

**Board of Zoning Appeals
Town of Easton
Tuesday, May 13, 2014**

OPEN SESSION MINUTES

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Mr. Cotter called the regularly scheduled meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, May 13, 2014 in the Town Council Chambers in the Town Office Building.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the February 5th and April 15th minutes as prepared.

In attendance were:

Board of Zoning Appeals Members:	Peter Cotter, Chairman, Gary Molchan, and Doris Mason.
Staff:	Lynn Thomas, Zach Smith and Stacie Rice.

NEW BUSINESS:

BOZA Case No. V-730 & SE-760

Clayton Collison, property owner was present at the meeting for property located at 9358 Ocean Gateway Easton, MD. Mr. Collison is seeking a Variance to allow the erection of a free standing sign where such a sign is ordinarily not permitted. The property is located in the R-10A Zoning District. Mr. Collison explained he would like to install a free standing sign 2' x 1.6' sign for his business. Sign will be constructed on a sign post.

Mr. Collison addressed the criteria as set out in Section 1303.5 C provisions for granting a Variance.

Upon consideration of all the evidence and testimony presented at the meeting, Mr. Cotter made a motion to approve the Variance request. The motion was seconded by Mr. Molchan and carried on a 3-0 vote.

Mr. Collison is seeking a Special Exception to allow the operation of a "home occupation" from the subject property. Mr. Collison explained he has a canvas and upholstery business (*CW Canvas*). Business would be conducted out of the garage. He is the only employee and all storage will be in the garage. No outside storage. He stated that he does a lot of boat and car upholstery work.

Mr. Collison addressed the criteria as set out in Section 1303.5 B provisions for granting a Special Exception.

Upon consideration of all the evidence and testimony presented at the meeting, Mr. Cotter made a motion to approve the Special Exception request. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Mason and carried on a 3-0 vote.

BOZA Case No. SE-758

Talbot Interfaith Shelter, Inc. (the applicant) and their attorney, Michael Kopen, Esquire, were present at the meeting regarding property located at 107 Goldsborough Street Easton, MD. Talbot Interfaith Shelter is seeking a Special Exception to entitle the operation of a homeless shelter from the subject property. The property is located in the CR Zoning District. Members of the Talbot Interfaith Shelter spoke on how the current shelter operates.

Jack Harrald, President of Talbot Interfaith Shelter. He stated that Easton's Promise is an ideal location for the shelter. He stated that the appearance of the building will not be altered. No signage indicating that it is a shelter. He also stated there is no on-site parking. Current location has the fire sprinkler system. Other locations they looked at needed renovations prior to operating. During the evening they have one paid staff member and one volunteer. Residents don't typically have vehicles.

Julie Lowe, Executive Director of Talbot Interfaith Shelter. Ms. Lowe explained that the current shelter operates from December through April. They have been operating out of Churches who volunteer their facility. Due to the current facilities not having a sprinkler system they are only allowed to have 5 unrelated guests per night. She stated they have over 500 volunteers. Name, birthdate, Social Security number, and a background check is done on all guests that come to the shelter. An interview is conducted with the perspective guest. Drug testing and a breathalyzer are required. Guests are typically persons without work due to various different reasons and unable to keep a roof over their heads. There is an operations manager daily to help the guests. There is also one overnight supervisor and one paid staff person. Shelter is open from 5 p.m. to 7 a.m. Duration of stay depends on the guests circumstances. They are required to have a sprinkler system to accommodate more than 5 guests. Majority of their guests' walk so being downtown would be helpful for their daily needs. Future services would be counseling, main street housing. They plan to gradually expand their services.

Rabbi Peter Hyman, Temple Benai Israel, participant with Talbot Interfaith Shelter – Stated that it has been a very rewarding experience to help out with the shelter. Guests are unable to shower and have to visit the YMCA to do so. He stated that he sees guests that have been helped through TIS out in the community. No vandalism or other issues have occurred during the guests stay. He indicated that it is wonderful to help people in need in our community.

Bishop Joel Johnson, Sponsoring organization for TIS - Supervision is very friendly and supportive. Took a walk through downtown Easton and talked with downtown businesses about their feeling on the shelter.

Father Dr. William Ortt, Christ Church – TIS has been great to work with and the members of the congregation have enjoyed volunteering with TIS. The church has never had any issues with the shelter.

Mr. Cotter questioned Mr. Kopen about whether the other religious leaders in the audience would be testifying in a similar manner to Rabbi Human, Bishop Johnson and Father Ortt. Mr. Kopen proffered that the other religious leaders in the audience would give similar accounts to those that had already testified about their experience with the Talbot Interfaith Shelter.

Patty Diamond, Real Estate Appraiser, Midshore Appraisal, Easton, Maryland – She has been in the business for 24 years. She worked as a tax assessor for 8 years. She was born and raised in Easton. Based on her experience, she doesn't believe a homeless shelter would have an adverse effect on property values in the neighborhood. She has had experience with other group homes in a neighborhood, and there was no adverse effect.

Bill Quick, Vice President of Talbot Interfaith Shelter – He has experienced being homeless himself. He indicated that the shelter would have twenty four hour monitoring. There would be no drugs, alcohol, weapons on the property. He doesn't feel the parking or foot traffic would be any different than that of the current use of a B&B. He does not feel the use as a shelter will adversely affect the general welfare of the surrounding neighborhood. Talbot Interfaith Shelter will abide by the Historic District regulations. Mr. Quick went through the other special exception standards from the zoning ordinance and indicated that the shelter satisfied those standards.

The public was given an opportunity to speak on the proposed application. The following persons spoke at the public hearing: Harriett Claggett, JoAnne Vaughn, Deb Cavalier, Keith Camp, Jamie Ploff, Lorraine Claggett, Kevin Bateman, Jeanie Beasley, Drew Cuslow, Laura Bennett, Peter Howell, Barbara Freedman, Jill Ferrier, Nancy Trippe, Carla Howell, Kay Duersen, Anita Brighton, Randy Staats, Tom Stork, Evelyn Sedlack, Lynn Mielke, Eileen Deymier, Catherine Poe, Brynja Booth, Joan Collier Fogg, Bill Hall, Dee Tangeris, Mary Ann Schoeb, Mr. Tangeris.

Mr. Kopen in closing statements explained that the property is within the Historic District and will be maintained as such. He also stated that the community will benefit from the shelter being downtown.

Mr. Cotter stated that the Board needs time to review the evidence that has been provided at the hearing. The Commission voted unanimously to table the application until such a time that the Board can reconvene to deliberate and vote on the application.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:35 a.m.

Submitted by

Date