

October 8, 2018 Town Council Meeting

- Approved the Town Meeting Minutes from September 10, 2018.
- Solera Reserve Kensington (10540 Metropolitan Avenue) presented a design revision following recommendations from the Historic Preservation Commission and Planning Board.
- Approved sending a letter opposing the special exception request by 1784 Capital Holdings for the proposed self storage and retail project at 10619 Connecticut Avenue.

Town Meeting 7:00 p.m.

Mayor Furman; Council Member Bartram, Crimmins, Hill-Zayat, and Rollins; Town Manager Daily; Assistant Town Manager Hoffman; and Clerk-Treasurer Engels were present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed for Liz Mansfield and Beth Pierce.

The Town Meeting Minutes from September 10, 2018 were reviewed and approved. Grammatical errors were noted and corrected. See Council Actions.

10540 Metropolitan Avenue Design Revisions

Solera Reserve Kensington presented a design revision for the proposed project at 10540 Metropolitan Avenue following recommendations from the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and Planning Board.

Kevin Sperry, Antunovich Associates, stated that the design changes were incorporated to reduce the massing of the building, which included additional brick, and a stepped down approach towards the existing historic structures to separate the top two stories of the building from the bottom three stories. The revised plan also has a more industrial look to parallel a train station with arched windows, and will move the corridor to help against the visual impact it has against the historic structures. Mr. Sperry noted that there will be two additional meetings with HPC and one with the Planning Board in December, and that they still plan to begin the project in the first part of 2019.

Sharon Scott supported the design, but questioned whether the depicted site plan was to scale, as the street and sidewalks appeared wider than they currently exist.

Mayor Furman stated that the building will be required to be setback and additional right-of-way will be dedicated to allow for the wider street and sidewalks.

Mayor Furman and the Council thanked Solera for presenting the revised plan and that they, along with the Development Review Board (DRB), were highly supportive of the project and appreciative of their efforts to preserve the existing historical structures. The Town will send a letter in support of the revised project plans to both the HPC and the Planning Board.

From the Mayor and Town Council

1784 Capital Holdings, 10619 Connecticut Avenue

Council Member Crimmins reported that the Development Review Board (DRB) met to review the plans for the proposed self storage facility by 1784 Capital Holdings for 10619 Connecticut Avenue. The project is a conditional use within the zoning table and Mr. Crimmins noted that the DRB was disappointed that the project only consisted of 3,607 square feet of retail and 138,000 square feet of storage; the DRB also took issue with the proposed elevation and that prior feedback from the DRB did not appear to be taken into consideration.

Council Member Bartram stated that the property has challenges to incorporate a commercial/residential use; however, if a developer were to present a project with a primary use of retail and a secondary use as self storage, he would be more inclined to discuss the project further.

Council Member Crimmins noted that the Town already has two existing self storage facilities within the general proximity of 10619 Connecticut Avenue.

Council Member Rollins stated that the proposed project does not envision the spirit of the Sector Plan and should be opposed as a conditional use.

Mayor Furman noted that it may take some time for an appropriate project to come along and that the risk is that a by-right project may not be what the Town wants either.

Council Member Bartram noted that with the shortage of affordable and senior housing within the County, and with retail uses not financially conceivable at this property, the Town may see more affordable and senior housing than the Sector Plan envisioned. Mr. Bartram noted that he does not support the project as currently proposed.

Mayor Furman noted that the current owner of the property also owns the adjacent property and was looking to attach an easement to the property to allow access between Metropolitan and Connecticut Avenues.

Tim Weir asked about the mix of affordable housing that the County is looking for with future development projects and suggested that the Town is in need of additional restaurants.

Council Member Bartram stated that affordable housing could be as much as 90 or 95 percent as with the Knowles Manor project, and although it is needed, the Sector Plan envisioned a wider diversity of housing.

Helen Wilkes stated that she agreed with the Council's position on the project and that the location is a major crossroads and has a significant impact on the community. Ms. Wilkes also noted that the existing garage is a mid-century structure, which is a 'rising-tide' within the historic preservation movement and may be renovated to accommodate a restaurant.

Sharon Scott stated that she was not supportive of a self storage facility for the location and

asked if a right turn only lane along northbound Connecticut Avenue prior to Plyers Mill Road could be designed before any future development.

Pete Fosselman stated that he does not support the proposal for the self storage facility and reminded the Council of Article 28, which requires the Planning Board to have a supermajority when opposing the Town on development projects; he also noted the Urban Land Institute study emphasized apartments, condos, townhomes, and mixed use for this specific location and believed that the property was too small for a restaurant; and suggested that Montgomery Planning conduct a workshop for the Council and public to provide a refresh of the Sector Plan and Design Guidelines.

