

St. Michaels Planning Commission Workshop
St. Michaels Town Office
300 Mill Street
February 26, 2020
2:00 P.M.

Present: Planning Commission Chairman Jefferson Knapp and members Paulette Florio, Chris Thomas, and Carol Parlett, Town Manager Jean Weisman, Zoning Officer Kymberly Kudla, and Zoning Consultant Peter Johnston. Also present were Commissioners Dennis Glackin and Mike Bibb. Helen Herman was not in attendance.

1. Call to Order:

Chairman Knapp called the workshop to order at 2:00 p.m. in the meeting room of the Edgar M. Bosley, Jr. Municipal Building, 300 Mill Street, St. Michaels, Maryland.

II. Changes to Draft Zoning Code document

Chairman Knapp introduced Zachary Smith, attorney for the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum (the Museum), who gave a brief presentation regarding a proposed text amendment for the property located at 302 Dodson Avenue. Attorney Smith explained that the Tyler family had plans to close their business and had contacted the Museum about the possible sale of the land to the Museum. Attorney Smith said the property is zoned R1 and there is a legal non-conforming use there. Mr. Smith said the Museum's proposed use would be similar but not the same and that it would like to present a plan to the Town that a change from R1 to the PR Zone designation and a use change would allow the Museum to use the property as they envisioned. Mr. Smith presented two options to the members, along with a copy of the pertinent section of the revised Code. Mr. Smith said if the Planning Commission was to approve either of the options presented, it would allow the Museum to come forward with a plan. Commissioner Dennis Glackin asked what the Museum's primary intended use of the property would be. Mr. Smith said primarily storage for boat-building materials and temporary boat storage. Member Florio had concerns about boats and large vehicle traffic going up and down the road in a primarily residential neighborhood. Member Thomas questioned whether allowing additional uses would set a precedent. Chairman Knapp said he would like to see housing on that property, perhaps a nice infill project, which would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Chairman Knapp said the Commission could not control who the property is sold to, it could only control how it is used. Zoning Code Consultant Peter Johnston said the property is in a residential area, and the suggested use is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Johnston also noted that if the land is sold to the Museum, which is tax-exempt, the property would be eliminated from the tax rolls and thus there would be no return on investment for the Town.

After some additional discussion, the members decided not to entertain a proposal from the Museum.

Attorney Smith said that the one outstanding concern the Museum had was about parking and was requesting a one space per 500 s.f. GFA. Chairman Knapp said even with the current one

space per 300 s.f. GFA, the Planning Commission would have the latitude to issue a waiver during the review process if deemed appropriate. After some discussion, the members agreed to split the difference and relax the parking standard for Museums further, from one space per 300 s.f. GFA to one space per 400 s.f. GFA. Commissioner Glackin said he favored a separate parking standard for museums, and he was comfortable with the 1/400 change, as the difference was only about 17 spaces and that would make it easier to consider a future specific request. Chairman Knapp agreed, and Attorney Smith said the change was reasonable. Attorney Smith thanked the Commission for the change and departed the meeting.

The members then moved on to other Code changes deciding to add outdoor seating into the total square footage for determining parking and making changes for distillery parking and micro producers in general. The members also agreed to a change of definition for Museum to allow for certain additional activities supporting their mission (such as educational classes at the Motor Museum). The members also corrected and refined the signage category including changes suggested by the Town attorney, refined the definition of lot depth for uneven lines, re-titled the definition of “group domestic care home” to the state definition “group home.” The members discussed and eliminated the delineation between residential and nonresidential structures as “nonconforming structures,” but asked Peter Johnston to do some re-writing, as related to destruction and re-construction of a building.

IV. Matters from the Commission and Staff

Chairman Knapp said he would like the Planning Commission to become more proactive vs. reactive and suggested setting up a workshop once a month to look at such things as revisions to the Comprehensive Plan, a possible master plan, etc.

Commissioner Glackin suggested that an additional listening session for the re-write be scheduled at the Planning Commission’s March meeting, with a public hearing scheduled possibly in April. The members agreed, and said they only needed to see a synopsis of today’s changes, and Mrs. Weisman said today’s revisions, including those suggested at the last public listening session, would be posted on the Town’s website.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:17 p.m.

Minutes approved by 3-0 vote in favor on 23rd day of July, 2020

Jefferson Knapp, Chairman