

**TOWN OF ELKTON
PLANNING COMMISSION
JANUARY 8, 2024
MEETING MINUTES**

Present: Dave Wiseman; G. Edward Ginder; Keith Thompson William Muller; Paul Manuel; Ray Polaski; Lisa Blackson, Esquire; Jeanne Minner, Director of Planning; Quinn Krenzel, Planner

Absent: None

Mr. Wiseman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He stated the first item on the agenda is approval of the minutes from the December 11, 2023 meeting. There being no corrections from the Commission members, Mr. Wiseman called for a motion.

MOTION: Motion was made by Mr. Thompson to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2023 Planning Commission meeting as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Manuel with the remaining Commission members voting as follows: Mr. Ginder – Aye; Mr. Polaski – Aye; Mr. Wiseman – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.

REQUEST OF MCCRONE, INC. REPRESENTING PARIS FOUNDATION, CONCEPT SITE PLAN FOR NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY CENTER, TAX MAP 033A, P/O PARCEL 1844 (PART OF LEASE AREA 1) AND ZONED R-3 (URBAN RESIDENTIAL)

Mr. David Strouss of McCrone, Inc. and Mr. Mike Brandon and Mr. Bob Imperatrice from Paris Foundation were in attendance to address this request. Mr. Strouss stated they are proposing a 2 story building on the Town's Hollingsworth Manor site. They wish to place the building next to the existing Head Start school run by Maryland Rural Development. The site is 3.6 acres and will be broken up into two lease areas – Maryland Rural Development/Head Start will lease 2.4 acres and the Paris Foundation will lease 1.19 acres.

Mr. Strouss stated the existing school has a parking lot in front and a previous stormwater management facility beside it. He noted the Paris Foundation will be doing the building, the parking area and stormwater management to address the new development part of the site. He said Mr. Imperatrice and Mr. Brandon will talk about their program and the use of the building. He mentioned the main comments from the Town was that they wanted all of the parking in front of the building toward Road B. He stated that becomes a big operational issue for the Paris Foundation. He said they would like to talk about that and hopefully work out some resolutions to that. He noted that once this is resolved they can address the remaining comments and provide structural drawings for the Town to review and approve.

Mr. Bob Imperatrice, Board President for Paris Foundation, in response to the comment concerning location of parking at the front of the building, explained how they function in order to serve the community. He shared that for the last 12 years when they were on Bridge Street, they have provided a nightly potluck meal. Each night a church group or organization will provide the meal which can range anywhere from 80 to 150 people being fed. The volunteers would access the building with the food through the entrance at the rear of the building, bring in the food and set up for the serving table for the evening meal. He said it was important for them to have the parking in the back because that was where the kitchen was located. He stated they are planning the same type of setup with the new building being proposed. He said there could be 4-8 cars of volunteers which would be parked at the rear of the building, and from a logistics standpoint they feel this would be the best way to handle food delivery and volunteer parking.

Mr. Imperatrice said their plan is to have their guests come down the sidewalk and enter the door into the main dining area of the building. He said this flow is intentional so that everyone will be entering and leaving at the same location so they are not wandering around the building, and in order for them to know who is coming and going each evening. He mentioned that through the year they have children's programs and they were hoping to utilize the grassy area in front of the building for games, etc. He mentioned they do VBS and holiday parties as well. He said they are willing to do whatever they have to do address the comments regarding headlights, vehicle noise, etc., whether that be a privacy fence or something else in order to keep from imposing on the adjacent properties. He said he had spoken with their site lighting representative and they talked about designing site lighting that would have zero foot candles at the fence line. He said they would appreciate the Board considering their operational flow to work with them in resolving these few concerns.

Mr. Ginder asked if the building will be sprinklered. Mr. Imperatrice stated sprinklers are required by Code. He mentioned there is a breezeway which connects the two buildings and after speaking with the Building Official, Chip Bromwell, they were informed that the breezeway cannot connect to the existing building or that building would also have to be sprinklered. Their steel contractor has provided a way to place an overhang without attaching the breezeway to the other building.

