

**NORTH EAST PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**North East Town Hall Meeting Room**  
106 South Main Street, North East, Maryland 21901  
Tuesday, November 4, 2025  
7:00 P.M.

Chairman Dobbins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Present for the meeting included Commissioner Crothers-Moore, Members Judy Duffy, and Michael Evans. Betsy Vennell, Director of Planning and Lisa Rhoades, Planning and Zoning Assistant. Christopher Mink, ENgineering was present for the meeting. Melissa B. Cook-Mac Kenzie, Zoning Administrator and Calvin Wilson were absent from the meeting due to a prior commitment.

**-MINUTES-**

September 2, 2025 – Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Ms. Duffy made a motion to approve the September 2, 2025 Planning Commission meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Crothers-Moore seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all. Mr. Evans abstained from voting as he was not present at this meeting.

September 2, 2025 – Comprehensive Plan Workshop Minutes

Ms. Duffy made a motion to approve the August 12, 2025 Planning Commission meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Crothers-Moore seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all. Mr. Evans abstained from voting as he was not present at this meeting.

**-OLD BUSINESS-**

None.

**-NEW BUSINESS-**

1. Riverwoods at North East Phase 2

Riverwoods at North East Lot 2-Phase 2: Applicant: Alex Zemicheal, Enterprise Community Development, Inc., 875 Hollins Street, Suite #202, Baltimore, Maryland. Property Owner: Alvin & Pamela Russell, 2665 Pulaski Highway, North East, Maryland. Contract Purchaser: Enterprise Community Development, Inc. Also Found on Tax Map 25H; Parcel 95; Zoning District "RM-C" Multi-Family Residential and "HCOD" Highway Corridor Overlay District.

Mr. Mitch Ensor and Mr. Steve Sullivan, representatives of Bay State Land Services, 2012 Rock Spring Road, Forest Hill, Maryland 21050 and Alex Zemicheal, Enterprise Community Development Incorporated, presented the Riverwoods at North East Phase 2 Final Site Plan.

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Mr. Ensor stated that the Riverwoods at North East, Phase 2, is a project consisting of two 24 unit apartment buildings. They will provide a combination of 1, 2, and 3 bedroom apartments. The buildings are located on the North side of Riverwoods Drive and Riverwoods, Phase 1. Riverwoods Drive is a private road and all of the existing and new parking will be private.

Cecil County Approvals and Status:

Mr. Ensor reported:

- Sediment and Erosion Control Plans and Stormwater Management Plans have received technical final approval from Cecil County.
- Cecil Soil Plans have received final approved and the plans have been submitted to Cecil County for signature.
- Forest Conservation Plan has received final approved by Cecil County.
- The Sewer plans have received final approval and await final signature.
- The Water Service Agreement cannot be finalized until such time as the new deed has been recorded.
- Final Water Plans have been reviewed by the Town's Engineer and final changes are being done at this time.
- Cost Estimates for the Public Works Agreement are under review by the Town's Engineer.

ENEngineering Letter dated October 17, 2025

Chairman Dobbins inquired about the responses to Mr. Christopher Mink's letter dated October 17, 2025 (attached).

Mr. Ensor reported the following responses to Mr. Minks comments:

1. Water Allocation cannot be formerly issued until such time as the Developer is the legal property owner, and a copy of the deed is recorded. Mr. Ensor acknowledged this comment and confirmed he understood that no Construction Authorization will be issued until such time as the Water Allocation is executed.
2. Evidence of all agency approvals is required prior to signing the Final Site Plan, an additional approval is required for Erosion and Sediment Control from Cecil Soil Conservation District and electronic copies of all agency signed approved plans shall be required. Mr. Ensor reported that he understood this comment and that there is no objection and they will comply.
3. A Water Utility Easement Agreement containing a metes & bounds description of the additional meter vault area with an exhibit plat shall be required prior to the Town endorsing signature on the Final Site Plan. Submit metes and bounds and plat for



verification. After verification, the Town shall forward the Utility Easement Agreement to the owner for execution. It is noted that the proposed water meter location is entirely located on Lot 2, the subject property. Mr. Ensor stated there is no objection and they will comply.

