

MINUTES OF THE
November 15, 2007 Meeting of the
Easton Planning & Zoning Commission

Members Present: John Atwood, Chairman, and members, Steve Periconi, Dan Swann and Tom Moore.

Members Absent: Linda Cheezum

Staff Present: Tom Hamilton, Town Planner, Lynn Thomas, Long Ranger Planner, Zach Smith, Current Planner, and Stacie Rice, Planning Secretary.

Staff Absent: None.

Mr. Atwood called the meeting of the Planning & Zoning Commission to order at 1:00 p.m. The first order of business was the approval of the minutes of the Commission's meeting of October 18, 2007. Upon motion of Mr. Swann, seconded by Mr. Periconi, the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the October minutes.

The first item discussed was the **YMCA of Talbot County** requesting sketch site plan review for a 9,304 square foot two-story addition to the existing building. The property is located at 202 Peachblossom Road. The proposed addition is planned for the east side (Hayward Avenue side) of the existing YMCA. The addition is to be used for a multi purpose youth activity space, weight room, and meeting space. Proposed addition will be brick with cornices, windows and other details/ornamentation consistent with and appropriate for the existing building. Proposed landscaping for the parking lot meets the minimum standards. The plan also includes a bermed buffer feature between the YMCA parking lot and the residential properties to the south that front on Hughlett Street. Based on the Town's parking standards the proposed addition requires 32 parking spaces. The plan proposes 57 new parking spaces. Upon motion of Mr. Swann, seconded by Mr. Periconi the Commission voted 4-0 to approve the sketch site plan with an extension of the site plan for 3 years.

The next item discussed was **Marlboro Plaza** requesting Planned Unit Development review for a 19,052 square foot three-story office/retail building with basement. Mr. Bill Stagg, and Shelly Curry, Architect were representatives for the meeting. Mr. Stagg explained that the proposed site is located on the south side of Marlboro Avenue behind Blockbuster Video. The building is to be 3 stories with first floor as retail, second story offices, and the basement which will be used for underground storage. Proposed building would be brick accented with windows and an entrance feature. Access to the proposed building is to be via an existing entrance into Marlboro Plaza from Marlboro Avenue and across a private access easement across the Blockbuster Video lot. The Commission was slightly concerned with the parking arrangement for the site. Mr. Higley, owner of the Blockbuster store was concerned with construction vehicles coming through the Blockbuster Video parking lot to the building site. Mr. Whelen assured Mr. Higley that construction traffic will not come through the Blockbuster site. Upon motion of Mr. Moore, seconded by Mr. Swann, the Commission voted 4-0 to forward a favorable recommendation to the Town Council for the Marlboro Plaza PUD finding it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and waiving 70 parking spaces.

The next item discussed was Frank Saulsbury's project on **Thorogood Lane** requesting Planned Unit Development review for four residential units. Property is located on Thorogood Lane between Dover Street and South Lane. During the October Planning Commission meeting the Commission further reviewed the PUD site plan/subdivision application for 4 residential units on Thorogood Lane, just south of Dover Street. At that time the Commission generally supported the project but had yet to resolve some issues regarding underground utility lines, material for surface of the parking/maneuvering area, whether the 11 off street parking spaces are sufficient for the project, and whether or not the applicant should be required to contribute to the affordable housing fund as a condition of approval. The applicant has submitted a letters from Easton Utilities stating that the overhead lines in this instance should not be required to be relocated underground. The applicant is proposing to install decorative pavers at the entrance off Thorogood Lane. The surface material for the balance is not clear. They are now proposing 14 spaces on site (Option E) and demonstrate there are 7 on-street parking spaces along the property frontages on Dover and South Lane. It is still unclear to the staff what the applicant is considering in regards to a contribution to the affordable housing fund. After discussion of the proposed site plans the Commission upon motion of Mr. Periconi, seconded by Mr. Moore, the Commission voted 4-0 to send a favorable recommendation to the Town Council and approve the PRD site plan (Option E) conditioned on pavers at the entrances on Thorogood and South Lane, sidewalk pavers around the units, making a contribution to the affordable housing fund, and maintenance of all trees on site.

Mr. Thomas presented the latest recommendations of the Planned Redevelopment Subcommittee concerning possible changes to the map and text of the PR District. He stated that after his previous presentation, the Subcommittee was expanded to include representation from the residential neighborhoods of the area, as well as business interests in the PR District. He stated that the latest set of proposed changes is the result of that meeting. Mr. Thomas then described the proposed changes in more detail. With regard to the map, the subcommittee recommends the removal of three more blocks than were originally presented at the September meeting. They also suggest the addition of one area on Melfield Avenue that was not part of the considerations in September.

As for amendments to the text of the **PR regulations**, Mr. Thomas outlined four suggested changes. The first moved some existing text to another part of the Ordinance so that the administrative relief that is currently available to properties in the PR under certain circumstances would now be available to any property in Town with those same unique circumstances. The circumstances under which this flexibility might apply was also slightly expanded. The second change suggested was one that was submitted in September by the original PR Subcommittee. It limits the ability of property whose underlying zoning is residential to be used for non-residential purposes. The third proposed change is an attempt to close a loophole in the current review process whereby there is no prescribed process by which a request to demolish and redevelop a building might be reviewed. The final text change addressed Institutional Uses in the PR district.

Mr. Thomas concluded his presentation by noting that the Subcommittee also discussed two issues that were beyond the scope of what they could address at this time. One concerned the appropriateness of the underlying zoning of a number of parcels in the PR. The group felt that these areas should be examined closely during the next

Comprehensive Zoning Update. The other issue that the Subcommittee addressed was the fact that their recommendations reflected the state of the PR district as it is today. It will undoubtedly change and therefore, something like this exercise will be necessary again in the future. The Subcommittee believes that perhaps tying this examination to the Comprehensive Planning Update cycle might make the most sense.

Mr. Thomas then discussed potential amendments to the **Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations**. He stated that although the Town Council only recently approved the 2007 packet of amendments, it is time again to consider the next set of possible amendments. He had a list of eight potential Zoning Ordinance Amendments and one amendment to the Subdivision Regulations. He briefly described each to the Commission. He concluded by stating that if there were no objections to what he presented he would now prepare the amendments in Ordinance language format so that the Commission can act on them at the next meeting. He noted that one potential amendment would require additional discussion. That was the proposal to possibly rezone and/or create a new zoning district for some of the land in the I-1 zoning district. Mr. Thomas indicated that he would prepare something for further discussion at the next meeting on this topic as well.

The item from staff concerning **Temporary Use for Firework Sales**. Mr. Hamilton received a request for a temporary firework sale in the Walmart parking lot the Commission discussed the request and determined to deny the temporary use. Further discussion of the Commission instructed the planning staff to develop language which would prohibit this type of use in the Town of Easton.

Mr. Smith brought up an item from staff for St. Mark's Church. They would like to defer some the parking. They currently meet all parking requirements. The Commission was in favor the deferral.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m. by motion of Mr. Periconi, seconded by Mr. Swann.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacie S. Rice
Planning & Zoning Secretary