

Planning Commission Notes – May 4, 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/_05042021-939?packet=true

Old Business:

PZ 2021-004 – Planning Commission approved accepting “Findings of Fact” prepared by City’s legal counsel, and sending the same to the City Council for further consideration. Essentially, the final recommendation permits up to 32 multi-family units on River Parcel 2, which is adjacent to the Hyatt hotel. Units must be developed in a manner consistent with the adjacent Willow Oaks Condominium (originally constructed by Beazer), and include the same constraints related to unit rentals. A revised Master Plan will be required.

PZ 2021-009 Planning Commission supported applicant moving forward with planning for a potential solar array on the south side of MD343; applicant has made significant efforts to buffer site from MD343 (scenic byway), and will work with Planning staff to finalize a landscaping/buffer plan. Next step will be to return to the Planning Commission with a preliminary plan, which would be considered as a Special Exception to be referred to Board of Appeals.

From 4/6/2021 Meeting: 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.

New Business:

PZ 2021-010 Planning Commission recommended sending a Special Exception to the Board of Appeals with a favorable recommendation to allow Anchor Point to move forward with the resumption of religious and community related activities at 902 Peachblossom Avenue. Anchor Point has purchased property, which formerly operated as the Church of Christ (before that it was historically the Immanuel Lutheran Church). Anchor Point has made restorations and improvements to the building and is requesting to resume religious and community based activities, as well as associated programs. Anchor Point might have small group bingo in this

location, and plans to maintain their bingo license. Bingo will not be conducted on a scale that was previously held by this same organization at the former Metro building (now the home of Tractor Supply).

Public Hearing:

TA 2021-005 Mill Street School House - Planning Commission intends to review additional information from surrounding community members and make discussed revisions to the proposed overlay before moving forward on any action related to the latest proposal to develop 9 units in the Mill Street School. The developer plans to create a condominium regime, and might eliminate the basement unit. A condominium regime in and of itself does not prohibit the units being rented.

From 4/6/2021 meeting: 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.

Discussion Items:

Continued discussion related to Bank of America request for stand-alone ATM at the Shoal Creek Plaza (the plaza where Walgreen's is located). At the last meeting, Planning Commission raised questions as to why an additional Bank of America ATM is needed so close to the existing Bank facility and asked that BOA provide further clarification. A BOA representative discussed that there was demand for another ATM at this location, based upon data the Bank collects from other ATM's in the area, usage, etc. Planning staff will work with applicant to approve project design.

Discussion of potential text amendment for corner lots with three sides (most problematic on Locust Street) to allow the zoning official to determine a reasonable location for the accessory structure. Currently setback requirements on three street frontages creates issues in placement of an accessory structure.

Discussion related to edibles and medical marijuana. Medical marijuana production facility would need to be able to rent a commercial kitchen in the City produce edibles at some point in the future. It could be considered processing and amendments to zoning might be required.