4. The development of Lot 2, will rely on existing Lot 1 for such items as minimum development area (5.0 acres), property line setbacks equal to the building height, public road frontage, parking requirements, and open space areas, along with items required per the annexation agreement such as a tot lot and a clubhouse. A reciprocal agreement between Lot 1 and Lot 2 shall be provided confirming Lot 2 shall have access to all areas and amenities provided in Lot 1. The agreement needs to note that Lot 2 recognizes and agrees to the rights and responsibilities afforded to it by the plan utilized and maintained by Lot 1, and Lot 1 recognizes and agrees to the rights and responsibilities afforded to it by the plan utilized and maintained by Lot 2. It is EN's understanding that the Developer's attorney and the Town's Attorney have been reviewing a draft agreement. Prior to the Town providing signature on the Final Site Plan the approved Reciprocal Agreement between Lot 1 & 2 will need to be filed in the land records tying the two properties together with a copy provided to the Town. Mr. Ensor stated there is no objection and they will comply.
5. A reciprocal agreement site note as required per comment 4, above, shall be added to the site plan notes. Mr. Ensor displayed a copy of the Final Site Plan showing the note had been added.
6. The following notes from the North East Fire Company and North East Police Department shall be added to the Final Site Plan. Verification the items have occurred shall be required prior to Occupancy:
  - a. the North East Fire Company requires a tour of the buildings.
  - b. the sprinkler room shall be marked on the outside of the room.
  - c. Security cameras linking to the North East Police Department shall be installed and functional. The North East Planning Office will be the liaison.

Mr. Ensor stated there is no objection and they will comply.

7. Bay Church sent a letter to the Town (attached) A chain link fence exists between the Church's property and Riverwoods Phase 2. No Trespassing sign, CCTV cameras, and buffer plantings will be installed. Final Site Plan is to be revised to show the location of the fence and a note shall be added to the Final Site Plan stating "No Trespassing" signs shall be installed along the fence line every 100 feet. Mr. Ensor commented on the location of the existing fence and commented that the signs have been added to the Final Site Plan.

Mr. Mink outlined additional conditions of approval, as follows:

1. The Town will prepare a Watermain Protection Agreement for the Developer to sign, as Stormwater Management facilities are in close proximity to the Towns watermain.

2. The agreement shall state that if the Watermain were to break or leak the Town of North East shall not be held liable for any damages to the Stormwater Management facilities.
3. There is a water service line that is located in the eastern parking lot proposed that serves the North East Family Restaurant however, the exact location of the service line is unknown therefore, the Town is requesting a blanket easement agreement for this area. No plat shall be required.
4. Request to adjust the bio retention area slightly away from the 6-inch water service line.

Mr. Ensor and Mr. Zemicheal replied that there is no objection to the conditions

#### Architectural Plan

Mr. Ensor displayed an architectural drawing of Riverwoods at North East, Phase 2, stating that it is an extension of Riverwoods at North East Phase 1. Mr. Ensor reported that Enterprise Community Development Incorporated, the developer of Riverwoods, Phase 1 will also be the developer of Riverwoods at North East, Phase 2. Enterprise Community Development Incorporated wanted to ensure that the two new apartment buildings would match what was existing. The same colors and materials used in Phase 1 will be used in Phase 2. The Planning Commission had no comments.

#### Landscape Plan

Chairman Dobbins noted that the letter from ENEngineering dated October 17, 2025 had no additional comments. The Developer is required to submit a bond and maintenance agreement prior to construction. Mr. Ensor replied they will comply with this comment.

#### Lighting Plan

Chairman Dobbins noted that the letter from ENEngineering dated October 17, 2025 had no additional comments. The lighting will match the existing lighting in Phase 1.

Mrs. Vennell commented all conditions as outlined on the letter from Chris Mink and as stated during the meeting are required prior to signing the Final Site Plan and associated drawings. Mrs. Vennell reported that if a conditional approval is granted by the Planning Commission, the Planning Office and Town's Engineer will verify that all of the conditions have been met.

Mrs. Vennell reported that the Town is working with Enterprise Community Development Incorporated with a Department of Housing and Community Development Community Development Block Grant for this project.

