

MINUTES
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
March 14, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Thompson, Chair
Chris Streett, Vice Chair
Todd Boyle
Bill Seccurro
Jay Ellenby

IN ATTENDANCE: Trish Heidenreich, Director of Economic Development
Angela Robertson, Economic Development Coordinator
Pat Richards, Town Commissioner
Donna Dickey, Bel Air Downtown Alliance
Robert Andrews, Harford County OED
Catherine Butrim, Recording Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. in the conference room at Town Hall, 39 N. Hickory Avenue, Bel Air, Maryland.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

Approval of Minutes – February 14, 2019

Mr. Ellenby moved and Mr. Seccurro seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2019 meeting.

The motion carried.

TOWN BUSINESS UPDATE:

Town Commissioners Retreat Update

Mr. Thompson stated that the Town Commissioners would like ECDC to assist in envisioning what the four corners at Route 24 and Route 1 could become in the future, including a possible mixed-use opportunity with additional residential. He stated that ECDC could possibly bring some of those developers in to discuss the darkening big box retailers.

Mr. Thompson stated that ECDC's three-point hit list was Main Street outdoor dining platforms, pedestrian safety and closing Main Street down between Lee Street and Pennsylvania Avenue for Fourth Fridays. He stated that they also discussed community gardens and taking the Armory to the next level of potential as a vibrant entertainment center.

Mr. Thompson stated that an MOU is being created with the Downtown Alliance regarding the Armory. Mr. Richards stated that the MOU with the Alliance is a partnership for a

shared revenue model for event planning that will be driven by the Alliance. Mr. Thompson commended Mr. Richards for taking the lead on this initiative.

Mr. Thompson stated that Michael Krantz discussed food trucks and possibly creating areas on Bond Street and in Howard Park for food trucks.

Mr. Richards stated that they discussed changing the Sunday Summer Concert Series to different dates with different types of music to align with varying demographics and to create music/food truck events at the park.

General Business Update and ED Dept. Update

Ms. Heidenreich stated that Z-Cryo Wellness Spa now has their U&O.

Ms. Heidenreich stated that ATA Martial Arts Studio is now located at 303 S. Atwood Road and has received a temporary U&O. Mr. Streett stated that he represented the buyer and that this is their third location, and that they have a great after-school program and are very community-oriented. Mr. Thompson advised that this building and the building next to it are in the floodplain, and there have been some significant challenges as a result. Mr. Thompson also stated that 331 Baltimore Pike has been suffering some growing pains with their success and that there is not enough on-site parking. Mr. Thompson advised that the Board of Education has been unwilling to speak with them about their property that is outside of the stormwater management pond as a potential sale or lease that would in turn provide additional parking. He stated that 331 Baltimore Pike looked at the 305 S. Atwood Road as a potential sale or lease, but the insurance would have been too high because it is in the floodplain. Mr. Streett advised that the development of 331 Baltimore Pike made FEMA redo the floodplain line, which affected the properties on Atwood Road. Ms. Heidenreich advised that there has been some focus on this at the Town, and she will speak to Bob Syphard to get clarity about this issue.

Mr. Thompson stated that an axe throwing business named The Crabby Axe is coming to 331 Baltimore Pike. Ms. Heidenreich stated they will be appearing before the Planning Commission on April 4.

Ms. Heidenreich stated that Brian Young, an attorney, may be locating in Wayne Norman's office space.

Ms. Heidenreich stated her staff visited 22 of the Best of Harford winners in the Town to deliver letters of congratulations and take photos for social media.

Ms. Dickey stated that John's Men's Clothing will be opening on Pennsylvania Avenue on April 6.

Ms. Robertson stated that Kore Bootcamps graduated from Armory Marketplace and moved onto Main Street. She advised that the Town is now advertising on Facebook and the *Bel Air Bond* for a new tenant at Armory Marketplace, and she has received two (2) new inquiries.

Mr. Thompson stated that Independent Brewing Co. is in for permitting to build permanent restrooms, a tap bar and potential food service for the back building. He advised that they are looking at making changes to their liquor license as they are considering a second location in Harford County.

Ms. Dickey advised that she received an inquiry questioning why The Mill is allowed to park its trucks on Dallam Avenue when parking is so limited.

