Planning Commission
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 20, 2022 - 1:00 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

Call to Order
Members Present:
Mr. Paul Weber - Chairman, Ms. Jennifer Dindinger - Vive Chairperson,
Members Present (via zoom):
Ms. Victoria McAndrews and Mr. William Ryall
Staff Present:
Mr. Lynn Thomas-Town Planner, Ms. Katie Reedy-Director of Site Development, Ms. Sharon Van Emburgh-Town Attorney, Mr. Rick Van Emburgh-Town Engineer, Mr. Joseph Mayer-Plan Reviewer.
Staff Absent:
Mr. Casey Ortiz-Planner 1
At 01:00 PM, Chairman Weber called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes.

Approval of Minutes of previous meeting: 2021-12-16 Meeting Minutes.

Upon motion by Mr. Bone and second by Ms. Dindinger, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the December 16, 2021 minutes with corrections.

New Business

Applicant:	Davis, Bowen & Friedel, Inc. c/o Timothy M. Metzner
Owner:	Talbot County, Maryland
Location:	10028 Ocean Gateway
Nature of Request:	Construction of a new addition south of the existing Community Center to serve as a new gymnasium. Additional parking and stormwater management is also proposed, along with the building addition adjoining the existing parking lot area.

Mr. Timothy Metzner and Mr. Christopher Cullen, from Davis, Bowen & Friedel and Mr. Preston Peper, Director of Talbot County, Parks and Recreation were present to represent the Talbot County Community Center. Mr. Metzner discussed the proposed addition south of the existing Community Center to serve as a new gymnasium. Additional parking and stormwater management is also proposed, along with the building addition adjoining the existing parking lot area. In addition, the entire complex will be connected to the Easton Utilities sewer system currently under construction. At the present time,the site is functioning with a failing septic system that requires a pump and haul practice. Mr. Cullen elaborated on the proposed architecture, matching the existing building with brick at the lower base of the building, metal roof and metal side panels. He clarified with Mr. Weber, stating that all proposed materials, including its color, would ultimately match the existing building.
Ms. Dindinger inquired about the architecture visually seen from Route 50 and the possibility of breaking up the uniform look of the building's appearance. Mr. Cullen pointed out the elevations that would be seen. Ms. Dindinger also wanted clarification about meeting Forest Conservation requirements off-site. Mr. Metzner stated concerns about onsite maintenance of the site and the fact that a Forest Conservation Easement can not be disturbed, even if there are invasive nonnative plants that need to be removed. Mr. Bone amplified his concerns about the east and north views of the architecture being too uniform. Mr. Cullen revealed that the proximity of the existing building would provide a less uniform appearance. Mr. Thomas confirmed for Mr. Bone that the project did not have to go through approvals from Talbot County. Mr. Weber inquired about the landscape screening along the proposed parking area. Mr. Metzner stated that there are existing trees and proposed landscaping to block the south view of the site.

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

Upon motion by Ms. Dindinger and seconded by Mr. Bone, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the application as submitted.

Discussion Item

Workshop discussion concerning Subdivision Regulations.

The Commission discussed the Subdivision Regulations. The first item discussed concerned minimum Open Space and Park Area requirements. Mr.Thomas noted the corrections to the previous revisions to the Subdivision Regulations. He also discussed the requirements of Open Space/Park Space standards in comparison to other jurisdictions. In addition, he discussed the option of applying a fee-in-lieu for Open Space relief. The staff met with Mr. Zach Smith from Armistead, Lee, Rust, Wright, P.A. to discuss the possibility of the Commission amending other parts of the Subdivision Regulations. The use of a fee-in-lieu for Open Space was discussed by the Commission. Fees should be appropriate in price to meet the responsibility of that particular development. The use of a fee-in-lieu is an option only to be determined by the Planning Commission if the required use is not practical for the proposed site.

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

Mr. Bone then raised an issue concerning the lack of variety of housing types in subdivisions. It was his opinion that subdivisions that include multiple types of housing would both be a superior design and also address housing affordability issues. Upon motion by Mr. Bone and seconded by Ms. Victoria McAndrews, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the addition of "Section 501 Subdivision Design Requirements, D - Style Variation; each subdivision of more than ten units must include ten percent multi-family structures, such as duplexes, townhomes or multi-family units." The Commission would like the staff to identify at the next meeting any issues it may have with the existing zoning.

Mr. Zach Smith was present, representing K.Hovnanian Homes. Mr. Michael Irons from K.Hovnanian Homes and Mr. J.L.Gannon, owner of the parcel on Dutchman's Lane, were also present concerning this issue. Mr. Irons discussed the project on Dutchman's Lane and the product that would be proposed. Mr. Smith elaborated on a proposed amendment he suggested in a letter to the Commission, which proposes to ease the existing requirement for a minimum of 60% of the lots created in a subdivision to be accessed via an alley. Mr. Smith's proposed amendment would exempt subdivisions on land that is zoned R-10 A and located east of U.S. Route 50.

The Commission then discussed the proposed amendment. Ultimately, they decided that a previous amendment that granted the Town Council the ability to waive the alley requirement for subdivisions approved via the PUD process was sufficient in terms of additional flexibility regarding this standard. Then, upon motion by Ms.Dindinger and seconded by Mr. Bone, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve the language the Commission presented to the Town Council for the proposed amendment to remain intact with no further change.

Election of 2022 Officers.

Mr. Weber discussed continuing the current informal process for the Election of Officers. Both Mr. Weber and Ms. Dindinger served the first year of a two-year term and would continue in the same positions for another year. Next January 2023, barring any changes, Mr. Weber would rotate off, Ms. Dindinger would become Chairperson, and the Commission would elect a new Vice Chairperson.

Upon motion by Mr. Bone and seconded by Ms. Dindinger, the Commission voted 4-0 to elect Mr. Paul Weber, Chairman of the Planning Commission.
Upon motion by Mr. Bone and seconded by Ms. McAndrews, the Commission voted 4-0 to elect Ms. Dindinger, Vice Chairperson of the Planning Commission.

Adjournment.

Mr. Van Emburgh informed the Commission that he would be presenting revised language for the road widths described in the Subdivision Regulations.

The meeting ended at 3:34 pm.