

## **Minutes of the January 23, 2008 Planning Commission**

Meeting called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Chairman Toby Gearhart. Planning Commission members Martin Sokolich, Mickey Newport, and Jeff Garrett were present. The following were also in attendance: Joe Mangini, Town Manager; Nancy Gearhart, Town Commissioner; Missy Vanskiver, Asst. Clerk; John Balderson, Medifast Distribution; Jill Kubatko, Times Record; Kip Koch; Shane Johnston; Mark Kottwitz; Todd Elliott; and Arlene Hege.

Toby said that even though it is not on the agenda, each January the first order of business is the election of officers. Mickey nominated Toby as President (Chairman), seconded by Martin. Mickey nominated Martin as Vice-President (Vice-Chairman), seconded by Jeff. Both motions were unanimously approved.

### **Approval of the Minutes**

Toby had a question regarding the December minutes. Toby said he had emailed Martin about it and asked Martin if his statement was to approve the November minutes with the addendum; Martin said yes. Missy said that wasn't the way it was stated on the tape, but if that is what they want, that change would be made. Martin offered revisions to the 'Old Business, Brodie Shopping Center' portion of the December minutes and there was some discussion concerning those changes. A motion to approve the December minutes as amended was made by Jeff, seconded by Mickey, unanimously approved.

### **Town Manager's Report**

Joe stated that there were only two building permit applications this past month. He also reviewed the WWTP Capacity Management Plan.

Development Projects – The Weese townhome project, Ridgely Park, Ridgeway Estates, Walnut Farms and 128 Walnut St are on currently on hold, pending the outcome of the MDE situation. Joe also provided an update on the status of Ali's Cove (Cow Barn project). Joe also said that Caroline County is still dealing with issues concerning the water storage tank, more specifically wetlands issues, and the tank may have to be relocated again.

Rails to Trails – Joe said the project is up and running. Pace Design, of Sudlersville, is the consultant. The town will utilize the grant funds presently obtained and build as much of the trail as possible. A schematic design of the trail should be available in about a month for review by the Rails to Trails committee.

Public Safety Building – Within the next 30 days, if not by March, the town will advertise a Request for Proposals for a feasibility study. The town is in the process of scheduling a meeting with the fire department's building committee.

### **Economic Development Projects**

Business Technology Park – Although there have been delays, mostly related to the weather; Joe believes the infrastructure should be completed within 30-45 days. Joe also said that per the Tech Park's marketing director, an international company interested in the park is to be visiting that site within the near future.

Brodie Industrial Building – Mr. Brodie is still working on the industrial building on N. Maple Avenue. They are still waiting on information/approval from the fire marshal before the day care center can be included in that building.

Musselman Building – There has been interest in the Musselman building on Bell Street, but no details were available at this time.

Joe stated that the town will be a meeting with MDE on January 25<sup>th</sup>. Apparently the issue of the I&I doesn't appear to be as big of an issue as it was initially discussed. URS has admitted that the study was flawed and has agreed to redo the study. Of the existing I&I issues, two were the town's responsibility to correct, and the rest (approx. 20) were issues to be addressed by property owners. Robin Eaton, Director of Public Works, hand delivered to MDE last week the construction permit application for the upgrade of the spray fields. The only remaining issue seems to be Capacity Management Plan, which will be discussed at the January 25<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Joe also stated that the Ali's Cove project is no longer happening, and also there is a 'for sale' sign on the Ridgeway Estates property. Joe is afraid that if something positive doesn't come out of the meeting with MDE the town could very well lose all pending development projects. He said the entire MDE issue has set the town back about two years, and has cost the town a considerable amount. Joe said that not only has this delay cost the town, it has cost other involved parties. There would have already been houses built in Ridgeway Estates; they have been ready to proceed since July.

### **New Business**

Due to the anticipated length of the discussion concerning items under Old Business, New Business was first addressed.

Building Permit Application/201 E. First Street – Kip Koch presented a building permit application for a detached garage at his residence. After some discussion, a motion to approve the permit application was made by Martin, seconded by Mickey, unanimously approved.

Demolition Permit & Minor Subdivision Application/208 Caroline Avenue – Todd Elliott presented an application for demolition of the existing structure at 208 Caroline Avenue. A letter from a building inspector was presented to the Planning Commission, as was a new drawing indicating a style similar to the proposed new construction. A motion to approve the demolition permit application was made by Martin, seconded by Jeff, unanimously approved.

There was some discussion concerning the proposed houses and their location on the lots. Martin asked if the driveways would be in the front; Mr. Elliott said the entrance would be from the alley, as he believes are most of the houses in that area. Jeff asked about the lot sizes. There was some discussion and a motion for preliminary approval of the subdivision was made by Jeff, seconded by Mickey, unanimously approved.

Building Permit/601 Sunrise Avenue – John Balderson and Mark Kottwitz presented a building permit application for a sign at Medifast Distribution. There was discussion about the sign design and the location. A motion to approve the building permit was made by Mickey, seconded by Martin, unanimously approved. Mark Kottwitz asked about Gemini letters across the front of the building and if a building permit would be required for those letters. A building permit is required for that type of work.

## **Old Business**

County Master Water/Sewer Plan and Ridgely Comprehensive Plan - Shane Johnston referred to the memos he had previously sent regarding the amendment to the County Master Water/Sewer Plan and the town's Comprehensive Plan/Water Resources Element. One memo was the results of Ridgely's SWOT's (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). The other was a water and sewer analysis. Shane reviewed that memo with the Planning Commission, citing the strategic recommendations for the town, which included: updating the URS report for the town's sewer facilities, completing the Comprehensive Plan, considering the annexation of the WWTP, initiating discussion with Caroline Co. and Environmental Health, requesting an amendment to the Caroline County Comprehensive Water & Sewerage Plan to include Ridgely Park, developing a detailed Capital Improvement Plan, and providing for appropriate Environmental Health forms. There was discussion concerning the recommendations. A work session to work on the Municipal Growth Element and Comprehensive Plan was scheduled for February 20<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.

## **Roundtable Discussion**

Ali's Cove Development/Redevelopment Possibilities – Toby stated that there is a Planned Unit Development Floating Overlay in that area. Joe stated that if anything changes in that area, the zoning reverts back to the original minimum of 20,000 sq. ft. lots. Joe also said that the Planning Commission is in a very favorable position as to what projects would be permitted in that area. There was some discussion about this zone and also about commercial zoning/uses. Martin stated that this would be a useful conversation to have with the town's Economic Development Commission. Joe stated that the town has applied for grants for a revolving loan fund and a strategic economic development revitalization study.

There was discussion concerning 106 W. Railroad Street and the owner's request for assistance to find a commercial use or if a special exception to allow apartments was a possibility. There was further discussion concerning the C-2 and other commercial zones. There was also discussion concerning the status of 207 Park Avenue. Joe said he would try to have more information concerning that property available by the next meeting.

## **Adjournment**

At 8:25 a motion to adjourn was made by Mickey, seconded by Jeff.

Respectfully Submitted,

Missy Vanskiver  
Asst. Clerk