

Planning Commission Notes – August 2, 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/_08022022-1130

New Business:

PZ 2023-002 – Planning Commission approved a preliminary concept plan related to the addition of one travel lift at Yacht Maintenance, which is part of the Cambridge working waterfront, which will allow for service of larger boats and provide for growth of the business. Pursuant to a request from the Planning Commission at the July meeting, the applicant provided renderings and depictions of how the travel lift will appear, which met with the approval of the Commission.

PZ 2023-003 & 004 – Initial concept plan presented for Mill Street School redevelopment project. The old school building, which is in an advanced state of deterioration, would be renovated and become 8 apartments, currently permitted under the zoning overlay. The overlay that was originally approved in 2020 affected only the school and the lot immediately around it. The apartment units will likely be longer term rentals and the overlay will need to be revised to remove the requirement that the property be converted to a condominium regime. Davis Group has committed that these units will be market rate, and the Planning Commission has indicated that somehow this commitment possibly be formalized in documentation. The vacant lot to the rear, not part of the overlay, would be developed into 10 duplex units (total of 5 buildings), accessed by a new street, which may remain private, or become a public street, to be determined. The duplex units would be offered for sale as owner-occupied residences. Sufficient off-street parking is proposed for both the apartment building, as well as the duplex units. Each duplex unit will have a garage on the first floor, living on the second, and bedrooms on the third, gabled floor. Layouts could change. It is also proposed that School Street be widened and become 2 ways between Choptank and Mill. Concerns were raised by neighbors as to traffic related issues, as well as drainage as there is considerable runoff between Mill and Choptank Avenues, which was the site of an historic creek area that drained into the Choptank River.

PZ 2023-005 – Concept plan presented for 200-208 Sunburst Highway (southeast corner of US50 and Maryland Avenue) for two buildings, containing three franchise type restaurants. Proposed restaurants are a Chipotle Grill, Mike's Subs and Smoothie. Prior consideration for this site was for a 7/11 and considerable concern was indicated regarding traffic issues and larger trucks accessing the property. Neighbors on Rambler Road raised continued concerns related to traffic and activity in the parking lots, suggesting a buffer fence along the residential area and better addressing the access to Maryland Avenue.

Public Hearing:

TA 2022-007 – Planning Commission approved text amendment to allow tattoo parlors in the downtown core area. There was much public input on both sides of the issue. The Planning Commission cited an evolution viewing tattoos as a form of art. The change was endorsed by the Chamber of Commerce.

Discussion from the July 2022 PC Meeting: 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.