Mr. Strouss asked Mr. Imperatrice if they would be having any programs during the day. Mr. Imperatrice stated there are none currently but he would let Mr. Brandon address what programs they hope to have in the building. Mr. Wiseman asked if anyone would be staying overnight in the building. Mr. Imperatrice stated there will be no one staying overnight. Mr. Wiseman asked what hours they would have people in the building. Mr. Imperatrice stated between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. They are planning to have classrooms on the second floor. There is an auditorium area at the back of the building. He said they hope to use the classrooms for a variety of things, and have been approached by numerous groups whether it's after school teaching children or Spanish speaking classes. They are open to doing whatever they can to help the people of Hollingsworth Manor.

Mr. Wiseman asked if those programs would be conducted by volunteers or Paris Foundation staff. Mr. Brandon, Executive Director of the Paris Foundation, stated they would be mostly volunteers but would be overseen by himself and other Paris Foundation staff. Mr. Imperatrice noted that the day to day operations, which includes approximately 800 volunteers, is handled by Mr. Brandon.

Mr. Wiseman asked if they would provide a brief operational synopsis of their work. Mr. Brandon stated that besides the meal program they will be initiating a training program for the food service industry where they will be providing classroom training for people so they can receive their ServSafe Food Safety certificate through 20 hours of hands on training in the kitchen. They will be working with volunteer professionals learning how to operate the equipment and then once they graduate from that satisfactorily, they will go through the Susquehanna Work Force network for job placement. The idea is to take folks that are unemployed or under employed that would like entry level positions in the restaurant business or food service industry and give them the basic training and some understanding of what they do and why they do it in a professional kitchen. He explained the kitchen being placed in the building will be a full commercial kitchen. They are hoping to be able to put 200-300 people through the program each year.

Mr. Brandon said other programs on site which are Christian ministries are Sunday Worship services in the auditorium and children's parties on Valentine's Day, Easter, Halloween and Christmas. He stated they also work in conjunction with the Hollingsworth Landing Association and Residents Association and what the neighborhood would like to have happen. They want to be able to accommodate the Homeowners meetings,

and the Girl Scouts. Mr. Brandon pointed out that the building is not for recreational use, they are focused on education, both children and adults, and literacy (they will be partnering with folks who are interested in early childhood development). They will be working with the Health Department on counseling issues and on January 25th Christiana Care/Union Hospital will be bringing their mobile clinic for the first time to provide basic health services.

Mr. Manuel asked if the other programs would extend the use of the building beyond the 4-6 timeframe. Mr. Brandon stated it depends on what the needs are, if they have people who are working a job and want to come for the training they can schedule the training sessions after the evening meal or on weekends since there is nothing going on at the school.

Mr. Ginder asked if they would be requesting a parking waiver. Mr. Strouss explained that this type of use is difficult to fit into a category in the Zoning Ordinance and KCI feels 100 parking spaces are required. Mr. Strouss said they talked with the people at the other site (Rural Maryland Development) and asked how many parking spaces they might need and with the number the Paris Foundation will need they are exceeding that amount of parking spaces. He stated they are going to request a modification from the zoning code requirements since this is not a recreational facility. Mr. Ginder stated his reason for asking is that there are two different agencies operating on the same parcels and he assumes they would allow coordination between the two agencies. Mr. Brandon stated he had spoken with Chris Lindsey, Executive Director of MRDC and their program is finished at 3:30 so they are off the property by 4:00 p.m. and the Paris program doesn't begin until 5:00 p.m. so essentially all of the parking spaces will be available to Paris during their use of the building. Mr. Brandon said they have a good working relationship with MRDC. Mr. Strouss stated they plan to move the dumpster to the back of the building and make it larger so that both programs can use it.

Mr. Thompson asked if they have their funding all lined up. Mr. Imperatrice stated they have the majority of their funding in place since they received a substantial grant. He mentioned they also have done some fundraising of about \$250,000. They are very excited to get the project started.

