Planning Commission
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, November 18, 2021 - 1:00 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

Call to Order

Members Present:
Mr. Paul Weber - Chairman, Ms. Jennifer Dindinger - Vice Chairperson, Ms. Victoria McAndrews, Mr. Talbot Bone and Mr. William Ryall

Staff Present:
Mr. Lynn Thomas - Town Planner, Ms. Katie Reedy - Director of Site Development , Ms. Sharon Van Emburgh - Town Attorney and Mr. Rick Van Emburgh - Town Engineer , Mr. Joseph Mayer - Plan Reviewer, Mr. Casey Ortiz - Planner 1

At 01:00 PM, Chairperson Weber called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes.

Approval of Revised Minutes of previous meeting: 2021-08-19

Upon motion by Mr. Bone and seconded by Ms. Dindinger, Vice Chair, the Commission voted to approve the revised August 19, 2021 minutes.

Approval of Revised Minutes of previous meeting: 2021-09-16

Upon motion by Mr. Bone and seconded by Ms. Dindinger, Vice Chair, the Commission voted to approve the revised September 16, 2021 minutes.

Approval of Minutes of previous meeting: 2021-10-21 Meeting Minutes

Upon motion by Mr. Bone and seconded by Ms. Dindinger, Vice Chair, the Commission voted to approve the revised October 21, 2021 minutes with corrections.

Old Business

Applicant:	Scott Shust - JTS Architects
Owner:	NLA Easton, LLC c/o Andrew Goodman
Location:	220 Marlboro Avenue
Nature of Request:	Supplemental Waiver Request for fewer parking spaces.

Mr. Andrew Goodman, from NLA Easton, LLC, decided to submit a waiver request for the December 16, 2021, Planning Commission Meeting.

New Business

Applicant:	Brock Parker - Parker & Associates, Inc.
Owner:	Nistazos Holdings LLC
Location:	8461 Ocean Gateway - Dunkin' Donuts
Nature of Request:	Supplemental Waiver Request for fewer parking spaces.

Mr. Trevor Schiavone, from Parker & Associates, Inc., was present to discuss the Supplemental Waiver Request for 26 parking spaces at 8461 Ocean Gateway - Dunkin' Donuts.In addition, the applicant is proposing a 728 SF building addition, a reconfigured dual lane drive-thru with 31 stacking spaces, 8 additional parking spaces and Stormwater Management treatment. Mr. Schiavone noted that the store is dominated by drive-thru patrons and is currently causing backup along Rte. 50. Also, the interior seating is not being utilized. The owner would like to use that space for the staff to better serve the drive-thru customers.

Parking requirements and the dual drive-thru lanes were discussed.

The Chair then opened the floor for Public Comment. There were no comments.

Upon motion by Ms. McAndrews and seconded by Mr. Bone, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the requested Parking Waiver, contingent on the applicant submitting a grading permit for staff review, Certificate of Occupancy, Signage Application and installation of native plants in the area to be landscaped for Stormwater Management.

Applicant:	Easton Utilities - c/o Becker Morgan Group, Inc.
Owner:	Town of Easton
Location:	201 N. Washington Street
Nature of Request:	The project includes improvements to the Easton Utilities Campus/Yard to include: minor revisions to a warehouse building, expansion of an existing garage bay building (4,600 sf) & construction of a new crew building (6,700 sf). Improvements include paving, walkways, SWM practices and storm drain pipe removal and realignment.

Mr. Kevin Parsons and Mr. Brad Hasings, from Becker Morgan Group, Inc., were present to represent Easton Utilities. Mr. Paron discussed the improvements to the Easton Utilities Campus/Yard which include: minor revisions to a warehouse building, expansion of an existing garage bay building (4,600 SF) and construction of a new crew building (6,700 SF). The improvements included paving, walkways, SWM practices and storm drain pipe removal and realignment. The parking is adequate for the entire campus and access to the site is on Washington Street. Mr. Parson added that the site is not in the Critical Area. However, a Forest Conservation Plan is required and will be forthcoming. Also, a Landscape Plan has been provided for the site with additional landscaping within the SWM facility. All planting will be native plant species. Mr. Hastings discussed that architectural design was consistent with the existing onsite buildings.

