existing easement is quite large and infringes on the lots. Therefore, the existing easement must be released or extinguished and a new easement must be established. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie stated that all parties could start working on the new easement agreement now.

Chairman Dobbins inquired if Mr. O’Laughlin and Mr. Matthai had any inquiries regarding the comments on the February 4, 2019 CNA comment letter, and they did not.

Mr. Nair made a motion to approve Ridgely Forest Subdivision Plat, Section 2 with the following condition:

- Letter from Chris Mink, CNA dated February 4, 2019.

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

3. North East Library

Morgan Miller, Cecil County Library, 301 Newark Ave, Elkton, Maryland, Representatives from GPI Engineering, John Sabatino and Brian Morgan, 15 Grandview Avenue, North East, Maryland came before the Planning Commission to present the North East Library Preliminary Site Plan, landscape plan and architectural renderings.

Landscape Plan:

Mr. Morgan opened by stating he would like to discuss some of the comments in the March 1, 2019 comment letter from CNA as well as comments provided by Ms. Shivery in this same document.

Mr. Morgan inquired if the comments from Ms. Shivery were suggestive in nature or if they were requirements. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie stated that the comments from Ms. Shivery should be considered the same as from the Town's engineer.

Item #1/#9: Mr. Morgan requested more direction on the location of additional plantings required by the Board of Appeals as a condition of the variance approval. Mr. Morgan referred to the Board of Appeals Case: A-2019-01-V condition: "The Applicant shall be required to provide additional landscape and/or larger caliper trees to assist with the visual softening of the site along the west side of the lot, on the outside edge of the library parking lot which abuts the shopping center driveway and additional landscape and/or larger caliper trees to be located on the north side adjacent to the employee parking area, which is technically "off-site". Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie reported that during the Board of Appeals it was mentioned that it is not the intent of the Board of Appeals to require planting to just meet the criteria but to insure their survival. Therefore, Ms. MacKenzie reported that a meeting with Ms. Shivery, the Town, a representative from the Library and possibly a member(s) of the Board of Appeals would be preferable. Ms. Shivery will have the final determination on the type of planting and the best location for installation to insure survival. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie added that the purpose of the additional understory plantings were for additional screening and softening of the site. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie stated that if Mr. Morgan does not believe he can accommodate the additional plantings, he shall provide a list of reasons why it is not possible and provide an alternate location. If it is determined the reasons seem valid, there can be further discussion regarding alternate plantings and location to reach a mutual agreement.

Mr. Nair inquired if solar panels were going to be installed and how this would this effect the planting plan. Ms. Miller stated that the solar panels for the Library would be installed on the roof if grant funding was available.

Item #8: Ms. Shivery stated that the Ilex glabra otherwise known as an 'Inkberry' bush does not produce berries and therefore may be male or female.

Item #10. Mr. Morgan requested clarification of the demolition plan requirements. Ms. Vennell referenced the trees scheduled to be removed on the demolition plan. Mr. Morgan stated that the existing trees may be damaged during construction, and if damaged, will be replaced. Mr. Morgan reported that there are three trees scheduled to be removed: two are in the location of the entrance to the parking lot and one tree located where there is a proposed sidewalk. Mr. Morgan added that all of the trees proposed for removal are on the South side of the property. Mr. Morgan would like to move these three trees to a temporary location during construction and then relocate them somewhere on the property, if possible. A note shall be added to the landscape plan: Three trees shall be removed during construction and shall be re-planted in the location determined by the Town's Landscape Horticulturist. If it is determined that the trees are not healthy enough to re-plant, coordination with the Town's Landscape Horticulturist shall be required for the installation of the replacement trees and locations.

Page 3. Item #4: Mr. Morgan referenced sheet L-200 #4 by stating that they were proposing this grouping of plantings for a burst of color and he prefers to plant in masses to get more bang for the buck. Ms. Shivery concurred however, the proposed plantings were shown in rows and the plants specified do not grow in formal rows and therefore it would create more maintenance. Ms. Shivery would like an integrated mix of perennial groupings throughout the upper contours, not planted in rows. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie inquired who would be performing the onsite maintenance of the landscaping. Ms. Miller stated that it will be library staff and an outside vendor.

Page 3. Item #5: Mr. Sabatino questioned why the Town required the use of washed river stone/gravel as mulch within the beds. Ms. Shivery and Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie reported that the Town currently uses the method of mulch and river stone/gravel and that it has cut down on the maintenance of the landscape beds.

Ms. Duffy made a motion to approval the Preliminary Landscape Plan with the following condition:

- Letter from Chris Mink, CNA dated March 1, 2019 with the clarification of the items mentioned above.

Mr. Nair seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

Preliminary Site Plan:

Mr. Morgan referenced the letter from Mr. Mink, CNA dated March 1, 2019 regarding the preliminary site plan for the North East Library:

Item #2 Water Meter Easement: Mr. Mink stated the Water main located running through North East Station is not within an easement. The water meter proposed would not be located on the library property, therefore an easement agreement would be necessary with the property owner of Lot 6. Mr. Mink stated that the easement would be from the Shopping Center to the Library. Mr. Morgan stated that they have a meeting scheduled with DK Kline the property owner of the

shopping center to discuss their easement. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie reported that the Town is working to schedule a meeting with the owners of the shopping center regarding the water main within North East Station.