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Ms. Duffy inquired, once all of the approvals have been received, approximately how long would it be until construction begins. Mr. Ensor replied once all of the agreements and a surety's have been secured and cost estimates submitted. Mr. Zemicheal added that they still need to finalize the private loan and tax credit and the time frame on that is in question because of the Government shut down. The USDA can not process anything at the moment so they are waiting on that funding as well. Once all of the funding has been secured, they will submit the building permit and then it should be 6 to 8 weeks for construction to begin.

Mr. Evans inquired about water service line to the North East Family Restaurant. Mr. Mink's letter reported that the actual location is unknown, and inquired if the developer is willing to relocate the water service line if needed during construction. Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Evans showed the Water Utility Plans to the Planning Commission. Mr. Sullivan outlined that there have been several utility markings done on the property and stated that one of the most accurate markings was one done in 2012-2013. He said there had been a service line discovered which fed off of the water main and ran parallel with the track boundary line that is within the easement and appeared to run toward the restaurant. Mrs. Vennell reported that the Water Plant Superintendent verified that information as well. Mrs. Vennell stated that the existing water main does have an easement and Mr. Ensor concurred. Mr. Ensor reported that they did have the water main located and they did a soft dig to verify the location.

Ms. Duffy made a motion to approve the Riverwoods at North East, Phase 2, Final Site Plan for the proposed Two Apartment Buildings (48 units), the Highway Corridor Overlay District Architectural Review, the Lighting Plan and the Final Landscape Plan subject to the following conditions:

1. Chris Mink's, ENEngineering, letter dated October 17, 2025 (attached).
2. Chris Mink's additional comments:
  - a. A Watermain Protection Agreement shall be executed as Stormwater Management facilities are in close proximity to the Town's watermain. The agreement shall state that if the Watermain were to break or leak the Town of North East shall not be held liable for any damages to the Stormwater Management facilities.
  - b. A Blanket Easement Agreement for a water service line, that is located in the eastern parking lot, that serves the North East Family Restaurant. Since the exact location of the service line is unknown, the Town is requesting a blanket easement agreement. No plat shall be required.
  - c. One the Final Site Plan adjust the bio retention area slightly away from the 6-inch water service line.

Mrs. Crothers-Moore seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

## 2. Maryland Department of Housing and Development: Façade Grant Application Review

Chairman Dobbins reported that there were two Façade Grant Applications received to discuss this evening, however, one of the two applications received is not eligible as the property is not located within the incorporated limits of the Town of North East.

Mrs. Vennell read into the record the Letter to the Planning Commission dated August 12, 2025 regarding guidance of the Review and Awarding of Façade Grant Applications. (attached)

Mrs. Vennell reported that there was \$44,000.00 previously awarded out of a \$50,000.00 Grant the Town received. There is \$6,000.00 remaining that had not yet been awarded. The applications presented this evening included:

- 306 East Cecil Avenue, North East, Maryland:

Mrs. Crothers-Moore made a motion to disqualify the application for 306 East Cecil Avenue as the property was not located within the incorporated limits of the Town of North East. Ms. Duffy seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

- 24 South Main Street, North East, Maryland-currently known as North East Chocolates

The application for 24 South Main Street proposes repairs to the building and replacement of the front entrance door. Chairman Dobbins stated that the pictures do show a need for the work and commented that this is a great program.

Ms. Duffy made a motion to approve the Façade Grant Application for 24 South Main Street for 50% percent of the total cost of the proposed project. Mrs. Crothers-Moore seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

## **-REPORTS-**

### WaWa - 10 Lums Road

Mrs. Vennell reported that the Town is planning to annex two parcels of land, Parcel 181 which is located at the corner of Route 272 and Lums Road as well as Parcel 393 which is located at the corner of Marysville Road and Lums Road. Mrs. Vennell stated that Town's Code of Ordinance, Annexation Policy and Water Service Agreement require annexation if a property is contiguous with the Town Corporate limit the property

This summer the Town learned that Cecil County had started to review the Site Plan for a proposed WaWa on these two parcels when it was determined that the project would require the owner to receive public water from the Town of North East. The Town met the owners of the property to review the annexation procedure. The Town also met with David Dahlstrom,

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Maryland Department of Planning and David Beste, the Town's Attorney regarding the annexation and the appropriate zoning district to assign to the parcels. Existing Cecil County Zoning for Parcel 181 is Business General and Parcel 393 is Suburban Transitional. The Town doesn't have either of these zoning districts, so in order to assign a 'like zoning', the Town proposes: Parcel 181: "H-C" Highway Commercial. The Highway Commercial will permit Automobile Filling Station, per Article 6-23.

