

Planning Commission Notes – April 6, 2021 – Submitted by Judd Vickers

The meeting of the Planning Commission was conducted via WebEx.

Support materials related to the meeting can be viewed at:

https://www.choosecambridge.com/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_04062021-909?packet=true

Old Business:

PZ 2020-010 Heron Point and Waterford Estates are long approved and platted subdivisions in the Jenkins Creek area, adjacent to the West Side Bypass, and located on both the north and south sides of MD343. Previous approvals stipulated that a clubhouse and community amenities be constructed at the beginning of any development. Given extensive up-front expenses related to improvements the developer must make to MD343, as well as the new West Side Bypass, the Planning Commission voted to defer the requirement that a clubhouse and relate amenities be built until a later phase of the project. The Planning Commission also approved the creation of new open space amenities, including a park area with picnic tables, as well as a dog park. Modifications to MD343 will no longer include a roundabout, but will feature bike lanes on both sides. The Planning Commission has encouraged the City Engineer to have further discussions with State Highway regarding the elimination of the roundabout, which was previously part of the Planning Commission’s approval, as well as potential traffic issues.

TA 2021-005 Mill Street School House, Discussion of Proposed Text Amendment Language. Previous efforts to amend the zoning to allow for dense development at the site have not been successful. HPC has identified the old schoolhouse as a building of historic significance and the Maryland Historic Trust has granted \$250,000 in tax credits to the owner to facilitate rehabilitation. The current proposal is now for 9 units in the existing building (no new structures). There would be two, two-bedroom units and seven, one-bedroom units. The MHT tax credit requires that the current owner maintain ownership for five years, therefore during that time the units would all be rental. Planning Commission discussion included requiring a requirement that at the end of the five-year grant period, the project *shall* be converted to for sale, owner occupied units. The remaining land would be subject to the overlay, but would still be required to be developed in accordance with underlying existing NC3 zoning. Essentially, the overlay will apply *only* to the schoolhouse building. Additional public hearings will be required.

New Business:

PZ 2021-009 Review and discussion of a proposed solar field on ten acres on MD343, adjacent to the power substation. MD343 is a Chesapeake Country scenic byway, and the UDC does not permit solar fields along scenic byways. The solar energy system would generate 2 megawatts and potentially support 400 homes, allowing residential users to subscribe to the energy

generated from this system, which may result in a lower energy bill. Applicant advocates that positioning next to an existing power substation, as well as providing vegetative screening, will not result in any additional deterioration of the viewshed along the byway. Potential solutions could be a new site plan locating the solar array further back on the property, away from the road and out of the viewshed.

Public Hearing:

PZ 2021-004 – Planning Commission approved a motion to Amend the Master Plan for the Residences at River Marsh (Hyatt Property) to allow 15 units per acre, subject to conditions, including a limitation on rental units and that development be compatible with adjacent condominium and townhouse developments. Additional requirements will include a height survey and ensure pedestrian access is maintained. This is related to previous requests to the RP2 parcel that is located immediately adjacent to the hotel.

Discussion Items:

Bank of America request for stand-alone ATM at the Shoal Creek Plaza (the plaza where Walgreen's is located). Planning Commission raised questions as to why an additional Bank of America ATM is needed so close to the existing Bank facility. There was an indication that the existing ATM (located in the Cambridge Marketplace) is highly used and there is demand. Bank of America to provide further clarification at future meeting.

American Legion Parking lot changes, informational purposes only – Shore Rivers working with American Legion to make improvements to the parking lot, landscaping and vegetative buffers.

Ocean Odyssey sign change request – signs are generally being lowered from the “pole” type sign, to “monument” style sign. Request is for Ocean Odyssey to reface existing pole sign, rather than replace with a monument style. Consensus by the Commission was this is more of a renovation of an existing sign, and potentially lowering the sign to monument style, given the building setback, would create a traffic hazard with cars existing the adjacent property.