Item #5 Traffic Concerns in future: Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie stated that the town would simply like to bring attention to and a sense of caution to the internal road/driveway entrances and exits, with close proximity to the shopping center entrance/exit on Mauldin Avenue. Ms. Cook-MacKenzie reported that after construction of the Lowe's Department store, it was determined that there were significant internal driveway traffic concerns with the main driveway and the entry/exit from Lowe's. The Town requested that Lowe's install a Stop Sign be installed in the driveway in the area between the shopping center and Lowe's, which proved successful. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that it is not yet known if there will be a problem with vehicles pulling out of the library onto the main driveway, especially with the existing entry/exit from Lowe's property, the entry/exit into West Marine and the existing main driveway. Ms. Miller stated that she appreciated the information and feedback.

Item #6 History of North East: Ms. Miller reported there will be display of pictures located in the main entrance of the Library, a large stain glass window donated by one of the historic buildings on Main Street, structures in the children's section which are modeled after well-known structures and businesses in the town.

Item #13 Permeable paver: Mr. Morgan stated that he has a vast experience in working with this permeable paver product. Mr. Morgan stated that the product was recently installed at the North East Elementary School parking lot addition and is working wonderfully. Mr. Morgan reported that he has also installed this product at Harford Community College and it is also working wonderfully there. The permeable concrete should not be installed in a temperature under 40 degrees and there is maintenance necessary with the product. The North East Elementary School recently had their parking lot cleaned and the cost was approximately \$300.00. Mr. Mink expressed that there is a concern of ponding water near parking islands which could affect the health of landscaping. Mr. Morgan replied that he is confident that the permeable pavement will not fail nor lead to any ponding of water which could undermine the health of any landscaping. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie inquired if there would be a performance bond in regards to the permeable concrete. Mr. Morgan stated that he will personally guarantee that it will be installed correctly.

Architectural Review

Chairman Dobbins requested Ms. Miller give the Planning Commission a brief overview of the process leading up to the architectural design of the proposed library.

Ms. Miller reported that the Cecil County Library held 8 community focus groups some of which were held at the North East Town Hall, North East Library, spoke with students at the North East High School, Middle and Elementary Schools and approximately 650 citizens participated over all. The designers had some challenges building a modern library, public/civic building in a commercial shopping center. Ms. Miller stated that although the library administrative offices

will be moved to this location they wanted the public library to be in the front. In addition, they wanted to bring the outdoors in by installing large windows facing the green space patio located at the back of the building. There will be outdoor seating spaces with benches. Ms. Miller stated that Main Street architectural components were incorporated into the design through exterior wood buildings on Main Street, gray panels which are a rain screen material to resemble reeds, and a red wall which resembles brick and terracotta. The pitched metal roof was designed to support solar panels in the future. Ms. Miller added that the second floor of the structure contain areas for teens, small children and families, the first floor will have areas for adults containing a digital media lab and entrepreneur area as well as a 100 person meeting room.

Chairman Dobbins stated that according to Ms. Miller, a lot of people were engaged during the design of the proposed library, however, reported that the Planning Commission is typically part of architectural design planning in this Overlay District. Chairman Dobbins stated that he was disappointed that an architectural design for the proposed library was presented to the County and to the public without giving the North East Planning Commission an opportunity to offer any feedback prior to this evening's meeting. Chairman Dobbins stated that typically a developer would start a conversation regarding an architectural design and spend a significant amount of time discussing designs prior to the design being brought before the Planning Commission for approval. Typically, the Planning Commission has been able to convey to developers what they would like to see incorporated into the architectural design. Chairman Dobbins reported that this design is not what he expected to see. Chairman Dobbins inquired what materials are being used in the building. Ms. Miller responded the treated wood represents driftwood, the rain screen is block/concrete and the white columns are steel, the windows will provide lighting indoors and a water feature will be added at the rear of the 3,000 square foot building, to provide an estuary environment. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that town staff had requested the architectural renderings in January so they could be presented to the Planning Commission during their February meeting, however, that request was not accommodated. Ms. Miller stated that they first presented the building to Cecil County, as they are the library's funding source. Chairman Dobbins stated that this will be a landmark coming into town and he would have preferred a design that is more visually harmonious with Town, and does not feel this requirement was met. Mr. Nair stated that he likes the interior but agrees with Chairman Dobbins, that the building is not a very attractive style on the exterior. Ms. Duffy stated that the design of the library should be held to a higher standard, however the design more reflects Lowe's Department Store, not the Town. Commissioner Mitchell reported that he concurred with Chairman Dobbins. Ms. Combs' concurred.

The Planning Commission invited the library to return to the March 19, 2019 Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Morgan agreed to table the Preliminary Site Plan and architectural approval until the March 19, 2019 meeting. Meanwhile, a meeting with Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie and Mrs. Miller would occur to discuss a plan to move forward.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

None.

-COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC-

None.

-NEXT MEETING-

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled March 19, 2019. Packages will be hand delivered next week.

-ADJOURNMENT-

With no further business, Ms. Duffy made a motion to adjourn at 8:40 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