OLD BUSINESS:

Outdoor Dining – Design Guidelines Update

Ms. Heidenreich distributed a draft package of design guidelines for outdoor dining. Mr. Thompson advised that the Town should also spin outdoor dining for pedestrian safety on Main Street because they go hand-in-hand.

Mr. Streett advised that the Town and the Commissioners should press the Police Department to enforce speed restrictions more as vehicles tend to pick up speed from Pennsylvania Avenue down to Lee Street.

Ms. Dickey stated that she attended the first Traffic Safety Task Force meeting, and the gentleman who attended from SHA claimed that the average speed they have clocked on Main Street is 29 mph, and the speed limit should be raised to 30 mph to accommodate that. Ms. Dickey stated that SHA clocked these times in July during a 24-hour period. In February, the Town had radar set up during a 3-4 day period and clocked one person traveling 50 mph. Ms. Dickey stated that Chief Moore encourages officers to take time to issue tickets, so that people traveling through the Town see officers issuing tickets. Ms. Dickey stated there will be a walk-through by the Traffic Safety Task Force of the entire Town with video of some of the corrections that need to be made. She stated that the area where Bond Street and Main Street come together will be revamped in the spring to make that area more pedestrian friendly. Ms. Dickey stated that there was discussion about changing the crosswalks at Bond Street and the courthouses and also near the Armory. She advised that the idea of paving 4-5 parking spots

across from the Armory is being revisited because the visibility at the Lee Street crosswalk is very poor. Mr. Securro stated that visibility is very poor for vehicles crossing Main Street at Lee Street as well with all of the parked cars there.

Ms. Heidenreich advised that she and Ms. Robertson will administrate the outdoor dining guidelines in the direction that ECDC would like them to proceed. She stated that ECDC will have to determine the time frame for allowing the outdoor dining platforms and parklets to operate. She inquired whether the time from should be from April to November. Ms. Heidenreich advised that the Town will need to investigate insurance requirements, and will need to develop an administrative framework for application fees, possible base fees and fees for lost meter revenue.

Ms. Heidenreich stated that the members should look at photos in the draft package and advise which designs and materials they prefer for the platforms. She stated that the members should review the package and advise if they would like to see any changes or additions.

Mr. Thompson advised that the first step should be to approach SHA for input. Ms. Heidenreich advised that SHA will most likely want to see a draft concept to better understand what the Town is hoping to achieve with outdoor dining. She advised that ECDC and the Economic Development Department should create an internal approval process to present to DPW and Planning for their input. Ms. Heidenreich advised that the Downtown Alliance would then review the draft, and it would then be presented to Jesse Bane and then the Town Commissioners. Mr. Thompson inquired why the Town would go through this process before meeting with and obtaining approval from SHA. Ms. Heidenreich advised that SHA will inquire whether all the Town's departments and stakeholders are on board with the proposal and it would be good to show that some planning and logistics went into this initiative before bringing SHA to the table. She advised that the Town should be creating these guidelines for the Town streets that are not under the purview of SHA. Ms. Heidenreich stated that SHA also may ask that the Town create a prototype on one of its streets first and develop data to bring back to SHA.

Mr. Securro advised that it might be helpful to have an artist concept of the platforms at a location such as 111 Main.

Mr. Richards stated that his vision for the meeting with SHA would be to seek the road closure for events and the outdoor dining approvals simultaneously with a cross-functional and cross-political front that has all the key stakeholders involved in the discussion. He advised that

the Town should prepare for the proposal to be turned down and then decide what political strategy to take.

Ms. Robertson advised that the administrative framework development for processing applications will take some time to create.

Ms. Heidenreich stated that it is ECDC's call to go to SHA for discussion first, but the Town is trying to ensure that it can answer all SHA's questions.

Ms. Dickey stated that she will follow up with Christine McPherson about any conversations she may have had with municipalities that have a state highway on their Main Street.

Mr. Andrews advised that the Town approach Jim Ports, the Deputy Secretary of Transportation as he is very invested in Harford County. He strongly advised that the Town investigate whether there is a state highway on any other Main Streets to gain a precedent. Mr. Andrews advised that it is better to know what SHA's thoughts are before drafting any plans for Main Street. He also advised that the first photo in the package depicts some tripping hazards and other liability issues.

