



MINUTES OF THE  
May 16, 2019 Meeting of the  
Town of Easton Planning & Zoning Commission

**Members Present:** Talbot Bone - Chairman, Don Cochran – Vice Chairman, Dick Tettelbaum  
Vicky McAndrews and Paul Weber

**Members Absent:** Jennifer Dindinger (Alternate)

**Staff Present:** Lynn Thomas - Town Planner, Sharon VanEmburch - Town Attorney, Rick  
VanEmburch - Town Engineer, Katie Reedy – Assistant Town Engineer, Joe Mayer – Plan  
Reviewer

**Approval of Minutes**

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Upon Motion of Mr. Tettelbaum and second by Mr. Cochran, the Commission voted 5-0 to  
approve the April 18, 2019 meeting minutes with corrections by Talbot Bone.

Change to Agenda for development site plan approval extension.

**New Business: Brant Court PUD Brendan Mullaney**

1:00 PM

Brendan Mullaney of McAllister, De Tar, Showalter and Walker spoke on behalf of applicant of  
the property requesting extension of the development site plan approval for a one year period.

Upon motion by Mr. Weber and second by Mr. Tettelbaum, the Commission voted 5-0 to approve  
the request for a one-year extension of the developmental site plan approval.

**New Business: Galloway Farms – Comprehensive Plan Amendment Greg Gannon**

1:06 PM

Mr. Thomas presented opening comments for potential to amend the comprehensive plan, which  
Mr. Gannon had brought to the Planning Commission several months ago regarding properties  
near and at the intersection of Chapel Road and Rt. 50. It has been discussed a couple of times  
and the Commission agreed at a minimum to hold a public hearing on the request and include the  
consideration of a couple of additional parcels (243 and 242) and advertisement of upgrading of  
the classification associated with Parcels 107 and 185 to square off the area under consideration .  
The specific request is to change growth areas map of comprehensive plan to designate these  
parcels as Priority 1 area for annexation. They are currently split between Priority 2 and Priority

3. This sort of request requires that notification be sent to State of Maryland and Talbot County. Notification has been sent to both. We have received comments from both agencies.

Mr. Gannon explained his reason for the request to amend the comprehensive plan and annexation of parcels. Mr. Gannon said eventually annexation of these parcels will be requested. He has no plans at this time but it will facilitate things faster if it is already a Priority 1. Mr. Tettelbaum asked Mr. Thomas or Mrs. Van Emburgh to explain what the Commission are here to vote on. Mr. Thomas replied to change the growth area map of the comprehensive plan that currently depicts parcels as a split between Priority 2 and Priority 3 areas for annexation which both refer to annexation being appropriate at some point in the future beyond the current planning period or cycle to Priority 1. Mr. Weber expressed that all parcels should have the same classification on each of the parcels. Mrs. McAndrews asked if the Commission should wait until they go through the comprehensive plan process and look at everything in its entirety before deciding whether or not to change the priority levels and further, if there is a reason not to wait. Mrs. Van Emburgh responded it takes several years to get through that process. We do not have census data. It would be 2022 or 2023 before it gets adopted. Mr. Cochran asked do we create an opening of gates of others waiting and do we have a stack of Priority 1. Mr. Thomas responded he has not had any request for changes at this time. Each one should be considered on its own merit.

Mr. Thomas stated that he has received comments from County and State. Mr. Bone read comments received from MD Department of Planning, Eastern Shore Regional Office, MD Department of Housing and Community Development and Talbot County Planning Department.

Mr. Bone opened floor to public. Ms. Alexis Sipe who lives on Bloomfield Road asked why leap from Priority 3 to Priority 1. She feels make them all Priority 2 and wait for comprehensive plan process and go from Priority 2 to Priority 1 at that time. Mr. Bone asked staff to do research and share research information with Commission.

