

St. Michaels Planning Commission

St. Michaels Town Office

300 Mill Street

Virtual Session

November 2, 2021 - 1:00 P.M.

Present: Planning Commission Chairman Jefferson Knapp and Commission Members Carol Parlett Cynthia Allen, Chris Thomas and Helen Herman, Zoning Officer Kym Kudla, and Commissioners Aida Khalil and Tad duPont.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Knapp called the Planning Commission's remote workshop to order at 1:07 p.m. via Zoom.

II. Approval of Minutes

- October 19, 2021

Chairman Knapp asked if there were any comments or changes on the minutes of October 19, 2021. There were no changes. Member Carol Parlett made a motion to approve the minutes. Member Cynthia Allen seconded it and the motion passed on a voice roll call vote of 3-0.

III. Items for Discussion

- Contracted Trash Removal Proposal

Chairman Knapp said the Commissioners had asked the Planning Commission to review and make recommendations on the proposed plan to outsource the Town's trash removal, and Town Manager Jeff Rhodes had provided background notes on the proposal. Chairman Knapp said the Planning Commission should be looking at such projects to provide an additional perspective. Chairman Knapp suggested that if the business trash removal was taken out of the equation, it was possible that residents would not need to be charged extra for trash removal. Chairman Knapp said that large businesses would then make their own trash arrangements and smaller businesses could opt for a residential level of service. Member Parlett agreed that would be reasonable. Member Parlett added that the increase in residential cost for contracted trash removal exceeds the current offset in taxes for trash, which would adversely impact residents on a fixed income. Member Parlett and Member Chris Thomas agreed that having large businesses be responsible for their own trash removal was a good solution. Helen Herman suggested that the business be polled on the matter.

The members continued to discuss the trash issue with Commissioners Khalil and duPont present at the meeting. Commissioner duPont asked the Planning Commission to ask Jeff Rhodes and Republic Services to re-bid for trash and recycling for residents only, with businesses taken out of the equation and responsible for their own trash and recycling arrangements. Commissioner duPont also suggested that the re-bid include a separate cost for the business trash/recycling so both costs would be available for comparison purposes. Chairman Knapp and the members agreed. Chairman Knapp said once the new re-bids were received the Planning Commission could formulate recommendations for the Commissioners. Chairman Knapp said the Planning

Commission would have another discussion of the issue at their next meeting and he would approach Jeff Rhodes with the request for re-bid numbers.

- Site Plan Review – Gina’s Restaurant

Chairman Knapp said this issue was not discussed at the previous meeting due to lack of members. Ms. Kudla said she had asked Gina to put a plan together for her request to maintain the tent on her property. Ms. Kudla said she potentially does meet the lot coverage requirement. Ms. Kudla added that Arthur Webb of Awful Arthur’s restaurant would be submitting a similar request to maintain his tent in a couple of weeks and his request had already been approved by the Historic District Commission. Commissioner Kahlil had concerns about having too many permanent tents in the Town from a visual standpoint and as a potential hazard in poor weather. Chairman Knapp asked for comment from the members. Member Parlett noted that the tents were allowed originally to assist for businesses during Covid-19 but she did not want to see St. Michaels become a permanent “tent city.” Chairman Knapp agreed and suggested that the Commissioners to put a temporary 3-month or 6-month moratorium on approval of any permanent tent structures until a text amendment to the Code can be made. Member Chris Thomas suggested extending the temporary tents for a year based on the ongoing nature of the Covid-19 situation so that the Code can be clarified. Chairman Knapp agreed and the Commissioners should be consulted on the extension and have all parties look at the issue long-term. Chairman Knapp suggested continuing the discussion to the next meeting.

- Potential Code Changes – Kym Kudla

Zoning Officer Kudla said she had examined the Code on public parking lots and most of them were not permitted uses in the zones they are in, including the Fremont Street temporary lot which was in process. Ms. Kudla said the language was probably an oversight and a simple change to the Permitted Use Table was all that was necessary. Ms. Kudla said the change would require a text amendment and recommended getting on the Commissioners’ agenda for their November 10th meeting to approve it. The members agreed the oversight should be corrected as soon as possible. Following discussion with the members, Ms. Kudla said she would draft a text amendment to change the Permitted Use Table to allow permitted parking areas in all zones, except the residential zones where a special exception would be required.

- Rotary Club Interest in Nature Trail extension

Member Carol Parlett said Rotary would like to move forward with the trail extension but wants the Commissioners to pay for the engineering study which is in the range of \$5-8,000. Kym Kudla stated there are grants for the feasibility and design study.

- Talbot Street Welcome Center

Commissioner Aida Khalil said she was now taking the lead on this project. She said that the Business Association owns the building, and the Commissioners will be turning the insurance check over to them so they can decide what they want to do. Chairman Knapp said he volunteered his time to the Business Association to do drawings for them. Commissioner Khalil said she would pass that information on.

IV. Items from the Staff

Chairman Knapp responded to a question from Member Helen Herman about the playground equipment offered to the Town as a donation from St. Luke's Church. Commissioner Khalil said she would reach out to the Parks and Recreation Committee and Member Herman said she would do drawings.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:36pm.

Minutes approved by 3-0 vote in favor on 16th day of November, 2021.

Jefferson Knapp, Chairman