

NORTH EAST PLANNING COMMISSION
North East Town Hall Meeting Room
106 South Main Street, North East, Maryland 21901
Tuesday, December 2, 2025
7:00 P.M.

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

-MINUTES-

November 4, 2025 – Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Ms. Duffy made a motion to approve the November 4, 2025 Planning Commission meeting minutes, as presented. Mr. Evans seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all. Mr. Wilson abstained from voting as he did not attend this meeting.

-PUBLIC HEARING-

1. ORDINANCE: 2025-12-01: Amending Article 5, Part 1. Zoning Districts. Section 5-3A. "RM-C" Multi-Family residential District Regulations. Providing a more defined commercial component to this zoning district. Amending Article 7. Section 7-9. Permitted Signs.

Chairman Dobbins opened the Public Hearing at 7:01 P.M. and reported that the purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comment on the proposed Ordinance and for the Planning Commission to make a recommendation to the Mayor and Commissioners regarding the Ordinance.

Mrs. Vennell stated the original "RM-C" regulations were was created several years ago in response to a workforce housing project which was proposed to annex into the Town. At that time, the Planning Office was focusing on the wording in regards to the proposed apartment complex including the walkability to goods and services. At that time, only minimal language, for the commercial uses, was included in the regulations, as the concentration was on the residential annexation. Mrs. Vennell read the opening paragraph of the current "RM-C" regulation found in Article 5 Part 1. Zoning Districts, Section 5-3A "RM-C" Multi-Family District Regulations:

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 uses interspersed with commercial uses along the Route 272 and Route 40 corridor. Residents within the Multifamily residential district would benefit by the close proximity of goods and services to the residents. These

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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 district.

Mrs. Vennell explained that the proposed Ordinance amendment is to more clearly define the commercial component of this zoning district.

Mrs. Vennell reported that The Town requires annexation into the Town's Corporate Limit if a property outside the Town's Corporate Limit desires to receive water from the Town, and the property is contiguous with the Town's Corporate Limit. One of the subject parcels that is proposing to annex into the Town's Corporate Limit most closely resembles the Town's "RM-C" Zoning District. Mrs. Vennell reported that she and Mrs. Melissa Cook-MacKenzie, Zoning Administrator, have had several conversations and correspondences with the Town's Attorney, David Beste and David Dahlstrom, Maryland Department of Planning, as well as the Cecil County Department of Land Use and Development Services regarding the proposed annexation and zoning amendment.

Chairman Dobbins inquired if there were any questions from the Planning Commission if any members of the public signed up to speak concerning Ordinance 2025-12-01. Mrs. Vennell reported that no one signed up to speak concerning the Ordinance amendment.

Chairman Dobbins closed the Public Hearing at 7:05 P.M.

-OLD BUSINESS-

None.

-NEW BUSINESS-

1. North East Retail: Property Owner and Applicant: Stavros Kalaitzougou, Sye LLC, PO Box 1427, Elkton, Maryland. Also Found on Tax Map 25H; Parcel 412; Zoning District "HC" Highway Commercial and "HCOD" Highway Corridor Overlay District. For retail pad sites.
 - a. Concept Subdivision Plat
 - b. Concept Site Plan

Minor Subdivision Plat for North East Retail

Mr. Tim Miner, Frederick Ward Associates, came to represent the North East Retail project. Mr. Miner reported he is presenting a Concept Minor Subdivision and Concept Minor Site

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Plan for the purpose of building five pad sites for a shopping center. Mr. Miner stated that the property is a consists of 3 Parcels (Parcels: 94, 412, 433). The Subdivision Plat shows these parcels will be divided into 4 Lots: Lot 1 (3.09 acres) shall be for a Grocery Store (Aldi) who will come in with an independent Site Plan for Planning Commission review, Lot 2 (2.4 acres) is proposed to be a 10,000 square foot strip retail site with 6-10 store fronts, Lot 3 (1.22 acres) is a proposed restaurant, and Lot 4 (1.87 acres) is proposed as a Sheetz gas station.

Ms. Duffy inquired if each of the sites would be sold or are they going to be leased. Mr. Miner replied at this time they will all be leased to the end users.

Mr. Mink provided a letter to the Planning Commission dated November 19, 2025. Mr. Mink inquired if a front yard setback variance for Lot 2 would be applied for from Rogers Road. Mr. Miner replied yes. Mr. Miner stated his design is based on two front yards and two side yards due to the configuration of the property being surrounded on three sides by roads.

