

MINUTES
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
April 11, 2019

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Trish Heidenreich, Director of Economic Development
Kevin Small, Director of Planning
Christine McPherson, Bel Air Downtown Alliance
Donna Dickey, Bel Air Downtown Alliance
Robert Andrews, Harford County OED
Catherine Butrim, Recording Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 5:08 p.m. at Independent Brewing Company, 418 N. Main Street, Bel Air, MD 21014.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

Approval of Minutes – March 14, 2019

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

The motion carried.

TOWN BUSINESS UPDATE:

General Business Update and ED Dept. Update

Ms. Heidenreich stated that a ribbon cutting was held at John's Men's Clothing located at 10 W. Pennsylvania Avenue.

Ms. Heidenreich stated that Dia Massage at 335 Kenmore Avenue received their U&O and will hold a ribbon cutting on May 16.

Mr. Thompson stated that Crabby Axe will be coming to 331 Baltimore Pike, and they are in for permitting. He stated that 331 Baltimore Pike is now 100 percent leased, and they are working on getting the strip for parking on the other side of the stormwater management pond from Bel Air High School. Mr. Thompson stated he is still very concerned about the 1 space per

250 gross square feet (4 per 1000 gsf) parking requirement for shopping centers in the Town Code.

Mr. Small stated that Chick-fil-A is less than a month away from opening.

Mr. Small stated that Popeye's has their building permit, and he is planning to meet with Chris Kurz soon.

Ms. McPherson stated that the façade is up at Barrett's on the Pike in Bel Air Town Center.

Ms. Heidenreich stated that she had a conversation with Scott Herman from Tollgate Plaza about the Starbucks leaving Barnes and Noble. She advised that Starbucks has a manager rewards system that was disadvantageous to the Starbucks owner at Barnes and Noble because the Starbucks at Bel Air Plaza was receiving higher numbers. She advised that parcel #7, where Party City was previously located, has received some interest. Ms. Heidenreich stated that they did talk about placing an entrance from one side of the shopping center to the other, but the elevation is very steep; and ADA requirements would call for an escalator, so that entrance will not be feasible.

Mr. Small advised that Bel Air Middle School is over capacity, which will create problems for 400 S. Main Street.

Mr. Small stated that the Town has completed its 2018 Annual Report to the State, and since 2005, Bel Air has issued the most building permits in the past year.

OLD BUSINESS:

Outdoor Dining – Design Guidelines Update & Meeting Setup for SHA

Ms. McPherson stated that she and Ms. Dickey traveled to Seattle for the National Main Street Conference, and she attended a work session for a pedlet concept. A pedlet acts as a sidewalk extension beyond the curb line and creates a new route for pedestrians, which provides safe passage for pedestrians while encouraging outdoor dining. She stated that the advantages are the following:

- Those using pedlets are in motion and safer than diners seated on a platform beyond the curb.
- Servers are not crossing the sidewalk for food and alcohol service.
- It is easier to accommodate ADA accessibility than with dining platforms.

- The footprint for restaurant seating is increased, which creates jobs and sales revenue for the business.
- Retail businesses can use pedlets and keep inventory closer to the store entrance.

Ms. McPherson stated that pedlets have been installed and are working out very well in Midwest towns. She stated that she learned that Bel Air is unique in wanting to work with the State since pedlets on other towns are on Town roads rather than State roads. Ms. McPherson advised that there is precedent for outdoor dining on State roads only in Ocean City.

Ms. McPherson stated that she had a conversation with Pilar at the Liquor Board, and she indicated that the Liquor Board could work with both parklets and pedlets; but pedlets are the better option. Ms. McPherson stated that the assumption on the Liquor Board is that outdoor cafés that are serving alcohol are on properties that are owned or leased, with the owners of the properties being aware that these outdoor cafés are serving alcohol. She advised that the Town should make sure that this criterion is being met with Savona and Black-Eyed Suzie's.

Mr. Small advised that he has spoken with SHA informally on three (3) occasions, and their answer has been no each time he inquired about changing outdoor dining regulations. He advised that he did not know there is precedent with Ocean City where outdoor dining is permitted on the State roads. Mr. Small stated that the Town does need to reconstitute an MOU with SHA on how Main and Bond Streets are treated.