Mr. Imperatrice noted the comments regarding headlights with respect to residential properties near that location. He stated the volunteers begin arriving at 4:30 to get prepped for the meals. He mentioned some of the other programs such as Trunk or Treat which they have in the parking area and this year they had about 200 families who participated. Some of the family members helped out and he mentioned that the Town Public Works Department participated also. He said it is great to see people from the community participating and excited about what Paris is doing.

Mr. Imperatrice said when they were at the other building on Bridge Street, although a lot of the guests walked to the building and they have ministered to the homeless for the past 14 years, they also had 6 or 8 vehicles of guests who came for the meals. It has become a sense of community and some of the people who have come for years have now moved out of the motels or tents they were living in and are now residing in Hollingsworth Manor. They continue to participate and are looking forward to getting back to spending time with other people they have gotten to know through the program once the building is in place.

Mr. Wiseman asked if they coordinate with the woman who has Sheila's Pantry. Mr. Imperatrice confirmed that they work with her. It was mentioned that she use to work out of her house but now is working out of the HRDC administrative trailer on the property. Mr. Brandon noted that Paris also has a small office in the building, so they are already entwined with HRDC.

Mr. Wiseman asked Ms. Minner about screening the rear parking lot. Ms. Minner stated she feels a fence would help, the main concern being the eleven parking spaces across the back rather than the eight against the building. The spaces next to the property line are more likely to cause issues with headlights shining on residential properties and she believes a stockade fence would be a good idea to alleviate that issue. Mr. Strauss stated they could remove the last 2 parking spaces which would get them further away from the property line and then they can place the stockade fence.

Mr. Wiseman asked if most of their guests would be entering through the front door. Mr. Imperatrice stated the guests would enter through the side door. Ms. Minner asked where they would be parking. Mr. Imperatrice stated 99% of their guests walk to the building but the few who drive who park in the front parking lot, only the volunteers will park in the rear parking area. Mr. Imperatrice noted that even on Bridge Street they had very limited parking in front of the building and they didn't have any issues with parking. The property owner made it clear where they were allowed to park. He said people come at different times so not all the vehicles are there at the same time, they come and go.

There was discussion regarding the dumpster and scheduling pick up early in the morning. Mr. Imperatrice stated that is what they do now because the parking lot is full during the day so the trash company comes very early.

Mr. Imperatrice mentioned the road going back to the proposed building and the fact that for safety reasons they will be providing a locking gate because they don't want to create an area where people can be hanging out. They will be checking every evening to be sure there are no vehicles left in the area before the gate is locked for the night. He explained they will be tying their fence into the existing one placed by MRDC to secure the back part of the property. He said they don't have any issues receiving a phone call during the night to remove anyone hanging out in the area.

Mr. Wiseman asked if Ms. Minner had any other comments. She did not. Mr. Wiseman asked if any Board members had additional questions. Mr. Ginder asked what type of fencing exists currently onsite that they might be tying into. Mr. Imperatrice stated there is six foot chain link fence currently. Mr. Wiseman pointed out that type of fencing won't deal with the headlight issues. Mr. Imperatrice stated they are planning to use six foot chain link with slats between the links. Ms. Minner stated normally they request vinyl fencing but she would be agreeable to placement of this type of fence because it would hold up to more abuse.

Mr. Strauss asked if it would be possible to combine Preliminary and Final for the next submission for this project. Ms. Minner noted that they have to do Concept, Preliminary and Final for their stormwater anyway so those plans still have to be submitted separately. She stated it depends on Critical Area and what they will require for planting to meet the 10% rule. Mr. Imperatrice asked how long the next two approvals would take. Ms. Minner stated it depends on how good the engineering plans are. He asked what the process for starting construction would be. He wondered if the approvals before the Planning Commission have to be completed before construction begins. Ms. Minner stated that the engineering plans have to be signed off before grading permits or construction permits can be issued. She noted that architectural plans for the building can be reviewed during that time so they will be ready when the approvals for the engineering plans are completed.