Concept Site Plan for North East Retail

Mrs. Vennell reported that the Zoning Ordinance outlines that the Planning Commission's review of a concept plan is less detailed and specific than a final site plan in terms of the exact arrangement of buildings, parking areas, access points and any other site design features. It is important that the Planning Commission provide comments to the Developer and their Engineer about what they would like to see at this site, and to review the Traffic Impact Study and provide comments in the early stages of project design.

Traffic Impact Study

Mrs. Vennell introduced John Borkowski, KCI Engineering, (attending via Zoom) to the applicant and the Planning Commission. Mrs. Vennell reported that KCI has been contracted to review the Traffic Impact Study for the Planning Commission.

Mr. Borkowski reported that he was brought onboard after the Traffic Impact Study scoping meeting had been held. Mr. Borkowski reported that Mrs. Vennell did share the information from the scoping meeting with him. The scoping letter provides the perimeters the traffic engineer will analyze for the site. Mr. Borkowski reported that in July 2025 he received the first version of the Traffic Impact Study, included in the package was a Concept Plan for the North East Retail dated August 21, 2024. Mr. Borkowski's first review letter, dated August 21st, 2025 summarized the Traffic Impact Study and included weekday and weekend peak periods, types of proposed uses, access points and a request for some additional clarification on some items.

Mr. Borkowski reported that Mrs. Vennell requested that the proposed Texas Roadhouse project also be included in the Traffic Impact Study review as this project is occurring at the same time. The consultant agreed to revise the Traffic Impact Study to included both projects.

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The revised Traffic Impact Study was submitted and included the same concept plans for both projects. Mr. Borkowski sent a send review letter dated October 2, 2025 which requested more clarification regarding the number of approximate vehicle trips for the retail use. The access entrances are in close proximity to some existing driveways along Route 40. Therefore, Mr. Borkowski suggested that Mrs. Vennell reach out to the State Highway Administration (SHA) for guidance to resolve any potential issues with the access point. Mr. Borkowski also suggested that the Town defer to the SHA on any site access point improvements at the intersection, which would be part of the SHA access permit for the site. Mr. Borkowski reported that KCI recommends approval of the revised Traffic Impact Study. Mrs. Vennell distributed a copy of the State Highway Administration approval letter to the Planning Commission, received earlier today, dated November 20, 2025.

Mr. Miner reported that there are two proposed access points to the shopping center, one off of Route 272 (directly across from the North East Plaza Shopping Center entrance) and the other one off of Route 40 (adjacent to the Sunoco Gas Station). Both entrances will have a right turn out and right turn in.

Mr. Miner reported that there is an easement already in place with the adjacent property, First National Bank of North East (also known as PNC) to build the driveway access for the Route 40 entrance and the recorded easement agreement will be noted on the site plan. Mr. Miner commented that landscape will be installed along both accesses to the site. However, the landscaping along the Route 40 access may be more limited due to the width of the easement. Mr. Miner reported that the recorded easement agreement with the bank does not define a width although the drawing attached to the easement agreement shows the intent and an approximate width of 50 feet. The bank property already has an access from Route 40, however, the access will be re-constructed to meet the current SHA standards. Mr. Miner commented that a temporary access permit will probably be required by the County.

Mrs. Vennell inquired what is the required width of the access off of Route 272 and asked if there would be adequate width for delivery trucks delivering goods to the site. Mr. Miner replied that the entrance would need to be a minimum of 30 feet wide. The proposed gas station and grocery store will have fairly large trucks coming to their sites and this was taken into consideration when designing the shopping center. Mr. Mink commented that he will review the width of both entrances during the Preliminary Site Plan review.

Mr. Mink inquired if there was sufficient stacking for vehicles exiting onto Route 272 and what improvements are proposed for the Route 272 intersection at the entrance to the shopping center. Mr. Miner replied that there is more than 170 feet set aside for vehicle stacking. Mr. Miner reported that they are still working with SHA on the re-design of the intersection at the Route 272 access. Mr. Miner commented that there is currently a turning lane on Route 272 which begins at Route 40 and extends to Timberbrook Drive. This existing turning lane could

potentially be turned into a turning lane for a right turn into the shopping center. There would still be a sufficient turning lane left for turning onto Timberbrook Drive. This will require further planning and discussion. Mr. Miner offered to come back to another Planning Commission meeting to share any updates from SHA. Planning Commission members discussed how confusing the intersection is currently and that this may be the time to clear up some of those issues. After some additional discussion, the Planning Commission determined that it would be very beneficial to have a workshop to discuss this intersection further. Mrs. Vennell also added that Mr. Borkowski may be able to attend a workshop as well to assist the Planning Commission.

