

Planning Commission Notes – July 5, 2022 – Submitted by Judd Vickers

The meeting of the Planning Commission was conducted in person and via WebEx.

Back up materials can be found at:

https://www.choosecambridge.com/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_07052022-1127?packet=true

New Business:

PZ 2023-001 – A representative from Marshall Craft Associates presented an initial concept plan for the proposed Maces Lane Community Center, which was the former Maces Lane School.

PZ 2023-002 – Concept plan related to the addition of one travel lift at Yacht Maintenance, which is part of the Cambridge working waterfront, that will allow for service of larger boats and provide for growth of the business. The Planning Commission expressed an interest in having renderings or other depictions created so the public will understand the size of the lift and not be surprised and/or alarmed once in place. Matt Leonard spoke from CWDI and indicated this type of marine development at Yacht Maintenance has been the consistent understanding by the City and fits with our marine heritage. CWDI believes the addition of the travel lift will mesh well with the redevelopment of the Sailwinds area.

Public Hearing:

TA 2022-007 – Planning Commission guided the zoning officer to provide a more specific public advertisement that indicated this would be a change to the downtown core area, adding Tattoo parlors as a permitted use downtown. Planning Commission still entertained public comment and the applicant spoke again advocating this change.

Discussion from the Jun 2022 PC Meeting: Potential small, boutique style Tattoo parlor proposed to be located at 533 Poplar, which is within the DWDD. A tattoo parlor is not currently a permitted use in this zone and the use was denied several years ago, based upon public comment at the time. The tattoo industry has potentially evolved into more of an artistic expression and public opinion might have changed. The Planning Commission recommended staff draft a Text Amendment that would add a tattoo parlor as a permitted use and provide opportunity for public comment. Applicant encouraged to obtain letters of support from surrounding businesses.

Ordinance 1197 – The Historic Preservation Commission requested this ordinance, which would require that any buyer be notified if the property is located within the boundaries of the Historic District Commission (this would include the West End area Historic District, as well as the Pine Street Historic District). A notification to the buyer would be required in the Contract/Agreement of Sale. It was recommended that this be included as a standard addendum to real estate contracts,

that the listing agent would be obligated to include. Planning Commission members suggested consideration might want to be given to including a penalty allowing the buyer to void the Contract if not properly informed. The City of Annapolis has a similar requirement. The Planning Commission recommended adopting the Ordinance, with a small administrative change.

Discussion:

201 Mill Street school – Davis Strategic Development has acquired the site and has proposed redevelopment. Proposal is for 8 residential units in the existing school building, which is now permitted under a zoning overlay approved in 2020. The overlay required a plan to transition the 8 units from rental to a condominium ownership type regime within 5 years. Davis' current proposal is that they remain rentals for at least 10 years, which is required due to tax credits. Davis was candid and indicated the square footage of the 8 units may not be ideal for a transition to a condominium regime and could realistically become higher end rental units for the longer term. Davis highlighted the advanced deterioration of the school building and if action is not taken soon, the building would likely need to be razed. Davis indicated project is reliant on tax credits, and without those credits, it would not be feasible to save the school building. An amendment to the overlay will be required to modify this requirement. Davis will make an additional request for 10 duplex units on the portion of the property not subject to the overlay. These 10 units can be permitted as a Special Exception, which will require a public hearing. Davis has chosen duplexes because they fit within the existing code, only requiring a Special Exception, rather than to pursue additional substantive changes to zoning. Duplex lot width will be approximately 30', similar to Choptank Avenue. Davis has renovated other historic properties on the Eastern Shore, including several in downtown Salisbury and Princess Anne. Davis emphasized this will be a market rate development and will not be part of any reduced rental program. Next step is preliminary concept plan.