

The Poquoson Planning Commission met in a work session on Monday, May 20, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers located at 500 City Hall Avenue.

PRESENT: Commissioner Bonnie W. Shriver, Chairwoman
Commissioner William J. Travis, Vice Chairman
Commissioner Gregory N. Gardy, Member
Commissioner Shawn M. Avery, Member
Commissioner Richard D. Clifton, Member
Commissioner Gustavus A. Goddin, Member

Deborah L. Vest, Director of Community Development
Kevin M. Wyne, Planner
Manfred C. Freeman, EDA Chairman
Charity Gavaza, ED Coordinator
Victoria H. Diggs, Clerk

ABSENT: Commissioner James K. Titlow, Member

Chairwoman Shriver opened the work session and welcomed Manfred Freeman, Chairman of the Economic Development Authority and Charity Gavaza, Economic Development (ED) Coordinator who were in attendance for the Commission's discussion on the Big Woods rezoning. She stated that she and Deborah Vest, Director of Community Development, had agreed that it will take numerous meetings to develop a rezoning plan for the Big Woods and since a majority of the Commissioners come to the work sessions directly from the office, it is important to limit each session to one hour in length. She then asked Ms. Vest to lead the discussion.

Proposed Multi-family Development:

Ms. Vest introduced Mr. Bobby Willis of Wave Properties Poquoson LLC who is constructing a car wash on Wythe Creek Road, adjacent to Poquoson Pharmacy, under the auspices of a Conditional Use Permit approved seven years ago. However, she explained that Mr. Willis was in attendance to informally present the multi-family development he is proposing for a 3.4 acre tract which is currently vacant behind the car wash site. Mr. Willis was invited to introduce his conceptual townhome development plan and to answer any questions the Commission might have. During his presentation, he stated that he will be specifically requesting a rezoning and an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan Map, both of which require public hearings. Ms. Vest stated that Mr. Willis's presentation was also provided to adjacent property owners on May 9, 2013 at which time it was generally well received after Mr. Willis responded to concerns relative to accessibility and drainage.

Mr. Willis stated that the area he proposed to develop with townhomes is currently zoned General Commercial (GC); however, since it has no road frontage he felt it was a good fit for the proposed transitional use. He acknowledged that should the site be rezoned to R-3 (Multi-Family Residential), 42 units could be legally built; however, his vision of 24 units better serves the property leaving green spaces in which children can safely play. In response to a Commission query, Mr. Willis stated that he would be constructing higher end units, ranging from \$250,000 to \$310,000, depending on construction costs. Utilizing a coastal theme, he explained that each unit will measure approximately 1,700 square feet in size and generally contain three bedrooms including a ground floor master bedroom, two and a half baths and a one car garage. He stated that his plans also include upgrading Firth Lane to State standards, underground utilities, curb and gutter, an eight (8) inch water main to support a tap for the car wash, fire hydrants and the townhouses, and City sewer connections for the same. He thanked the Commission for allowing him to make his presentation and concluded with his plan to submit the rezoning and Comprehensive Plan Map amendment applications to the City the next day so that the Commission could formally consider his requests at their June meeting.

Big Woods Rezoning:

Mr. Freeman, Economic Development Authority Chairman, was introduced to the Commission and asked to share the Authority's vision for this area. He stated that the landowners have met four (4) times, but the following concerns have not yet been resolved:

- Convincing property owners to pledge in writing to cooperate with one another to market/develop their properties.
- Initiating other cooperatives to successfully market this area without City facilitation.
- Helping developers to recognize the value of the Big Woods area.
- Persuading landowners to obtain wetlands delineations for their property.

However, Mr. Freeman also shared the following positive aspects resulting from the meetings:

- The landowners are willing to attend and participate in future meetings.
- Attorney/EDA Board Member, Tim Trant, has shared his practical land use experience with the property owners.
- Landowners are motivated, due to their age and taxes, to collaborate with others to market/develop their parcels.

During the discussion, it was evident that the need for affordable homes for the younger generation and older citizens on a fixed income were priorities for the Commission.

In conclusion, Mr. Freeman stated that many well-known developers and commercial realtors had recently attended a meeting hosted by the City at which time an outstanding marketing campaign developed by another EDA Board Member was revealed.

Ms. Vest reminded the Commission that the VC (Village Commercial) District is the only mixed use district currently allowed within the City; however, it does not allow the flexibility that is needed in this specific area. Kevin Wyne, Planner, suggested revisiting the City's waterfront overlay district concept, tweaking it to meet the specific needs of the Big Woods area and presenting it to the Commission at its next work session.

In response to staff's request for direction, the consensus of the Commission was that the waterfront overlay district should be appropriately modified and reconsidered as a possible option for the Big Woods area.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:20 p.m.

ADOPTED: June 17, 2013

ATTESTE: Victoria H. Diggs
Victoria H. Diggs, Clerk