Mr. Borkowski stated there will be a lot of improvement plans associated with this project: signal plans, reconstruction of the intersection, new signage and pedestrian plans. If there are any concerns the Town or Planning Commission has with the lane configuration or the traffic signal, among other items, these items should be raised directly with the SHA. Chairman Dobbins inquired what the SHA grade of the intersection is currently. Mr. Borkowski reported that the existing condition grade is an A. The projected future conditions grade after the proposed shopping center is constructed is an A/B.

Chairman Dobbins commented that he had concerns to whether the one access on Route 272 would be adequate for the shopping center. Ms. Duffy commented that the North East Plaza, which is significantly larger than the proposed shopping center, primarily has one main entrance and it seems to be sufficient to handle vehicular traffic. Chairman Dobbins concurred.

Ms. Duffy inquired how the vehicles would enter Sheetz Gas Station when entering from the Route 272 access. Mr. Miner replied that there will be an entrance to the Sheetz Gas Station shortly after turning into the Shopping Center on the right.

Sidewalks-Pedestrian Traffic

Chairman Dobbins inquired what the pedestrian movement plan was for the shopping center. Mr. Miner stated that two main components have determined the design for pedestrian traffic, the community directly behind the proposed shopping center and the North East Plaza Shopping Center. A crosswalk is proposed across Rogers Road at Timberbrook Drive to a sidewalk which will wrap around the end of the shopping center property and continue along Route 272, to a crosswalk at the Route 272 entrance, which will cross Route 272 to the North East Plaza entrance. In addition, a sidewalk is proposed from the Route 40 entrance to the shopping center. Ms. Duffy inquired if there was a sidewalk being installed behind the Sunoco which would connect the sidewalk along Route 272 to the sidewalk from Route 40. Mr. Miner replied that a sidewalk has not been proposed between the Sunoco and Sheetz. Mr. Miner commented that at some point in the future the Sunoco property may be re-developed and at

that time that developer will be required to install a sidewalk and that sidewalk would connect to the North East Shopping Centers sidewalk. Mr. Miner added that he would like to add the crosswalks nearer to the project for safety reasons, however, he will need to check with Cecil County, as Rogers Road and the North East Shopping Center are located outside of Town limits. Mrs. Vennell stated that a pedestrian signalized crosswalk from this site, across Route 272, to North East Plaza will be a requirement.

Mr. Evans inquired what were the plans for keeping individuals from climbing up the hillside along Rogers Road on to the shopping center site and what protective measures are proposed to keep children on the sidewalk as Route 272 is dangerous for pedestrians. Mr. Miner stated that there will be a Forest Conservation Area around the north end of the property and landscaping installed along the sidewalk. Mr. Miner stated that a fence could be installed on Lot 1 but that would need to be discussed with the Aldi developers.

Stormwater Management

Mr. Miner reported that the stormwater management system will be a combination of above ground facilities, in the form of micro bio-retention ponds, filtering boxes and underground tanks which will discharge stormwater into the existing Rogers Road public drain. Mr. Miner pointed out on the locations of the filtration boxes and micro bio- retention ponds of the Concept Site Plan. Mr. Mink inquired how the stormwater will be disbursed and is Lot 1 providing its own Stormwater Management. Mr. Miner stated that they will be providing stormwater management up to the grass noted on the site plan and a pipe to receive stormwater from Lot 1 which be gravity fed across the site to the stormwater pipes located on Rogers Road. Aldi will provide the balance of the Stormwater Requirements for Lot 1 during the site development of that Lot.

Mr. Mink inquired if any pervious paving will be installed on the site. Mr. Miner replied no that it requires too much maintenance.

Signage

Mr. Miner reported that they are still working on the location for signage and stated that he does not intend for any of the signs to be located within the SHA right away. Mr. Mink pointed out that on the Concept Plan one sign along Route 272 is located with the SHA right away. Mr. Miner replied that sign will be relocated.

Forest Conservation

Mr. Miner reported that they will be requesting to do a fee in lieu for some of the required forest conservation area as the property is too small to support the amount of Forest

Conservation required. Mrs. Vennell stated that the fee-in-lieu funds should be sent to the Town as this property is located within Town limits. Mr. Miner indicated he would look into the logistics of the fee-in-lieu being paid to the Town, with the understanding it would need to be utilized for landscape within the Town's Corporate Limit. Mrs. Vennell reported that the Town's Zoning Ordinance provides a fee-in-lieu provision.

