

**MINUTES OF THE ST. MARY'S COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
CHESAPEAKE BUILDING * LEONARDTOWN, MARYLAND
Tuesday, October 12, 2010**

Members present were Brandon Hayden, Chairman; Shelby Guazzo, Joe Meinert, Merl Evans, and Martin Siebert. Members excused were Susan McNeill and Lawrence Chase. Department of Land Use & Growth Management (LUGM) staff present were Phil Shire, Deputy Director; Bob Bowles, Planner IV; Dave Berry, Planner II; and Jada Stuckert, Recording Secretary. Deputy County Attorney David Weiskopf was also present.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – The minutes of September 13, 2010 and September 27, 2010 were approved as presented.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

CCSP #10-132-004 – Admirals Landing Townhouses

Mr. Berry gave an overview of the request for a 37 townhouse units stating the final findings for adequate public facilities will be made administratively by the Planning Director, as a prerequisite to final site plan approval. Mr. Berry stated this project is in fact 400 to 500 feet away from the AICUZ, adequate parking is available, and the tot lot will be moved above the bio-retention area.

Mr. Meinert congratulated staff on a good staff report. Mr. Meinert stated in looking at the aerial photograph he noticed the Queen Anne apartments and asked if access could be provided for a sidewalk connection to the library. Mr. Berry stated we have not considered this at this time.

Mr. Siebert asked what is the degraded area that is being improved. Mr. Berry stated the woods in this area have been used as a “dumping ground”. Mr. Berry stated the development of this property and other future projects will help to revitalize this area. Mr. Evans stated the development of this lot will help improve the area. Mr. Evans stated the passage way has a steep slope and should be carefully considered. Mr. Berry stated the developer has worked diligently with staff to ensure this project meets the standards.

Ms. Guazzo asked for an example as to what the bio-retention areas will look like. Mr. Berry stated they are supposed to be landscaped open areas. Ms. Guazzo asked what the density is for residential in the DMX zone. Mr. Berry stated it would be 20 by right as this is under the 2001 Ordinance.

Mr. Butch Bailey stated the bio-retention areas are basically a sand filter which is one foot in depth and is landscaped over the top. Ms. Guazzo stated the entrance way which is a two lane road looks narrow. Mr. Bailey stated DPW has approved this plan. Ms. Guazzo stated we have seen that these townhouse units will hold their value. Ms. Guazzo stated she like the option of brick on the townhouses however there should be an in between of masonry block.

Mr. Meinert asked who the developer is for this project. Mr. Bailey stated it is Michael Gallatin, LLC out of Annapolis. Mr. Meinert stated making it a requirement that highly visible units have a brick façade on the side elevations which would be more in line with the County Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Meinert also recommended adding architectural elements such as windows on all the side elevations.

Mr. Meinert stated this is an opportunity for the Commission to improve the visual qualities of buildings. Mr. Meinert recommended requiring the side elevations to have brick and architectural elements in the approval of this project.

Mr. Siebert made a motion in the matter of CCSP #10-132-004, Admiral's Landing Townhomes, having accepted the staff report and having made a finding that the objectives of Section 60.5.4 of the zoning ordinance have been met, and noting that the referenced project has met all requirements for concept approval, I move that the concept site plan be approved and Mr. Evans seconded.

Ms. Guazzo stated she will be voting against this project as it is the same old, cheap looking project we see every day and should be trying to steer clear of. Ms. Guazzo stated she agrees with Mr. Meinert's opinion and she feels a few improvements to the drive-by quality of this development is not asking too much. Mr. Evans stated he does not necessarily disagree with Ms. Guazzo however the affordability of these homes becomes an important factor.

Mr. Evans asked if this will come before us again. Mr. Berry stated yes. Mr. Evans recommended the developer seriously consider the comments provided tonight regarding the side elevations prior to returning to the Commission. Mr. Siebert stated we are once again discussing affordable housing and considering pricing these houses out of the affordability range. Mr. Siebert stated he has a hard time requiring additional items/expenses that will filter down to the home buyer. Mr. Meinert stated when we see this again it will be in the preliminary stage therefore this is the stage where we should be requiring these types of improvements. Mr. Meinert stated if there is a concern regarding the pricing then we should table this to another meeting in order to give the developer to compile some numbers.

Mr. Meinert stated he does not feel requiring a better drive-by quality will cause a significant impact to the possible home buyers and Mr. Meinert proposed a friendly amendment to the original motion to include two conditions, one) that there be a minimum of two end wall features on all end walls and 2) that units numbers one, seven, twenty-seven, and thirty seven contain brick facades as a requirement. Mr. Siebert declined the friendly amendment.

The original motion passed by a 4-1 vote with Ms. Guazzo opposed.

Mr. Evans asked if Mr. Bailey would relay the comments from tonight's meeting to the developer. Mr. Bailey stated yes, he would relay these comments.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Jada Stuckert
Recording Secretary

Approved in open session: October 25, 2010

Brandon Hayden
Chairman