

St. Michaels Planning Commission

St. Michaels Town Office

300 Mill Street

In Person and Virtual Session

March 15, 2022 - 1:00 P.M.

Present: Planning Commission Chairman Jefferson Knapp and Members Chris Thomas, Helen Herman and Cynthia Allen, Zoning Officer Kym Kudla, and members of the public. Member John Novak joined the meeting late.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Knapp called the Planning Commission's remote regular meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. in the meeting room of the Edgar M. Bosley, Jr. Municipal Building, 300 Mill Street, St. Michaels, Maryland

II. Minutes

- March 1, 2022

The members had no issues with the draft minutes. Chairman Knapp called for a motion to approve the March 1st minutes as presented. Member Chris Thomas made the motion. Member Cynthia Allen seconded it and the motion passed on a voice vote of 4-0 in favor.

- Grants

Chairman Knapp said member Herman had been working on grants for extension of the nature trail to the ballfield, as well as a grant for a proposed sidewalk on the North side of Railroad Avenue. Member Herman provided an update on the grant for the feasibility study for trail extension. She noted that a letter of commitment for a match was needed from the Commissioners. Chairman Knapp asked Zoning Officer Kym Kudla to try to schedule time on an upcoming Commissioners' meeting for the Planning Commission to request the commitment letter. Chairman Knapp said the Planning Commission had received permission earlier this year from the Commissioners to go ahead with the grant applications and that he was working on the Railroad Avenue grant. Chairman Knapp then called for public comment. A resident of Railroad Avenue was concerned about losing a portion of his front yard to a public sidewalk. Chairman Knapp assured him that no one would be losing property as the sidewalk would be constructed in the right-of-way.

- Noise Ordinance.

Chairman Knapp said he would take public comment prior to the discussion to gather any views. Mike Estrella of E. Chew Avenue noted that notice of the noise ordinance being on this meetings' agenda was not received via email until 30 minutes before the meeting and that a later meeting would enable more members of the public to attend and participate in the discussion. Chairman Knapp said he would see that better notice was provided for the next discussion of the noise ordinance and would be held later in the day to accommodate residents who work.

Commissioner Michael Bibb explained that there had been some resident complaints about noise from loud music in town and that the Commissioners felt they needed to explore better solutions to noise pollution in town. Chairman Knapp then reviewed a summary of the important points of the ordinance. Member Thomas described the measurement of noise levels, the decibel limits based on time of day, and who is authorized to measure the noise levels. Chairman Knapp said the Planning Commission had been asked by the Commissioners to review the noise ordinance to see whether there was anything that needed adjustment. Chairman Knapp mentioned that the noise ordinance included guidelines for commercial contractors and that construction noise should be part of the dialogue. He then opened the discussion for public comment. Ron Wojokowski, of 315 E. Chestnut Street said he had lived in town near the water and near Foxy's for twenty years and thought that the noise ordinance had been generally effective and did not need to be changed. He added that the Town should determine the source and number of complaints and try to balance the needs of all the stakeholders in the Town. Nicole Giordano of 207 Brooks Lane agreed with Mr. Wojokowski, asking if the complaints come from the same people repeatedly and how many complaints there are in any given time period. A resident of Locust Street said the ordinance was working and that no evidence of complaints had been provided. The resident said he could hear music from multiple locations around town and that the greatest noise was from heavy equipment. Walda duPriest Brandt of 111 Mulberry Street said the noise was a problem for her and her neighbors in recent years from events and from restaurants. Jaime Windon of S. Talbot Street said the ordinance is adequate and the key is enforcement. Captain Oswald of the Police Department said the officers preferred a common-sense approach in a small town such as St. Michaels and would rather deal with offenders individually, whom he found were generally willing to comply with a request to "turn it down."

Member Novak suggested that the ordinance should be issued on constant contact so that everyone can read it and participate at the next meeting. Ms. Kudla said the next meeting dealing with the noise ordinance would be April 5th at 6:00 p.m. both live and via zoom.

The members listened to additional public comments.

III. Adjournment

Chairman Knapp adjourned the meeting at 2:15 p.m.

Minutes approved by 4:0 vote in favor on 19th day of April, 2022.

Jefferson Knapp, Chairman