

Commissioners of Ridgely

Public Hearing Ordinance #302 April 2, 2007

A Public Hearing was held on the above date in the Town Office at 7:00 pm. Linda Jo Epperly-Glover, President; Nancy S. Gearhart, Commissioner; Chuck Hunter, Commissioner; Joe Mangini, Town Manager; Merl Evans, Police Chief; Robin Eaton, Director of Public Works; David Crist, Supt. of Water/Wastewater; and Carol Balderson, Town Clerk; were present. A sign in sheet is attached.

Joe read Ord. #302 (copy attached). The ordinance was introduced and is supported by the Planning Commission. He said it was requested by Mr. Brodie of Hill Management who has purchased the property between Quality Car Care and the Ridgely Cemetery and is proposing to build a 5-unit shopping center. He requested a drive-in capability to entice a Dunkin' Donuts into the area. He has done work in Chestertown, Centreville, and Denton and is highly regarded.

Joe reported that it is up to the Commissioners for a Public Hearing. The property has been properly posted and advertised. Abutting property owners have also been notified. Joe read the recommendation of the Planning Commission into the record. They voted at their regular meeting on March 28, 2007 to recommend Ord. #302 with an amendment to add the South Planning District in the south, and the Sunrise Ave. Planning District which includes the Highway Commercial C-2 Zone as part of the Design Guidelines, Section 15.7 of the Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Ridgely. This ordinance is also supported by the Town Administration.

Public comments pro or con.

Elsie Ebling asked if there would be a buffer between the cemetery and the new facility. Joe reported that he did not know.

Marion Jones asked if the road next to the property is a town road.

It is.

Marie Jarrell said she is a member of the Ridgely Cemetery Association and is opposed to this type of business being located next to the cemetery; not appropriate. Commented on the noise from drive-in speakers when there is a funeral, and asked who would take care of the trash from this establishment. She said she was aware of Mr. Brodie's other establishments and doesn't think they are well cared for.

Mrs. Jarrell also said there are 5 businesses in town already that sell subs. Do you want a new business to hurt them, or put them out of business?

Joe responded that the ordinance proposed tonight is strictly for drive-in. The zoning is commercial; a shopping center is legal to go there. The issue tonight is drive-in.

Nettie Mae Goad said she is also a member of the Cemetery Association and agrees with Marie. Wants some kind of buffer between the cemetery and the business; some trees or a nice fence.

Cathy Schwab asked if the design could be arranged so that the drive-in is away from the cemetery.

Joe said the individual has to come to the Planning Commission for site plan approval. Prior to that meeting he will have the staff notify the Cemetery Association so that they can come and talk with Mr. Brodie and the Planning Commission about their concerns. Mary Donoway said she and her husband own property in Greenridge that butts up to that one. Complained about the trash and music from the bar. Now will have to put up with lights around the building, drive-thru window, teenage kids with boom boom music blairing? Her husband gets up at 3 am. Not picking up everybody's trash. They have lived there for 8 years, and now are concerned about people cutting through their property to go get a sub.

Joe mentioned some kind of buffer there too.

Mrs. Jarrell said the cemetery needs a parking lot. That would be a good use.

Kevin Barnes, owner of Caroline Boating Center, said he is not for or against but has some comments. He was aware when he decided to put his business here that drive-thrus were not allowed and thought that was good. Asked about the history of not having it in the Zoning Ordinance before.

Joe said he did not know why it wasn't in there.

Commissioner Gearhart said she didn't know how they could change a drive-thru because it has to be on the driver's side.

Joe said these concerns need to be addressed by the Planning Commission.

Mrs. Jarrell asked what else he planned to put in there.

Joe reported a Subway. An Italian restaurant and a dry cleaners were talked about.

Joe said he believes the integrity of the cemetery should be protected.

Chuck Walls, part owner of Ridgely Pharmacy, asked about the location of the Highway Commercial Zone, and questioned that the Zoning Ordinance disallowed drive-ins so there wouldn't be McDonald's, etc.

Joe said the Highway Commercial Zone is only on 480.

Commissioner Hunter said there was concern about alcohol sales, not food.

Mr. Walls asked if this would be opening the town up for other fast food establishments.

Mrs. Jarrell said she did not know of another town with a drive-in establishment like that next to a cemetery.

Commissioner Gearhart said she would encourage the Planning Commission to put into place a requirement for sidewalk/bike path.

Joe reported the Commission President will close the Public Hearing. This ordinance is on the agenda tonight for consideration. The Commissioners can approve it, disapprove it, or defer it to the next meeting.

Mr. Barnes asked if the property had been purchased.

Joe replied yes.

President Epperly-Glover thanked everyone for their comments and closed the Public Hearing at 7:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Balderson, Clerk