Parcel 393: "RM-C" Multi-Family Residential. Mrs. Vennell reported that the Town wrote the RM-C zoning regulations in 2008 to accommodate annexations. The Town utilized RM-C zoning for the Stoney Run Apartments annexation and the Riverwoods Apartments annexation. This zoning provided for multi-family along the Route 272 and Route 40 corridor, where the residents would have access to transit bus stops, goods and services within these corridors. After review of the RM-C regulations, it was determined that the Zoning Ordinance would need to be amended to further define the commercial aspect of the District Regulations. Mrs. Vennell reported a draft zoning amendment has been submitted to the Town Zoning Administrator and to the Town's Attorney. The regulations provide for the transition of residential to commercial uses, as well as protectives such as buffer yards between commercial uses and residential properties. Mrs. Vennell read a portion of the drafted RM-C revisions:

*"While existing land uses in the Town's Corporate limit provide for a variety of residential uses, it is the Town's intent to provide opportunities for Multifamily Residential-**Commercial** uses interspersed with commercial uses along the Route 272 and Route 40 corridor. Residents within the Multifamily **Residential-Commercial** district would benefit by the close proximity of **commercial** goods and services to the residents. These neighborhoods would provide and encourage multi-modal transportation opportunities, unique to the Route 272 and Route 40 corridor, as the road systems in these areas have been designed to handle traffic volumes, which can support the multi-family residential **units within this** district."*

Mrs. Vennell stated that because of the timeframe and not wanting to hold up this proposed project, the Planning Office would like to bring this amendment before the Planning Commission at the December 2, 2025 meeting. This is subject to the time line involved with a public hearing for zoning amendments.

Chairman Dobbins confirmed inquired this is the property on the opposite side of Route 272 from the Flying J Travel Center. Ms. Duffy inquired if the subject property was located north of the Holiday Inn Express and adjacent to Liquor World. Mrs. Vennell replied yes and reported that Chesapeake Resources abuts the subject property on two sides.

North East Retail Shopping Center

Mrs. Vennell reported that the developer for the North East Retail Shopping Center will be bringing their Concept Site Plan to the December 2, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting. A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) has been completed. The Town hired KCI Engineer to review the Traffic Impact Study, at the recommendation of ENEngineering. The State Highway Administration has reviewed the study and KCI has reviewed their comments, as well. Mrs. Vennell stated that the Planning Packages will include only the summary and conclusion of the TIS and not the full 245-page report, along with the KCI, and State Highway review letters. Mrs. Vennell reported that KCI has been invited to the December 2<sup>nd</sup> Planning Commission meeting to assist the Planning Commission, along with Mr. Mink will also be present. Mrs. Vennell reported that Concept Agency approvals are required at this stage, which will be included in the Planning Commission's package. Ms. Duffy inquired if there were any end users for the shopping center and Mrs. Vennell replied that the developers are in negotiations with some end users. Chairman Dobbins inquired if this was the forested property across from the North East Plaza Shopping Center. Mrs. Vennell replied yes and reported that the developer did receive a waiver from Cecil County regarding the trees, however, the property is located within the Highway Commercial Overlay District and the developer will be required to address the trees. Ms. Duffy inquired if there is an entrance proposed directly across of the North East Plaza Shopping Center entrance. Mrs. Vennell replied yes, this will be a four way traffic light. Mrs. Vennell reported that the Planning Commission should require a pedestrian crosswalk at that light, as well, due to the pedestrian traffic that is expected between Timberbrook, to this shopping center and over to the North East Plaza shopping center.

Comprehensive Plan Updates

Mrs. Vennell reported that additional revisions to the Comprehensive Plan are not ready for the December meeting, yet. Mrs. Vennell reported she has been working on amendments to the sensitive area chapter, which are hoped to be on the January Planning Commission Agenda. An open house is being discussed, however; it is too early to schedule at this time.