Mr. Tettelbaum expressed that the comprehensive plan needs to be looked at more than once every 10 to 15 years. Mrs. McAndrews said we should look at the map in further details before making a decision. Mr. Weber said he is not clear on what basis the Commission would make a decision to move something to a Priority 1. Mrs. Reedy located the Future Land Use Map on the Town of Easton website. Mr. Thomas explained areas that there are Priorities 1, 2 and 3 depicted on the map. Mr. Weber asked what the criteria was for Priority 1. Mr. Thomas responded they are not raw undeveloped vacant land with one or two exception. Mrs. McAndrews asked are there any benefit to Town of Easton in having the reprioritization occur now. Mrs. Van Emburgh responded you have to go through this at some point, so it depends on which step is first. Mr. Thomas also responded how much land is necessary to accommodate how much growth in the future. Mr. Weber asked Mr. Gannon if he was expecting an annexation request in the near future. Mr. Gannon responded no. Mr. Weber said he is not in favor of changing priority levels based on a request. Mr. Weber asked is it possible to study Town-wide to look at all Town priority areas so the Commission can make a rational decision concerning priorities for entire Town. Mr. Cochran said we have 2010 plan and it was based on a 6 year window that has since changed to 10, and we know we have persons hanging that are wanting to develop, but he likes Mr. Weber's idea of taking a look at the Growth Areas comprehensively and put on an agenda and take a broad look at Mr. Gannon's request. Mr. Bone asked Mr. Weber what specific items you are looking for to make a decision. Mr. Weber responded some rational decision basis to what constitutes a Priority 1, 2 or 3.

Upon Motion of Mr. Tettelbaum and second by Mr. Bone, the Commission voted 2-3 to recommend approval of change of Priority on these particular parcels to Priority 1. Motion was denied.

After motion was denied, Mrs. McAndrews asked what is your thinking on why it should be a Priority 1. Mr. Bone responded if we do not consider it when someone asks to have it done when should we do it. Mr. Cochran asked Mrs. Van Emburgh can there be a motion that we defer issue for three months to review. Mrs. Van Emburgh said nothing prohibits from saying we need additional time to look and reschedule meeting for whenever and make a decision then. Mr. Thomas also responded that if the results of examination is different than what is in consideration today we have to come back again with the same thing. Mr. Weber explained that if we decide to take look at priority levels comprehensively and at the end we take four parcels and make all 2 or 3 but we can have comprehensive amendment subject to public hearing.

Upon Motion of Mr. Cochran and seconded by Mr. Weber, the Commission voted 3-2 to defer action on the request for a period of three months to allow Staff and Board to broadly consider comprehensive plan and this specific request and their content.

### **Discussions Items**

#### Zoning Ordinance Update – Sign Regulations

Mr. Thomas opened the discussion with the Commission concerning Sign Regulations of the Zoning Ordinance. He submitted documents to the Commission, including a detailed report from the American Planning Association representing the latest thinking regarding sign regulations and issues. It included a Model Ordinance. Mr. Thomas used existing regulations and recommendations from the document, including the model ordinance. Mr. Thomas has followed up with Sharon's comments via email. This information is a starting point for discussion. Mr. Thomas incorporated, consistent with the model ordinance, more than doubling the landscaping area recommended to be provided in conjunction with freestanding sign. Also added a little more clarity with regards to plant species by requiring native plants.

Mrs. Van Emburgh continued her discussion on signage. She explained there is more to draft to get it to a content neutral ordinance. Mrs. Van Emburgh said one temporary sign is not enough. Mr. Bone asked are you talking about the real estate or political signs and do they have to be uniform. Mrs. Van Emburgh responded yes and that a regulation cannot have preference of one type of sign. Mr. Tettelbaum did not understand content neutral. Mrs. Van Emburgh explained content neutral.

The Commission continued their discussions on sign regulations and zoning areas. Mr. Thomas asked the Commission if they have any comments specific to the document that was circulated at the meeting to please let him know. He and Sharon will work together to produce Version 2 and take a closer look at some of the issues discussed at the meeting and present their findings at a future meeting. Mrs. McAndrews commented on native plants. Mrs. McAndrews mentioned that for signs that are of a long-term duration native plants makes a lot of sense.

Mrs. McAndrews mentioned wood signs in historic district. She asked if the historic district Commission provision currently requires wood or if someone wanted to use a man-made material that appeared as if it was wood it would not be allowed. Kelly Pezor, Vice Chairman of the Historic

District, responded they do not have requirements in their guideline for material of sign. Mrs. Pezor asked about electronic sign in windows which is distracting in the Historic District. Historic District Commission does not have anything in their guidelines and have not been able to enforce anything on that line. Mrs. Pezor asked if the Planning Commission would consider that any type electronic signage or messages in store front windows would not be appropriate in the Historic District.

Mr. Bone said with this topic, staff will take whatever input the members of the Commission have and come back with another go around in two or three months.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 2:42 p.m. by motion of Mr. Tettelbaum and second by Mr. Cochran.

The Commission will meet again at their next regular monthly meeting, which is scheduled for Thursday, June 20, 2019 at 1:00 PM.