Parking

Mr. Miner reported that there will be a shared parking agreement for all pad sites. Lot 1 will be 16 spaces short on the required number of parking spaces for the proposed use and Lot 2 will be 16 spaces over in the number of required parking spaces. Mrs. Vennell commented that a shared parking agreement will be required, and the agreement will be recorded, and outlined on the final subdivision plat/site plan. Mr. Miner concurred that the shared parking agreements should be recorded.

Mr. Miner inquired if there is any flexibility in the number of parking spaces that are between each of the parking islands. The regulation states 8 parking spaces between the islands, however, would it be possible to have more or less depending on the design and how the configuration works on the site. Mrs. Vennell stated that if there is a unique situation, the Planning Commission would need to see the design but there is not a waiver for less parking islands. Mr. Miner confirmed that he understands the parking islands are required and will meet the number of required parking islands per the number of parking spaces.

Trash Receptacles

Mr. Miner would like to also have a shared trash receptacle agreement between two of the lots. There is limited space on Lot 3 for a trash receptacle. Mrs. Vennell stated if the proposed use for Lot 3 is a restaurant a dumpster is needed. The Town has seen to many issues in the past during Code Enforcement inspections when there are insufficient trash receptacles. Mr. Miner said there may be sufficient room in the loading/unloading area for a small dumpster.

Public Water

Mr. Miner stated that Sheetz will have its own water connection and the remaining pad sites will share one connection to the water main and then private meters after the Town meter.

Mr. Wilson inquired where the gas pumps will be located and Chairman Dobbins inquired how many gas pumps there will be. Mr. Miner indicated that there will be 12 gas pumps located on the right-hand side when entering the shopping center from Route 272.

Ms. Duffy inquired if each pad site would be developed individually. Mr. Miner responded that the pad sites would be all created simultaneously including all of the utilities. Mr. Wilson inquired if there will be multiple transformers or just one main one. Mr. Miner stated that each structure will have its own transformer. Ms. Duffy inquired where the construction entrance is proposed. Mr. Miner stated that the construction entrance would most likely be located on Rogers Road as they will be doing considerable grading to the site. Mrs. Vennell inquired if a construction access permit will be required by the County since Rogers Road is a County road. Mr. Miner replied he is expecting that a temporary construction access permit will be required.

Chairman Dobbins inquired about the responses to Mr. Mink's comment letter dated November 19, 2025 (attached):

Mr. Miner reported the following responses to Mr. Mink's comments:

1. Site Plan and uses within the Highway Commercial District Regulations. Mr. Miner reported that he understood this comment, there is no objection and they will comply.
2. Landscape, buffer yards, site lighting and architectural plans are required and should be shown and labeled on the Preliminary Plans. Mr. Miner reported that he understood this comment, there is no objection and they will comply.
3. Final setbacks, impervious acreage limitations, environmental impacts, parcel lines for the existing three lots shall be extinguished and re-arranged into the new four lots meeting the minimum subdivision requirements within the Town of North East Zoning Ordinance. A record of the proposed sub-division plat is required at the time of the Final Site plan review. Mr. Miner reported that he understood this comment, there is no objection and they will comply.
4. Applicant shall note how the site is complying with the State of Maryland and Cecil County requirements for the Forest Conservation Act. Currently a special request has been submitted for a fee-in-lieu instead of retention on the site. The applicant shall submit a copy of the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan and provide a statement in the General Notes with an explanation of compliance. In addition, submittal of Forest Conservation plan to Cecil County and the county's comments shall be provided to the Town Planning Office prior to Final Approval. Mr. Miner reported that he understood this comment, there is no objection and they will comply.
5. Specimen Tree Survey shall be required. Identify existing trees and trees which will be removed on the property. Plan shall specify tree type and diameter. No tree over 8 inches in diameter shall be removed unless approved by the Planning Commission.

6. Mr. Miner reported that he understood this comment, there is no objection and they will comply.

Mr. Mink clarified that specimen trees are viable trees and inquired if the County had an issue with the proposed clearing. Mr. Miner reported that the property had been logged approximately 20 years ago and the County did not have an issue with the proposed clearing, however Mr. Miner stated he will go back and re-evaluate the all trees 8 inches and above. Mr. Miner has no objection to the comment and they will comply.

7. Cecil County Technical Advisory Committee comments shall all be addressed on the Preliminary Site Plan. Mr. Miner reported that he understood this comment, there is no objection and they will comply.
8. Concept Stormwater Management, Erosion & Sediment Control Plan have been approved by the county. If the county requires a change to the layout of the Concept Plan a new Concept Plan shall be brought before the Planning Commission. Mr. Miner reported that he understood this comment, there is no objection and they will comply. Mr. Miner added that the Erosion & Sediment Control plans were submitted October 23, 2025 to the County for signature.