Ms. Dindinger commented on the landscape plan. She noticed the perennial plant listing was not a native species and recommended replacing it with Blue Wood Sedge. She also added the need to break up the siding on the side of the crew building with possibly the use of landscaping. Ms. McAndrews asked if the landscape enhancement helps with the viewshed for anyone. Mr. Parsons stated they added plants on the perimeter of the property to soften the view from the adjacent townhouses. Mr. Bone inquired about the existing SWM facility and the Stormwater Management Sketch Plan approval.

The Chair then opened the floor for Public Comment. There were no comments.

Upon motion by Ms. Dindinger, Vice Chairperson, and seconded by Mr. Bone, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the Site Plan, with the recommended plant changes.

Applicant:	Brett Ewing, Lane Engineering, LLC
Owner:	RDE Investments, LLC c/o Ron Endzel
Location:	8831 Mistletoe Drive
Nature of Request:	Site Plan Review for a proposed two-story office building with associated storage space (9,075 sf footprint and 9,875 sf gross floor area). Improvements also include SWM facilities, utilities, parking & landscaping.

Mr. Brett Ewing, from Lane Engineering LLC, was present to represent the owner, RDE Investments, LLC c/o Ron Endzel, for Sketch Site Plan and Architectural Approval. Mr. Ewing discussed the proposed two-story office building with associated storage space (9,075 SF footprint and 9,875 SF gross floor area). Additional improvements included stormwater management facilities, utilities, parking and landscaping. He noted that the Stormwater Management Sketch Plan was Approved and the Forest Conservation requirements were addressed for the entire subdivision in 1997. The architecture is consistent with the surrounding site.

Mr. Weber inquired about the number of employees at the site and the architectural materials. Mr. Ewing stated that the owner had planned for expansion and has adequate parking for the current number of employees and anticipated future expansion. In addition, he also confirmed that there are gray vertical panels and a masonry water table depicted on the architectural renderings. Ms. Dindinger wanted to make sure the location of the culvert under the access road and the connection between the proposed SWM facility- Bio-Swale and the existing storm drain was addressed. She also noted that the landscape plan lacks native plant species and recommends using the Talbot County Buffer Management Plan Guidelines & Plant List for reference. Arborvitae, Crepe Myrtle and Cryptomeria are not native plants and need to be replaced within the landscape plan.

The Chair opened the floor for Public Comment. There was no public comment.

Upon motion by Ms. Dindinger, Vice Chair, and seconded by Mr. Bone, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the application with the condition of substituting the three plants; Arborvitae, Crepe Myrtle and Cryptomeria with native species and the adjustment of the Bio-Swale location.

Applicant:	Brett Ewing, Lane Engineering, LLC
Owner:	Raughley Family Realty Business Trust (Contract Purchaser-Mallard Construction Group)
Location:	8286 Elliott Road
Nature of Request:	Site Plan Review for a proposed multifamily PUD with four 3 - story buildings with a total of 120 dwelling units & associated amenities including a clubhouse, pool & playground. Improvements also include SWM facilities, utilities, parking and landscaping.

Mr. Brendan Mullaney, from McAllister, DeTar, Showalter & Walker, Mr. Brett Ewing, from Lane Engineering, LLC, Mr. Mark Keeley, from Traffic Concepts, Inc., and Ms.Heather Morrison, from Fisher Architecture, were present to represent the Contract Purchaser-Mallard Construction Group c/o Jim DiDonato, President, and Ms.Victoria Hoffman, Vice-President, to discuss the project. Mr. Mullaney stated that the applicant is seeking a recommendation for approval of the proposed multifamily PUD with four 30 unit buildings that are 3 stories tall with provided elevators. There are associated amenities, including a club house, a pool & playground area. Improvements also include Stormwater Management facilities, utilities, parking, sidewalk along Elliott Road and landscaping. The PUD provisions recommend a density of 16 dwelling units per acre. This site, however, is slightly over at 17.54 dwelling units per acre. Mr. Thomas pointed out that the Zoning Code permits a density increase subject to specific findings. Forest Conservation will be onsite and placed in a perpetual easement. Also, the project meets Open Space requirements. Mr. Mullaney continued that the project will target a workforce, market-rate product for various types of tenants: teachers, first responders, government employees, nurses, young professionals and families. He also stated that Mallard Homes also provides a discount for state and local officers, as another way to give back to the community.