Pat's Pizza Alcoholic Beverage License

Mrs. Vennell reported that the owner of Pat's Pizza, North East, applied for an onsite and offsite premise alcoholic beverage license. Mrs. Vennell reported that off-premise is not permitted without the North East Board of Appeals approval and requested a revised application from the owner's attorney. A revised application was received for an onsite alcoholic beverage license. Mrs. Vennell reported that she approved this application, however, the application has not yet been heard by the Cecil County Liquor Board, therefore, is still not approved.



#### Planning Commission Contact Listing

Mrs. Vennell distributed a copy of the Planning Commission Contact Listing during the meeting. Chairman Dobbins reported that he no longer had the phone number on the listing. Chairman Dobbins stated that although the Planning Members can call one another, no more than two members can meet to discuss Planning agenda items, as that would constitute a meeting with quorum and the meeting would need to be advertised.

#### Maryland Planning Commissioners Association

Mrs. Vennell reported that the Maryland Planning Commissioners Association has scheduled a Regional Workshop in Elkton on November 12<sup>th</sup> and the invitation has been extended to the Planning Commission and Board of Appeals.

#### Comprehensive Plan Meetings

Mrs. Vennell reported that the Planning Commission determined that all Comprehensive Plan Meetings and Planning Commission meetings are to be conducted on the same meeting date. Mrs. Vennell expressed concern that if the Planning Commission had a full agenda at 7:00 p.m., then the Comprehensive Plan review follows the regular agenda items, it may be too late in the evening to review the Comprehensive Plan. Mrs. Vennell inquired if the Planning Commission would be open to review the Comprehensive Plan amendments at 5:00 pm or 5:30 pm, followed by the regular Planning Meeting at 7:00 p.m. Chairman Dobbins and the Planning Commission members agreed that reviewing the Comprehensive Plan items earlier would work if there was a full agenda for the regular Planning Commission.

#### Texas Roadhouse Restaurant

Mrs. Vennell reported that she was planning to attend the Technical Advisory Committee meeting at Cecil County November 6, 2025. Mrs. Vennell reported that the Texas Road House restaurant is proposed at the corner of Sycamore Drive and Route 40, adjacent to Pat's Pizza. Mrs. Vennell reported that they propose two entrances, one on Sycamore Drive and the other via Pat's Pizza property. The developer will most likely be bringing the Concept Site Plan to the Planning Commission sometime in January or February 2026. A traffic impact study has been performed on that project, as well.

#### North East Preserve

Ms. Duffy inquired about the status of the North East Preserve project. Mrs. Vennell reported that the Mayor, Town Administrator and Assistant Town Administrator will be presenting the North East Preserve during a State Highway Administration lunch this week. A grant application has been submitted to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

however, there has been no reply as of yet, which may be a result of the Federal Government shutdown. The Town did receive one grant for cleaning up the debris on the property which has not yet been scheduled.

Turner Park

Ms. Duffy inquired what the status was of the Turner Park renovations. Mrs. Vennell replied that the Town has applied for funding for the park, however, no response has been received, to date.

15 South Mauldin Avenue

Chairman Dobbins reported that the realtor's sales description of 15 South Mauldin Avenue states that the property is planning to be rezoned to "VC" Village Commercial. Mrs. Vennell replied that statement is inaccurate as at this point it is only a discussion. There is an open house which we request public comments, and two public hearings which will occur prior to voting on a rezoning. What the Steering Committee has outlined in the draft may, or may not be approved. Mrs. Rhoades will call the realtor to have the advertisement description corrected.

I-95 Belvedere Road Exit

Ms. Duffy inquired if there was an update on when the new I-95 exit ramp at Belvedere Road would be completed. Mrs. Vennell replied no, however, there may be an update after the State Highway Administrations meeting this week.

**-MISCELLANEOUS-**

None.

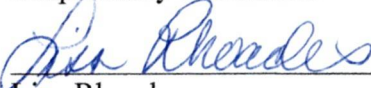
**-NEXT MEETING-**

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for December 2, 2025.


**-ADJOURNMENT-**

With no further business, Ms. Duffy made a motion to adjourn at 8:05 PM. Commissioner Crothers-Moore seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

Respectfully Submitted:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa Rhoades,  
Planning and Zoning Assistant

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Dobbins,  
Chairman

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