

Town of Emmitsburg Planning Commission Minutes

June 27, 2023, 7:00pm

Present: Mark Long (Chair), Kevin Hagan (Vice-Chair), Dan Garnitz (Secretary), Joe Ritz (Commissioner Liaison), Valerie Turnquist

Staff Present: Najila Ahsan (Town Planner), Leslie Powell (Town Counsel), Jessica Housaman (Office Coordinator)

1. Call to Order

- a. Pledge of Allegiance
- b. Commissioner Long briefly introduced the new Planning Commission alternate member, Patricia Galloway.
- c. Commissioner Patricia Galloway mentioned a few words about herself

2. Review and Approval of Minutes for May 22, 2023

- a. Motion to approve minutes by Commissioner Hagan
- b. Seconded by Commissioner Ritz
- c. Changes: none
- d. Approved: The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Public Comment: None

* Agenda items were rearranged to allow items under “New Business” to be discussed before “Old Business”.

4. New Business:

a. Annual Report

- i. Ms. Ahsan mentioned that the Planning commission prepares and submits an annual report for the previous calendar year as it is required by the state.
- ii. Motion to approve the 2022 Annual Report by Commissioner Turnquist
- iii. Second by Commissioner Hagan
- iv. Motion carried unanimously

AYE: 5

NAY: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

b. Seton Shrine Museum

Commissioners control over land use, green spaces, and other aspects of planning. Mr. Dean expressed his satisfaction with the draft language and that the applicants would like to collaborate with the Town to ensure that the entrance to Emmitsburg is visually appealing.

- iii. Mr. Dean and Ms. Powell addressed the language for architectural standards that has yet to be taken out of the entire text
- iv. The applicants and Ms. Powell addressed Floor Area Ratio (FAR) or the ratio of building square footage to the land area excluding parking. The suggested ratio is 0.4 and it's similar to what has been adopted by other comparable municipalities (i.e., New Market). A height restriction of 45' was confirmed by Ms. Powell.
- v. Ms. Powell asked for recommendations from the Planning Commission regarding FAR. The Commissioners asked for examples of buildings with a FAR of 0.4.
- vi. Commissioner Hagan asked about permeable surfaces, and Ms. Powell responded that the County has requirements for stormwater management, but the applicant be required to report their stormwater management practices. Mr. Dean proposed that staff add language to require designated open/green/permeable spaces in a Master Plan.
- vii. Ms. Turnquist asked for a draft with tracked changes to see what changes are being made.
- viii. Ms. Powell and Mr. Dean mentioned that staff and applicant were in consensus with possible expiration of a Master Plan. Ms. Powell emphasized the importance of keeping track of the master plan and expressed concern about isolated land areas getting developed while the rest remains undeveloped, potentially affecting the validity of the master plan. Mr. Dean mentions that a master plan should remain valid indefinitely and that it could be changed by updating the Town's comprehensive plan. Ms. Powell suggested adding language in the ordinance to indicate that if there's a lack of development, there is a possibility that the masterplan could become obsolete due to zoning change in the next Comprehensive Plan cycle.
- ix. Ms. Powell and Mr. Dean agreed to work on the language regarding signage since signage rules vary from zone to zone.

- x. It was confirmed that the next Planning Commission meeting will be a public hearing for the text amendment.
- xi. Mr. Dean mentioned that there is an economic benefit to the applicant and several benefits to the Town. Staff did not see any downside to the proposed changes.
- xii. Diane Walbrecker asked where the floating zone would apply and would that be included in the Comprehensive Plan update. Ms. Powell clarified that the Comprehensive Plan would include the underlying zone.
- xiii. Mr. Dean clarified that a floating zone “floats” until it’s adopted and different from Euclidean zoning
- xiv. Ms. Ahsan agreed to remove highlighted residential zone as the Floating Zone does not apply to residential districts.

6. Next Meeting Date: Monday July 31, 2023.

7. Adjournment

- a. Chair Long adjourned the meeting at 8:05pm