



Town of Sykesville

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Town House

Stacy Link, Mayor

Joseph Cosentini, Town Manager

Craig Weaver, Town Treasurer

Kerry G. Kavaloski, Town Clerk

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF MAY 3, 2022 SPECIAL PUBLIC HEARING **NO. 22-09**

The Special Public Hearing of the Town of Sykesville was held on Tuesday, May 3, 2022. Mayor Link called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in the Sykesville Middle School Cafeteria. Mayor Link led the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

PRESENT: Mayor Stacy Link, Council President Anna Carter, and Council Members Alan Grasley, Elizabeth Guroff, Mark Dyer, Leo Keenan, and Jeremiah Schofield.

STAFF: Joseph Cosentini, Town Manager
Police Chief Michael Spaulding
Kerry Kavaloski, Town Clerk
Jana Antrobus, Development Coordinator
Kevin Rubenstein, Town Planner

Public Hearing and Consider/Discuss/Act on the Introduction of Ordinance NO. 2022-03: Zoning Text Amendment – Planned Employment Center

Mayor Link explained the process for a zoning text amendment and announced that the Warfield Development team, through their lawyer, has requested she recuse herself from this item. Mayor Link declined to recuse herself.

MOTION: Council Member Grasley motioned to introduce Ordinance NO. 2022-03: Zoning Text Amendment – Planned Employment Center. Council Member Schofield seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

MOTION: Council Member Grasley motioned to open the public hearing on Ordinance NO. 2022-03: Zoning Text Amendment – Planned Employment Center. Council Member Dyer seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

Joe Cosentini, Town Manager, presented information regarding the Town's process thus far, including Planning Commission meetings and recommendation to deny the proposed amendment.

Roger Conley, Steve McCleaf, and Sean Davis presented the zoning text amendment that they have requested. Topics presented included population increases, school impacts, water and sewer impacts, and vehicles and parking.

Mayor Link invited the public to make their comments. All addresses are Sykesville, MD, 21784, unless otherwise noted.

Jane Mergler, 763 Central Avenue, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Ian Shaw, 7594 Boulder Drive, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Ricardo Baan-Garcia, 767 Sperry Way, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Lois Roberts, 7291 Norris Avenue, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Jason (last name not provided), Parkside resident, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Michelle Flynn, 7309 Brown Street, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Dana Alonzi, 7307 Spout Hill Road, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Robert Blitz, 7303 Spout Hill Road, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

James McTygue, 804 Vantage Point Drive, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Ridia Dearie, 303 Neale Court, provided a public comment in favor of the proposed zoning amendment.

Daniel Mican, 7260 Springfield Avenue, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Chad Bederka, 7319 Brown Street, asked if a market study had been completed showing how much the renovations would cost and how much the developers would make.

Steve Jones, 7150 Harlan Lane, provided a public comment in favor of the proposed zoning amendment.

Jon Mudrick, 299 Kalorama Avenue, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Mark Rychwalski, 7302 Spout Hill Road, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Andrea St. Clair, 645 Shimmering Run Court, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Rachael Beck, 614 Kell Mill Road, Westminster, MD 21157, provided a public comment in support of the proposed zoning amendment.

Laura Smith, 1005 Cypress Forest Drive, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Julie Della-Maria, 7411 Second Avenue, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Fred Gossage, 3045 Route 32, West Friendship, MD, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Dan Andersen, 7511 Second Avenue, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Tiffany Yetman, 310 Anna Lane, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Lauren Hanratty, 969 Sperry Way, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Stephen Konsowski, 7119 Harlan Lane, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Howard Saslow, 7241 Norris Avenue, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Frank Roelke, 730 Central Avenue, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Debbie Scheller, 305 Kalorama Road, provided a public comment both in support (as a local business owner) and against (as a resident) the proposed zoning amendment, however, her overall opinion was not favorable towards the proposed zoning amendment. She also provided a written comment before the meeting that was against the zoning text amendment.

Henry Armstrong, 7311 First Avenue, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Vakul More, 7133 Sisco Way, provided a public comment against the proposed zoning amendment.

Mayor Link thanked the public for their comments. She invited the Council to ask the developer questions.

Council Member Schofield also thanked the public for their comments, and he asked the developers if they were open to finding a middle ground between what they proposed and what is currently in place. He is willing to work with the developers if they are willing to compromise. He also mentioned that the tax credits were obtained without any input from the Town. He would like future opportunities to be worked through as a team.

Roger Conley explained that private meetings were asked for because there is so much information to exchange. He appreciates the flexibility and is willing to work together as well. The tax credits were not created in a vacuum and the Town was kept in the loop but was not briefed by the developers regarding every meeting with the State.

Mayor Link expressed concern not over updates regarding the Catalytic Historic Tax Credit (CHTC) legislation but over the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) not requiring from the Town a letter of support for the developer's application for the CHTC. The catalytic tax credits were awarded with the assumption that there was a good working relationship between the developers and the Town. But specifically, because the developer's application for the CHTC did not include a letter of support for the developer's plan, that assumption should not have been made on the part of DHCD. And because the plan included in the developer's application is 100% dependent upon an approved text amendment for increased residential density, DHCD should have sought out comment from the Town before awarding the CHTC to the developer. The Mayor also noted that according to the developer's latest plan for the historic buildings' redevelopment, less than 1/3 of the requested residential density increase will be within the historic buildings, and therefore the "unlocking" of the funding stack to "save the buildings" is not dependent upon the dramatic increase in residential density reflected in the petition.

Council Member Guroff noted that there is not a good working relationship, and there is even hostility between the developers and the Town. She explained that during the election, Steve McCleaf had told her 67% of the residents supported an all residential development; however, Council Member Guroff was unable to verify the 67% statistic that was reported to her. She also noted that multiple documents, the Open Meetings Act complaint letter and the request for recusal, had hostile statements about and attributed to her. She would like open and transparent meetings between the Town and the developer, and between the developer and the public.

Council Member Grasley explained that in the past, multiple accommodations were made for the developers. He thinks some good will on the part of the developers, such as rehabilitating or even working on the historic buildings, would go a long way.

Council Member Dyer thanked the public and also thanked the Planning Commission for all of their hard work. He asked if the developers plan to change their approach based on what was heard during the public hearing, what is needed from the Town to start working collaboratively, re-establish trust, and start to make things happen.

Council Member Keenan encouraged the public to email in their comments if they were unable to make it to this meeting. He explained that when the Town annexed the property, it was to control the development. The developer was supposed to rehabilitate the buildings and limit residential.

The public hearing remains open so comments can continue to be emailed to town@sykesville.net.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the Council, Council Member Grasley motioned and Council Member Schofield seconded to adjourn meeting at 9:52 P.M.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted
Town Clerk Kerry Kavaloski