Ms. Robertson stated that she will remove Photo 1 from the package and look for other photo angles of that example. Mr. Streett suggested that it might be helpful to show 4-5 potential locations for platforms and parklets. Ms. Heidenreich stated that there is an opportunity for a parklet on Ellendale Street where Independent Brewing Co. is located. Mr. Richards stated that it would be very helpful to create a pilot location to present to SHA.

Ms. Heidenreich stated that the members should send their feedback to her, and she will get back to them with an updated draft as soon as possible. Mr. Ellenby suggested an arch or overhang design concept facing the street to provide shade, protect from the weather and add an element of safety. Mr. Andrews advised that SHA will be looking at sight paths for vehicles coming down the road.

Downtown Parking Discussion

Ms. Heidenreich advised that the Town is receiving much positive feedback about the ParkMobile app.

Maryland American Water – Public Education

Mr. Thompson stated that many people do not realize that, with the increase in the water rate, the water charge at the developer level has been repealed. He stated that this has leveled the

playing field between Bel Air and the County, and developers who are interested in investing in Bel Air should be aware of this. Mr. Thompson advised that there is still a sewer charge.

Mr. Thompson stated that ECDC has sent its letter of support for the new police station. Mr. Richards stated that the Public Meeting for the new police facility will be held at the Armory on April 8, and the ECDC members are welcome to attend if they are able.

NEW BUSINESS:

Food Hall

Mr. Thompson stated that there is a developer that is investigating a food hall in the Town, but they have not landed on any specific property. He advised that a location on Bond Street could help invigorate that corridor.

Town Annexation

Mr. Seccurro suggested that Town annexation at the former Bel Air Auto Auction could be an opportunity to extend the tax base and gain more control over how that property is developed. Mr. Seccurro stated that the Town should have more control over this portion of Route 1 as it is how people enter the Town of Bel Air. Mr. Richards advised that the struggle with annexation is how to make it attractive to the property owner.

OTHER:

Downtown Alliance Update

Ms. Dickey stated that Ms. McPherson and Len Parrish visited Root co-working space in Frederick and reported that it is a very impressive project. She advised that the Alliance has decided to pursue the former County space above the Liquor Board as its coworking space. Ms. Dickey stated that she is encouraged by the project as it has the potential to bring 14-15 new businesses to downtown Bel Air.

Ms. Dickey stated that the Pub Crawl was a success and that Fourth Fridays will be beginning in six (6) weeks.

County Update

Mr. Andrews stated that Defense Technology Commercialization Center (DefTech) was awarded \$750,000.00 to continue its mission.

Mr. Andrews stated that RAMP MD is working to continue to grow the Peak 3 Apprenticeship Program, which brings young people into the advanced technology marketplace.

Mr. Andrews stated that Harford Community College is proceeding with the planning of the Edgewood campus with brick and mortar likely proceeding in 2020.

Mr. Andrews stated that UM Upper Chesapeake is moving along with the Aberdeen campus, and they are hoping for an August groundbreaking. He stated that Upper Chesapeake plans to add three (3) floors to the top of the Kaufman Cancer Center to accommodate bed space that will be lost at Harford Memorial. Mr. Thompson advised that there is a Virginia-based developer that is investigating an opportunity for a hotel because of this addition.

Mr. Andrews stated that the County is halfway through construction of a roundabout to accommodate truck traffic traveling in and out of the Perryman Peninsula. He stated that the County is working with Aberdeen Proving Ground and SHA to possibly construct a new road from Eastgate to 715. Mr. Thompson advised that Mr. Andrews remind the administration about the situation that occurred at Spesutia as another possible solution.

Mr. Andrews stated that Prime Source has moved into their new building on Perryman Peninsula, and their old building on Route 40 will probably be a new UPS headquarters for a sort center in Harford County.

Mr. Andrews stated that Abingdon Woods has gone through the public hearing phases and is continuing on the development path for a large distribution office.

Mr. Andrews stated that Tower Logistics, which is bordered by Route 40 and Route 7, is moving forward.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