Mr. Mink commented that he also included a list of general comments for the Preliminary Site Plan submittal. Mr. Miner thanked Mr. Mink for the additional guidance in preparation for the Preliminary Site Plan and he understands the comments, has no objection and will comply.

Chairman Dobbins inquired how many store fronts will the strip mall have. Mr. Miner stated that there could be anywhere from 6 to 10 depending on the end users, how much space they will need and parking capacity.

Name of Shopping Center

Mrs. Vennell commented that the name of the shopping center "North East Retail" should revisited and revised to reflect the maritime theme of the Town. The Planning Commission concurred that the word "Harbor" does not fit as the property as the property is not adjacent to water or a harbor and using "Gateway" in the name is more fitting. The Planning Commission will revisit this at the next Planning Commission Meeting.

Ms. Crystal Schlogel, 9 Mahogany Drive, North East was present from the public and inquired if there would be a permanent entrance off of Rogers Road, would there be a crosswalk across

Rogers Road and would there be any type of noise barrier. Mr. Miner replied that there will only be a temporary construction entrance on Rogers Road which will be removed at the end of construction. A crosswalk is proposed across Rogers Road to a sidewalk and there will be a 35-foot vegetation buffer along Rogers Road. Ms. Schlogel commented that she has spoken to the Timberbrook Homeowners Association about installing a sidewalk on Timberbrook Drive as you enter the development. Mrs. Vennell let Ms. Schlogel know that the Concept Site Plan is posted on the Towns website if Ms. Schlogel would like to print a copy to take to the next Homeowners Association meeting. The Planning Commission also commented that their intent is to make the whole area safer for pedestrians.

Ms. Duffy made a motion to approve the Concept Subdivision Plat and the Concept Site Plan for N.E. Retail, subject to the following conditions:

1. A Planning Commission workshop shall be held, after comments are received back from SHA and prior to the developer coming in for the Preliminary Site Plan, to discuss the Route 272 intersection and crosswalks/pedestrian walkways.
 2. Developer shall provide an enlarged version of the Route 272 access and intersection with the Preliminary Site Plan.
 3. Pedestrian Access shall be provided for Timberbrook residents.
 4. Tree Survey that includes all of the trees 8 inches and above, what trees will be removed, what trees will remain and the trees that a fee in lieu is being requested for. The Planning will vote on tree survey at the workshop.
 5. Mr. Chris Mink's comment letter dated November 19, 2025.
2. ORDINANCE: 2025-12-01: Recommendation to the Mayor and Commissioners.

Ms. Duffy made a motion to recommend ORDINANCE: 2025-12-01 to the Mayor and Commissioners for approval. Mr. Evans seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

-REPORTS-

April 2026 Planning Commission Meeting

Mrs. Vennell reported that she sent an email to the Planning Commission about rescheduling the April 2026 Planning Commission meeting to April 14, 2026. The Planning Commission approved the re-scheduling of the meeting.

Texas Roadhouse Restaurant

Mrs. Vennell reported that the Texas Roadhouse Concept Plan proposed at the corner of Sycamore Drive and Route 40, will be coming to the February 3, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting.

Annexation

Mrs. Vennell reported that the Town is working with the Attorney for the annexation of a proposed WAWA at 10 Lums Road. This project may be ready to come before the Planning Commission in February.

Walmart Gasoline Pump

Chairman Dobbins inquired if there is a proposed gas station at Walmart. Mrs. Vennell replied yes, however, that project is located outside of the incorporated limits of the Town. Mrs. Vennell added that a Traffic Impact Study for the proposed project was done and was approved by SHA and Cecil County with the current traffic configuration.

North East Comprehensive Plan Revisions and Refinements

Mrs. Vennell reported that there are several chapters to review at the January 6, 2026 Planning Commission meeting and inquired if the Planning Commission would like to meet at 6:00 P.M. instead of 7:00 P.M. The Planning Commission agreed to meet at 6:00 P.M.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

None.

-NEXT MEETING-


The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for January 6, 2026.

-ADJOURNMENT-

With no further business, Ms. Duffy made a motion to adjourn at 8:37 P.M. Mr. Evans seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

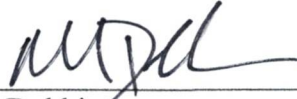
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Respectfully Submitted:



Lisa Rhoades,
Planning and Zoning Assistant

Attest:



Mark Dobbins,
Chairman

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