

Ridgely Planning Commission
July 28, 2010
Meeting Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Martin Sokolich. Planning Commission members Nancy Gearhart and Leo Stepp were present as were Commissioner Anthony Casey and Planning and Zoning Administrator Robin Eaton. Several people from Medifast and Pop Warner Football were also present, including: John Balderson, Herman Dunst. Also present were John Mungai, John Murphy and Tracy Catheart.

Approval of Minutes

There was a motion by Nancy to approve the minutes for the July 26, 2010 meeting. Leo 2nd the motion, unanimous approval.

Because there was such a crowd for this meeting, Martin said that we would go to New Business first.

New Business

101 Central Avenue Gibson - Quality Nursing Agency. They are a skilled nursing and medical supply company that provides in-home care to clients. They are based out of Edgewood, MD and they want to set up a satellite office in Ridgely. The space would be used for office work/clerical & administrative. The space would be leased and nobody will be living there.

Martin said that it is zoned C-2 Central Business District and office space is a permitted use, and inquired about parking. Quality Nursing said there would only be one employee and occasionally there will be other employees dropping off time sheets or other paperwork. They go to see the potential clients, so there would not be any traffic from prospective clients. There are no plans to put a sign on the building.

Nancy motioned to approve renting the space at 101 Central Avenue to the Quality Nursing Agency. Leo 2nd. Unanimous approval.

Medifast/Pop Warner football field. Medifast wants to utilize their open field for a Pop Warner football field with electricity, lights, signs (for all sponsors involved), scoreboard and concession stand. John Murphy from Pop Warner football spoke about their need to find a permanent home. They approached Medifast and it will be a joint partnership between the Caroline Cougars and Medifast. John showed the drawing of the proposed field which would be adjacent to 480. It will include a practice field that accommodates several teams. They have donated lights and trenching with joint sponsors. The season would run from August 1(practice begins) through the end of October, possibly into November if the team were to make the playoffs. The field would be used Monday – Thursday 6-8:30pm for practices and Saturdays (when it is a home game) from about 8am to about 5pm. There are over 200 kids in the program with 5 teams and 4 cheer squads.

Martin said that it would need a little work, some grading, leveling and aerating/seeding. Pop Warner will maintain the lines.

Nancy asked if they had considered the Cowbarn area? John Murphy said yes, but the got nowhere. It would need to be resurveyed which would cost between 30-35K. Nancy asked if it would only be used during football season? Medifast said it could possibly used for lacrosse in the spring, but for now just football. Leo asked about parking? John said that Medifast has agreed to let them use their lot so there would be plenty of parking.

Martin said that this is a complicated proposal because of the following:

1. Sign specifications (size & lights) we need a sketch and the approximate location.
2. Change of use would need to be advertised to let people who live nearby know.
3. Recreational use in an industrial zone.
4. Concession stand and lighting. This would need to be in writing and would need a building permit from Ridgely based on square footage and possibly a county building permit.

It is a good deal, but needs to be looked at in more detail.

Medifast and Pop Warner are anxious to get started because they want to have it ready for the games in September.

Martin said that there is nothing in the ordinance that anticipates this in an Industrial Zone. He does not see a conflict. Commissioner Anthony Casey indicated that he would like to get the ball rolling quickly on this project, as it would be good for the town.

Leo motioned that due to the timing a motion be made to allow for the practice field & game field only. The lights, sign & outbuilding applications would have to follow and be dealt with another meeting. Nancy 2nd. Unanimous approval.

401 Maple Avenue Owner Jeffery Davis, Fence. Owners want to put a privacy fence on a corner of the yard and split rail around the rest of the yard to protect their children from the registered sex offender that lives across the street. She owns a daycare and the neighbor sits in his front yard all day and says inappropriate things to the children. Her customers are worried and want her to do something about the situation.

Martin: It is a 50' x 180' lot that has a front and side setback of 25'. From the corner of the curb measure at an angle and come 20' in. The post cannot be closer than 20'.

Davis: Electric runs from the corner into the yard.

Robin: Robin asked them to come tonight because it is a strange yard & he is unsure how to proceed. The address is 401 Maple, but it faces 4th Street.

Nancy: On a corner lot the side is also considered to be the front.

Martin: Is this really going to help the situation?

Davis: This will help give privacy to her children and to the daycare children as well as some peace of mind.

Martin: Spoke with Chief Foster about neighbor. He had a 2002 offence and went to jail and was on probation. He is done, but on the registry for life. Chief Foster is not aware of any complaints. Martin understands that the fence will give some peace of mind.

Davis: Some type of fence needs to go up because of the stop sign and regulations for a licensed daycare.

Martin: The property cannot meet any setbacks according to the ordinance and asked for suggestions.

Nancy: if it is not in the zoning ordinance we cannot approve it.

Martin: Correct and it would have to go to the board of appeals. It is zoned R-1 and except for accessory structures, minimum side yard requirement shall be 3 feet, but perhaps if it was just on the corner with 2 8 ft sections and used as a decorative fence and then split rail fence the rest of the yard. A discussion followed.

Nancy motioned to approve a stockade fence from the house corner to the sidewalk and then split rail fence 2' off sidewalk to corner & perpendicular to existing splitrail. Martin 2nd. Unanimous approval.

Old Business

Cowbarn: Martin has not heard a word on the Cowbarn from Archie Carroll, Anne Ogletree or Jack Hall. Archie is anxious and Martin hopes they have enough to work with.

Reports

Robin Eaton reported that we had 2 permits issued one for a deck and one for porch repair. He is making his way through the zoning books every chance he gets.

Commission Roundtable Discussion

Martin would like to redo the zoning ordinance. Diane is looking for grants that would help with this. Tonight's new business has given us some good ideas for new rules. He will enjoy the new comprehensive plans.

Anthony inquired about regulations for the signs for Medifast/Pop Warner.

Martin said that they are in the design guidelines. In zone I-1 they may have a 150 square foot illuminated sign under section 18 in the zoning ordinance.

Robin asked about the rules regarding PODS. How long can they be there and if they need a permit?

Martin: every planning district has allowed accessory uses – rolloff, contractor's trailers for temporary use. We need a non-feasible permit for a paper trail.

Leo motioned that the meeting be adjourned, Martin 2nd. The meeting was adjourned at 8:49pm.