

NORTH EAST PLANNING COMMISSION
Virtual Meeting conducted via ZOOM
106 South Main Street, North East, Maryland 21901
Tuesday, October 6, 2020
6:00 P.M.

Chairman Mark Dobbins called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m., via a virtual meeting with ZOOM due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Present included Commissioner Raymond Mitchell and member Judy Duffy. Also present Melissa Cook-Mackenzie, Town Administrator, Betsy Vennell, Director of Planning and Zoning and Lisa Rhoades, Planning and Zoning Assistant. Mike Nair was absent from the meeting.

-MINUTES-

June 2, 2020

Commissioner Mitchell made a motion to approve the June 2, 2020 Planning Commission minutes as presented. Ms. Duffy seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

-OLD BUSINESS-

None.

-NEW BUSINESS-

Request from Owner/Developer WOLF, LLC 2301 Rutledge Road, Fallston, Maryland. Subject Property: Ridgely Forest, zoned "R-4" Mixed Use Residential District with the Master Planned Community Overlay District. Also found on Tax Map 31, Parcel 1355; 235; 971: 1279; 675 on 195.94 acres. Developer requests an extension to the provision of MPC Guidelines regarding the completion date of the club house/pool.

Jim Wolf and Tom O'Laughlin, WOLF, LLC, the developers, requested an extension to the provision of the Master Planned Community Guidelines, regarding the completion date of the clubhouse and pool. Mr. Wolf reported that the clubhouse and pool received final site plan approval in March 2020 and the Construction Authorization application was submitted to the Town of North East in April 2020. Mr. Wolf stated they had hoped to begin construction in June 2020, with an intended completion date of December 2020. However, the County Building Permit was not approved until the middle of September due to the Corona Virus Pandemic. Mr. Wolf reported, that they currently have contracts in place with two different contractors for the pool and clubhouse. The pad sites are fully graded, water and sewer services have been installed within 5 feet of the clubhouse location and the parking spaces have received the base course of pavement. The contractor for clubhouse is scheduled to break ground October 7, 2020 and the clubhouse, pool and open space are anticipated to be completed by spring 2021, depending on the progress during the winter months, as determined by the weather. Mr. Wolf reported that the MPC Guidelines book state that the pool and clubhouse have to be opened by the 272

APPROVED

November 10, 2020

occupancy permit. Mr. Wolf requested that the requirement be changed to: The pool and clubhouse shall be opened no later than May 31, 2021, or the Town, or the Planning Department can withhold the issuing of the construction authorization applications for new homes in Ridgely Forest.

Chairman Dobbins stated that the developers are requesting an extension from the clubhouse and pool requirement which requires the Club at Ridgely Forest to be opened by the occupancy of the 272nd home, to a set date of May 31, 2021. Chairman Dobbins requested comments from the public:

Leslie McCorkle, 213 Magnolia Drive, Ridgely Forest, inquired what the current occupancy count is. Mr. Wolf responded 230 occupancies have been granted. Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie added that an additional 30 building permits have been issued. Ms. McCorkle re-iterated that regardless of the number of homes built, the developers are proposing to have the clubhouse and pool opened by May 31, 2021. Mr. Wolf concurred.

Nilay Pandya, 200 Magnolia Drive, Ridgely Forest, inquired if the other amenities around the clubhouse would be open around the same proposed timeframe. Mr. Wolf reported that it is expected that the amenities would be open concurrently with pool and clubhouse next spring and reported that the ball field has already been graded and seeded.

Michael Cerreto, 5 Yellowwood Drive, Ridgely Forest, inquired whether the clubhouse and pool would be open to the public or would it be strictly for the residents of Ridgely Forest, and asked how it would be controlled. Mr. Wolf and Mr. O'Laughlin confirmed that it would be opened to the Ridgely Forest residents only and this would be managed by the HOA and homeowners. Mr. Wolf stated that the amenities in Ridgely Forest are exclusive to the homeowners and they will be adding signs which state this information. Mr. Wolf stated it would be up to the homeowners to call the police to address trespassers on private property.

Mrs. Vennell reported that one email was received September 21, 2020 from Kimberly Thelen, a resident of Ridgely Forest, which stated: I am asking for denial of the extension requested by the developer WORF LLC set for discussion on October 6, 2020. Ryan Homes is actively marketing properties for sale stating that the Clubhouse and recreational area are being installed. It is my belief that they should not be allowed to build or sell further homes until the promised facilities are completed."

Ms. Duffy inquired what the approximate expected timeframe was for obtaining the 272nd occupancy. Mr. Wolf stated that they expect sometime in January or February of 2021. Chairman Dobbins stated that he would not like to see fully built homes sitting empty because homeowners cannot obtain occupancy, should the clubhouse and pool not be completed in February.

Chairman Dobbins stated that the Planning Commission is hearing this request this evening to make a recommendation to the Mayor and Commissioners, who will hear this request and

recommendation on October 14, 2020. Commission Mitchell made a motion to make the following recommendation to the Mayor and Commissioners:

That the requirement to open the clubhouse and pool at The Club at Ridgely Forest by the occupancy of the 272nd home be changed to: The Clubhouse and Pool shall be open by May 31, 2021. If the clubhouse and pool are not open by this date, the Town shall not process any new home Construction Authorization Permits within the Ridgely Forest Development. The Town shall commence processing new home Construction Authorization Permits only after the Clubhouse and pool are open.

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

-MISCELLANEOUS-

None.

-REPORTS-

Lower North East Creek Watershed Master Plan:

Mrs. Vennell reported that the Town received notification from Bryan Lightner, Zoning Administrator, Cecil County Department of Land Services. Cecil County was awarded a grant for developing the “Lower North East Creek Watershed Master Plan.” Mr. Lightner wrote to the Town and requested assistance from stakeholders who may be willing to help develop the plan. Mrs. Vennell reported that it would be a great opportunity for the North East Planning Commission to be a stakeholder and the Planning Commission concurred to be a stakeholder in the Lower North East Creek Watershed Master Plan.

Verizon Fios Request:

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that a resident within the Ridgely Forest Development, Ms. McCorkle has requested that the Developer install Fios. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that she has learned that Verizon Fios is primarily located in the Baltimore and Salisbury area has not expanded to Cecil County. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that she has reached out to the Economic Development Department to inquire if there have been any updates or if they have included Fios in their Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Wolf commented that when they began the Ridgely Forest project, he and Mr. O’Laughlin reached out to Verizon about Fios and Verizon informed them that they would not be expanding or installing Fios in any new locations as they were trying to focus on getting the 5G up and running, therefore, they believed that Fios would then be obsolete.

Bridge Over Amtrak

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that the bridge is expected to be completed in November 2020. The concrete has been poured and must sit for 28 days and then the final paving can be done as well as the landscaping.

North East Gateway

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that the Town has not been notified of a tenant for North East Gateway Cross-Dock Facility.

-COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC-

None.

-NEXT MEETING-

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for November 3, 2020 at 6:00 P.M., which shall be scheduled as a Virtual Meeting.

-ADJOURNMENT-

With no further business, Ms. Duffy made a motion to adjourn at 6:47 P.M. Commissioner Mitchell seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

Respectfully submitted:

Attest:

Lisa Rhoades
Planning and Zoning Assistant

Mark Dobbins
Chairman