Mr. Small advised that he would like to be able to start conversations with the State Planning and Transportation Departments to see what will result from those talks before approaching SHA. He advised that he wants to make outdoor dining happen on any Town roads. Ms. Heidenreich confirmed that she will not move forward with SHA until Mr. Small has a conversation with James Ports, Secretary of the Maryland Transportation Department.

Mr. Kelly moved and Mr. Streett seconded the motion to support the pedlet concept as Plan A for outdoor dining.

The motion carried.

Armory Revenue and Vision - Update

Ms. Dickey advised that they have not seen the latest version of the MOU, but the main change is that the Town does not want to make profits off the sale of alcohol. She advised that they are considering changing the MOU to state that the Armory will be leased, and there will be an opt out if it is not working out for either party.

NEW BUSINESS:

Four Corners at Routes 1 & 24

Mr. Thompson advised that the Town Commissioners have asked ECDC to address the appearance and evolution of the four corners at Routes 1 & 24.

Mr. Small advised that he would like ECDC to hold a charrette to come up with some ideas for the four corners, and he would like to be proactive with Harford Mall to create residential component as part of that complex.

Mr. Streett moved and Mr. McNulty seconded the motion to schedule a separate ECDC meeting to discuss the four corners at Routes 1 & 24.

The motion carried.

2020 Census

Mr. Small advised that the Town will begin holding meetings this summer to prepare for the 2020 Census.

Public Input Meeting for Proposed Police Facility

Mr. Small stated that the response from Town residents was largely positive. He advised that he instructed the consultants to finalize their report for the Town Commissioners to review next week.

Mr. Thompson advised that this will be an opportunity to get some Town properties back on the tax roll and create more infill development. Mr. Small advised that he would like to come back before ECDC to discuss possibilities about the tire lot. Mr. Thompson stated that he would like to discuss all the available properties. Ms. Heidenreich stated that she will put discussion about Town properties and a land swap with an undesignated property owner on the agenda.

OTHER:

Downtown Alliance Update

Ms. Dickey stated that she attended a lecture on brownfields at the National Main Street Conference, which informed her that the Alliance can receive financing for the first two (2) phases of remediation. The first phase is the history of the property, the second phase is the testing, and the third phase includes help with funding to clean up the property for the landowner, so they can sell or lease the property. Ms. Dickey advised that vacant and crumbling buildings can be considered brownfields as well. She advised that the first step is to get the landowner on board because the Town cannot proceed without the landowner's consent.

Ms. McPherson advised that some of the Town's retailers have requested lights and music on Main Street, and they met a vendor with sound equipment that would be easy for the Town's DPW to install. The cost would be approximately \$12,000.00 or \$4,000.00 per section. She advised that the conversations on lighting at the Main Street Conference included lighting in the trees, ridgeline lighting, storefront lighting and lighting for awnings. Ms. McPherson noted that the new awning at John's Men's Clothing will have gooseneck lighting.

Ms. McPherson stated that John's Men's Clothing received façade improvement funding, and Black-Eyed Suzie's, Independent Brewing, and Lisa Fuller Insurance each received \$10,000 in façade improvement grants.

Ms. McPherson stated that event season is beginning this month, and the Alliance has received very good press about the change from First Fridays to Fourth Fridays.

County Update

Mr. Andrews stated that the County passed the addition to the Enterprise Zone.

Mr. Andrews stated that there has been some activity at Washington Court, and some interesting proposals have been received.

Mr. Andrews stated that a ribbon cutting was held for Survice Engineering, and they are building a new hanger at the soon-to-be expanded Aldino Airport. Survice Engineering also will be conducting drone testing.

Mr. Andrews stated that Karen Holt received the Commanders Award for Public Service at APG. He advised that Major General Taylor will be leaving APG, and they are awaiting the arrival of the team for the new Commander at APG.

Mr. Andrews stated that several proposals have been received for the tire lot, with one very attractive proposal, but the right deal has not yet been made.

Mr. Andrews stated that the County budget is being submitted on April 15.

Mr. Andrews stated that the tourism grants will be presented to the County Council by the end of June.

Other

Mr. Small stated that the Farmers Market opening day is on April 13.

Mr. Small advised that Moores Mill Road will close on April 22 for improvements and remain closed for six (6) months.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:11 p.m.