Mr. Weber asked if the other workforce tenants mentioned would receive a discount out of fairness. Mr. Mullaney was not sure. He stated it's a practice of Mallard Homes to provide discounts to officers. He also went over the unit pricepoints with Mr. Weber. Ms. Dindinger was concerned about the pricepoints and market rates. Potential connectivity on James Street, landscape buffers adjacent to the existing SWM Facility and access points to the site were discussed. Ms. Dindinger and Ms. McAndrews discussed the sidewalk locations along Elliott Road, suggesting the sidewalks be greener and further off the road. Mr. Bone requested a sketch of the sidewalks. Ms.Dindinger also asked if the SWM swale was sized for treatment. Mr. Ewing replied yes and that the Stormwater Management Sketch Plan is approved.

Mr. DiDonato discussed that there will be a provided management team for the daily maintenance of the site and those amenities are included into the price of the rent. Ms.Didinger questioned the use of the Open Space requirements. Ms. Van Emburgh informed the Commission that this project would fall under the new Zoning Regulations and it includes language that could allow the Commission to consider indoor recreation amenities as open space. Ms. Dindinger concluded that the Open Space Areas would have to be revised. Ms. Van Emburgh also mentioned the new requirements for affordable housing. Mr. Ryall added the need to show a comparison of pricepoints for medium income and how that ties in to affordable and workforce pricing.

Ms.Hoffman discussed affordable housing and average income. She indicated she would look into the numbers required in the town to better determine the qualifications. Ms. Diddinger added that if the presentation of the site is for workforce housing, she would like to see it described as an actual program for qualifying. Also, Ms. Hoffman would have to see how the discounts for other occupations would work. Mr. DiDonato added that they would have to look into that to give a more definitive answer.

Geoff Turner, from Choptank Transport, commented on the need for housing and that it would be a great addition to the town.

The traffic study was discussed in regards to cueing lengths, traffic lights and intersections. Mr. Keeley discussed the level of service in the surrounding areas on Ellott Road and Matthewstown Road. Mr VanEmburgh stated that the traffic works well and the Town is currently working with SHA in that area. In addition, the site's entrance and right-of-way were discussed. Mr. Bone discussed the curb appeal of the buildings facing the main roads and the placement of HVAC's. Architecture was discussed in regards to the use of stone surfaces. Mr. Brendan Mullaney also presented letters of support.

The Chair opened the floor for Public Comment.

Ms. Tracy Ward, from Easton Economic Development Corporation, supports the project. She discussed the town's housing needs, workforce housing, median income and economic impacts. Unit pricing of the site was discussed.

Mr. Brian Gearhart, from Benson & Mangold Real Estate, stated there's a demand for apartments and it will serve the town with a positive impact.

Upon motion by Ms. McAndrews and seconded by Ms. Dindinger, Vice-Chair, the Commission voted 5-0 approving the Sketch Site Plan and recommending approval of the PUD to the Town Council with the following conditions:the single point of exit and entrance meet the towns requirement for rapid access by emergency vehicles, coordinate with the town's standards for the sidewalks and buffer areas to have a large buffer area between Elliott Road and the sidewalk for aesthetic and safety reasons to encourage walkability, verify the 35% use of recreational area and the Commission concers with the desity.

Discussion Item

Workshop discussion concerning Subdivision Regulations.

The workshop concerning Subdivision Regulations was removed for discussion.

Adjournment.

The meeting ended at 4:25 PM.