

NORTH EAST PLANNING COMMISSION
106 South Main Street, North East, Maryland 21901
Tuesday, June 1, 2022
7:00 P.M.

Chairman Mark Dobbins called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Present included Commissioner Hilary Crothers, ex-officio and member Judy Duffy. Also present were Melissa Cook-Mackenzie, Zoning Administrator, Betsy Vennell, Director of Planning and Lisa Rhoades, Planning and Zoning Assistant.

-MINUTES-

May 3, 2022

Ms. Duffy made a motion to approve the May 3, 2022 Planning Commission minutes, as presented. Ms. Crothers second the motion and the motion was approved by all.

-OLD BUSINESS-

None.

-NEW BUSINESS-

1. Cecil County Board of Education, 201 Booth Street, Elkton, Maryland. Applicant proposes to install two (2) 24'x36' relocatable classrooms with access ramps adjacent to the north side of the North East Elementary School, 301 Thomas Avenue, North East, Maryland; and to install one (1) 24'x36' relocatable classroom with an access ramp adjacent to the east side of the North East Middle School, 200 East Cecil Avenue, North East, Maryland. Zoning Designation: R-1 Single Family Residential District.

Mr. Eric Olson, 201 Booth Street, Elkton, Maryland on behalf of Cecil County Board of Education, stated that there are two schools proposing relocatable classrooms, the North East Elementary School which would have two (2) relocatable classrooms and the North East Middle School which would have one (1) relocatable classroom. Mr. Olson had presented a drawing of the proposed 24' x 36' relocatable classrooms. Mr. Olson reported that each of the relocatable classrooms will serve up to 25 students. The classrooms will have handicap ramps, as noted on the plan, and will sit on foundation piers and have skirting added around the bottom of the classrooms. All of the relocatable classrooms are alarmed and also have heating and air conditioning. Mr. Olson stated that one of the relocatable classrooms is being relocated from Conowingo Elementary School to North East.

North East Elementary School

Mr. Olson stated that two relocatable classrooms are proposed for the North East Elementary School and he provided a plan showing the proposed location for the relocatable classrooms. Mr. Olson indicated where the ingress and egress into the school would be located. Mr. Olson

Approved
July 5, 2022

clarified that the site plan indicates that there is a covered walkway, however, the sidewalk is not covered. Mr. Olson stated the installation is proposed between June 13, 2022 and June 20, 2022.

Ms. Duffy inquired if the North East Elementary School sign was going to be replaced. Mr. Olson replied not at this time.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that the Town had received several complaints about the North East Elementary School's drop off/pick up loop which is causing a traffic issue on Thomas Avenue. The North East Chief of Police has gathered data on the timing of the vehicles, which is primarily in the afternoon. As the car loop gets full, the vehicles back up onto Thomas Avenue while waiting to enter the car loop. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that in previous years the parents were permitted to line up in the cemetery driveway, adjacent to the elementary school, however, that is no longer permitted. The vehicle congestion on Thomas Avenue is a safety issue as other vehicles, not needing to wait in the car loop, are driving around those vehicles that are waiting to get into the loop. The Chief of Police has spoken with the North East Elementary School's Principal, Ms. Adair and proposes that the afternoon traffic should utilize Church Street, Carolyn Avenue and Maryland Avenue to form a waiting line while waiting to enter the drop off/pick up loop. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she has a letter from the North East Chief of Police with an attached drawing with a solution to the traffic problem. The Principal would have the summer to notify parents of the new line up plan. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie, on behalf of the Chief of Police, would like to inquire if the Planning Commission would consider adding the following condition to the approval:

Letter from Stephen Yates, Police Chief, dated June 1, 2022 with an attached drawing showing the new traffic flow and that the Principal and the North East Chief of Police continue to work together to find a solution to resolve the drop off/pick up vehicle congestion and that the collaboration with the Chief of Police and Principal continue to be ongoing to resolve future traffic congestion concerns.

Mr. Olson commented that the sudden growth of the student population and cultural changes seem to have contributed to more parents and grandparents dropping off and picking up their children as opposed to having them ride the bus. Chairman Dobbins commented that the Chief of Police's proposed staging plan seems like a good plan to try to relieve some of the traffic congestion.

Ms. Duffy made a motion to approve the (2) relocatable classrooms to be installed at the North East Elementary School as per the submitted site plan with the following condition:

1. The North East Chief of Police, Stephen Yates letter dated June 1, 2022 with attached drawing (attached). The North East Chief of Police and the North East Elementary School Principal shall find a solution to resolve the drop off/pick up, vehicle line-up congestion, which is causing traffic issues in the afternoon. In addition, continued collaboration of the Chief of Police and Principal shall be ongoing to resolve future traffic congestion concerns.

Commissioner Crothers seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

North East Middle School

Mr. Olson stated that (1) relocatable classroom is proposed for the North East Middle School to be placed as shown to the site plan submitted with the application.

The Planning Commission had no further questions regarding the relocatable classroom or the proposed location.

Ms. Crothers made motion to approve the (1) relocatable classroom to be installed at the North East Middle School as per the submitted site plan. Ms. Duffy seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

2. Annual Report 2021 – Adoption of the Annual Report

Mrs. Vennell reported that the report contained data from 2021, as required by the Maryland Department of Planning. Ms. Duffy inquired if information about the North East Preserve was included in this report. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie replied that most of the activity around the North East Preserve project will occur during 2022 and will be entered into the 2022 Annual Planning Report.

Chairman Dobbins commented that under the New Commercial Occupation License section one of the business names required a correction.

Ms. Duffy made motion to adopt the Town of North East 2021 Annual Planning Report with one minor correction. Ms. Crothers second the motion and the motion was approved by all.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

None.

-REPORTS-

Critical Area Maps

Mrs. Vennell reported that the new Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Maps are required to be adopted in July 2022. A Public Hearing has been scheduled for the Planning Commission's July 5, 2022 meeting. Ms. Vennell displayed the proposed critical area maps and pointed out the areas where the critical area line has changed and reported that there are less properties within the critical area than as shown on the current maps. Mrs. Vennell stated that the Critical Area Commission conducted a virtual meeting in 2020 in which every property owner affected by the new map changes were sent letters. All of the affected properties were within the Intensely Developed Area of the Critical Area. The North East Preserve was converted to Limited Development Area. The Planning Commission will need to make a recommendation to the Mayor and Commissioners, who will also conduct a public hearing. After the Mayor and Commissioner's vote, the Critical Area Commission will conduct a hearing and vote on accepting the maps.

Approved
July 5, 2022

North East Preserve

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported that the Town has awarded a contract to a firm for the North East Preserve to create a master plan. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie responded that there will be an inventory taken of what trees and conditions are on site, which should be shown on the master plan. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie also added that the firm chosen is known for creating public spaces and parks.

-COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC-

Mr. Olson stated that a design team has been selected for the new North East Middle School and new North East High School, proposed off of Irishtown Road. The Cecil County Board of Education reviewed (4) proposals for a construction management company today. Once a construction management company has been chosen, they will work together with the design team on the project. The two schools were originally going to be constructed simultaneously however, due to funding, the project will now be done in phases with the middle school being built first.

-NEXT MEETING-

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for July 5, 2022.

-ADJOURNMENT-

With no further business, Ms. Duffy made a motion to adjourn at 7:49 P.M. Commissioner Crothers seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

Respectfully submitted:

Attest:

Lisa Rhoades
Planning and Zoning Assistant

Mark Dobbins
Chairman

Approved
July 5, 2022