Mr. Strauss mentioned that some of the comments were regarding utilities, fire flow and sprinkler system. Mr. Imperatrice stated they are in the process of having the fire flow test done. The sprinkler company is coming out in the next two weeks to do the test on the hydrant. He said they are trying to get everything done that they are able to do prior to the plan approvals.

Mr. Imperatrice asked if there is a checklist they can review to keep them on track. Ms. Minner stated that Appendix A in the Town Zoning Ordinance Subdivision Regulations and there is a flow chart for site plans approvals and she told Mr. Imperatrice she would send it along to him. Mr. Wiseman said the best thing they can do is keep an open line of communication with Ms. Minner and the Town throughout the process.

Mr. Wiseman asked if anyone in the audience had any questions. There was no one in attendance who wished to speak for or against this project.

MOTION: Motion was made by Mr. Thompson to approve the Concept Site Plan for Paris Foundation contingent upon addressing all outstanding comments and working with the Town with respect to their comments regarding placement of fencing and screening of parking spaces. The motion was seconded by Mr. Polaski with the remaining Commission members voting as follows: Mr. Ginder – Aye; Mr. Manuel – Aye; Mr. Wiseman – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS: Ms. Minner stated they are continuing to review plans which are coming in and getting ready for the next phases of Southfields.

Mr. Wiseman asked whether there have been any additional submission for Patriots Landing. Ms. Minner said there have been no submissions recently. He asked if there have been any more meetings with WILMAPCO with respect to the road/traffic issues. Ms. Minner said she has an upcoming steering meeting with them and then there will be another public meeting. She said they are looking at alternatives for addressing the issues with the roads. She mentioned that Cecil County will also be sending some information to them for their reference as they seek alternatives.

There was discussion regarding Red Hill Apartments and Ms. Minner mentioned someone had called regarding the additional land which was part of that project along Delancy Road. Discussion ensued regarding the amount of traffic along Delancy Road currently and how much traffic these proposed residential properties will add.

Ms. Minner said one of the alternatives for access to Delancy Road they are considering would be creating a road opposite either Turnquist or Pine Valley and cutting to the west and then going behind where the apartments are being proposed and down Kemp Lane, which is a private driveway. They would have to acquire Kemp Lane or do something to have egress at the circle.

Mr. Wiseman mentioned the flooding issues and the fact that if you can't go down Delaware Avenue then you would have to go down Delancy Road. There was discussion regarding the number of entrances and exits for subdivisions. Commissioner Broomell wondered if there were regulations already in place. She pointed out that if they have only one entrance and it gets blocked then people have no way to get out of their development.

Ms. Minner noted that when the Wilbur properties came in originally they were looking at 500 apartments. Discussion ensued regarding the four different accesses into the commercial and residential properties for Southfields.

Mr. Wiseman asked if there was any update on the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Minner stated she hasn't had a chance to work on it with the plan reviews coming in.

Mr. Thompson asked what the status was for the Wash X. Ms. Minner noted there were a lot of outstanding comments and there was information which was missing so she didn't feel it was appropriate to place them on the agenda. Her understanding was the Commission members asked her not to put projects on the agenda which had so many comments or issues that they would have to be denied approval. Ms. Minner said they never formally requested the specimen tree variance, there was no lighting plan and the plans were not labelled properly.

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner Broomell wanted to talk about the possibility of changing the Town regulations regarding handicapped parking so that there will be more of this type of parking at 55 and over apartment communities. She feels this needs to be done as soon as possible. There was discussion regarding how to address this. Ms. Minner said the Zoning Ordinance can be amended to address these concerns.

Mr. Thompson asked about the parcel next to him where the fire took place and the L shaped lot behind the building that burned. He wondered if anything else needs to be done if someone else purchases the property. Ms. Minner stated that if they follow the plans already received they would be ok unless the codes have changed since the plans were originally submitted.

Mr. Wiseman stated the next meeting of the Planning Commission will be on February 12, 2024. There being no additional items to discuss Mr. Wiseman adjourned the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brie Humphreys