

MINUTES OF THE JOINT LAND USE/LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEES MEETING 3-7-2022

The meeting was called for 7 pm on Zoom. Present were Dedun Ingram, Chair; Tom Collins, Kathy Flaxman, Sybil Freedman, Jay Kelly, Tandra Leonard, Eric Murtagh, Mark Patterson, Joe Rubin, Steve Seidel, Stuart Sessions, David Valenstein; and Irene Lane and Ellen Cornelius Ericson, Council liaisons.

Chair Dedun Ingram called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

Minutes of the February meeting: Eric moved to accept as circulated with one minor edit. The motion was seconded and passed.

Thrive 2050: The Office of Legislative Oversight put out a report stating that they could not produce the required Racial Equity and Social Justice report for Thrive because it lacks sufficient enough information to make the assessment and there was insufficient outreach to groups of color. This report was discussed at the February 15 County Council meeting. Despite protests from the Planning department that they had conducted extensive outreach and the OLO assessment was not needed for Thrive, the Council decided to hire a consultant to do an assessment and determine what outreach is needed. They have filed for an extension of the timeframe to vote on adoption of Thrive and will extend further if necessary (a vote is needed by October 31 if the current Council is to vote). The schedule of additional meetings has not yet been determined. On April 5 the Council will again talk again about the approach to outreach.

Attainable Housing: The County Council has tabled the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative Zoning Text Amendment for this year. They don't have the time to take it up before the election. Councilmember Riemer proposed establishing a task force to explore the topic and identify areas of community agreement.

Farm Women's Market project: The County Executive's Capital Improvement Budget did not include funds for the FWM project. The Town does not know where the needed funding stands at this point. The parking study that was supposed to be completed in November 2021 has still not been released.

Concept plan for 4-H property: At the recent presentation to Town residents by the developer a fairly detailed concept plan was described. We will need to see a massing study and 3-D rendering, but it appears that the proposed project is a high-end product, and the architectural details look good. The Fire Marshall has approved a single entry from Connecticut Avenue. As much as 50% of the built space will be community amenities, including a small amount of retail that will be accessible to Town residents. The plan shows that they will preserve the wooded area at the Meadow Lane and Thornapple sides of the property. So far, feedback from Town residents on the concept plan has generally been positive. Irene reported that Grant Epstein from Community 3 (the developer) had met with some of the residents on Thornapple St. and Woodside Place and that the residents feel that the developer is listening to their concerns.

Committee members who did not attend the presentation were encouraged to listen to the recording and not just look at the slides so they could hear the Q&A part of the session.

We expect the developer to ask for a zoning change. The Committee wondered if this type of senior development is subject to MPDU requirements. Several members thought so, but we will need to check. Irene noted that last year the County Council adopted Zoning Text Amendment 21-02 that expanded the types of housing units allowed in senior independent living facilities, reduced the required green space, and required a certain percentage of low/moderate income units. We need to check to see if it is applicable to the type of zoning they will seek.

Joe noted that there is an ongoing discussion regarding how integrated the project will be with the Town. It will be at least partially fenced..

The Town will send a list of questions to the developer.

Stormwater management: Modifying the Town's stormwater management regulations is under consideration. Dedun noted that the Land Use Committee members of the current hybrid committee will take this on. Stuart noted that activation of the Town's current requirements when more than a certain amount of new impervious surface area is created, and the limited look-back period are somewhat problematic. He noted the following stormwater problems within the Town:

1. Many properties in the Town currently cause stormwater runoff problems for their neighbors, but unless the specified amount of new impervious surfaces the is created, mitigation is not triggered.
2. Some parts of the Town stormwater infrastructure are undersized. This will only get worse as climate change leads to bigger storms.
3. There is a growing understanding of water quality issues caused by stormwater.

It was suggested that it might be better for the Town to use the total proportion of a lot that is covered by impervious surfaces to trigger stormwater management measures, rather than the amount of new impervious surface being created in a project. Such an approach would involve limiting the amount of impervious surface on a lot (the Town currently only limits the amount of impervious surface in the front yard).

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 pm.

Next meeting: The Committee voted to meet in person for the next meeting which will be on Monday, April 4 at 7 pm in the Town Hall.