Mayor Furman stated that the Town has already arranged for a meeting between the Planning Department and the DRB, and that the Town is aware of Article 28.

Council Member Rollins asked Mr. Fosselman if the Town had any recourse if a developer proposed a by-right project.

Mr. Fosselman stated that there is not much the Town can do if the project is by-right; however, this is why meeting with the developers in advance is important.

Council Member Bartram suggested communicating with the developers first verbally to express our opposition to the project and then send a letter to the County Council.

The Council discussed the process to express their opposition and concluded to send a letter in opposition of the project to the County Council. See Council Actions.

Knowles Station Townhouses

Mayor Furman stated that there was a community meeting regarding the Knowles Station Townhome project and that she was generally supportive of the project; however, there were a few concerns with regards to products and design following the meeting.

Summit Avenue Extension

Council Member Bartram reported that he and Mayor Furman met with Nancy Floreen to discuss the Summit Avenue extension project and that she was fully supportive. The County will discuss continued funding for the project on October 11th.

Tim Weir asked if there has ever been consideration in moving the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department and suggested it be discussed.

Mayor Furman stated that the fire station would not need to be moved for the Summit Avenue extension project; and that neither the State Highway Administration or MCDOT recommend relocating the station following their Connecticut Avenue analysis study.

Peter Bartram asked about any future development plans at the Kaiser property located at

Knowles and Summit Avenues.

Town Manager Daily stated that he spoke with Kaiser Permanente recently and that they plan on using the facility again in the near future.

Dr. Cooper clarified that the Planning Board unanimously approved the Summit Avenue extension project and asked about the funding and timetable for the next phase; whether Ms. Floreen's support would speed up the project, and stated that there will be further congestion along Knowles Avenue because the Knowles Manor project will be completed before the extension is built; and also questioned the proposed egress and ingress on Knowles Avenue for the Kensington Station Townhome project.

Council Member Bartram stated that the County has multiple funding stages for the Summit Avenue extension, and that the initial study phase has been funded and completed. Mr. Bartram noted that the continued development in Bethesda and Wheaton will have a much greater impact on our traffic than the Knowles Manor project and reiterated the importance of having our elected officials at the State and County level support the Summit Avenue project.

Jen Beaudet stated that she supports the extension of Summit Avenue and recalled from a previous meeting that by the time the project is completed, it may only alleviate congestion to current levels; and emphasized the importance of improving pedestrian safety at University Boulevard and suggested coordinating this with the Summit Avenue extension project.

Todd Frankel noted the importance of improving sidewalks and crosswalks for pedestrians.

From the Town Manager and Staff

Town Manager Daily stated that the engineering plans for the Detrick Avenue resurfacing and gutter installation project will begin later this fall and the cost is approximately \$80,000.

Tim Weir suggested additional police or traffic controls should be considered to help with pedestrian safety and also noted that the trees along Lexington Street needed to be elevated.

Council Member Rollins noted that there are several intersections where crosswalks are not crosshatched and noted the appearance of 3501 Dupont Avenue.

Council Member Bartram reported that the Traffic Committee will convene on Wednesday evening, beginning at 7:30 pm.

Helen Wilkes requested that a Greenscape Committee meeting be called to address certain vegetation issues over sidewalks.

Mayor Furman noted that Explore Kensington Day will be held on October 21st and that the "I Found it in Kensington" advertising campaign will begin on October 22nd; the Mayor also thanked the business community for their generous support in helping fund the advertising campaign, which will include advertising on social media and on Ride-On buses; and noted that

new wayfinder signs will be installed and that the Town is currently refurbishing the gateway signs.

Public Appearances

Pete Fosselman stated that he sent an email to the Town to address multiple violations and the lack of code enforcement, specifically with the placement of banners at commercial properties; and questioned if there was an enforcement issue with respect to the Code.

Mayor Furman confirmed that they received the email and that the Code Enforcement Officers are currently working through the list; and noted that the Council will be discussing amendments to our sign regulations.

Helen Wilkes stated that she has increasingly noticed vehicles parked the wrong direction on her street, and asked if the Town could send out a reminder in the Around Town Journal.

Council Member Bartram and Town Manager Daily both noted that this has not been a focus of priority for the Code Enforcement Officers, and that it will be addressed by the Traffic Committee.

Council Actions

Council Member Rollins moved to approve the Town Meeting Minutes from September 10, 2018. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Hill-Zayat moved to send a letter opposing the special exception request for the conditional use at 10619 Connecticut Avenue to the County Council. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Bartram moved to adjourn the Town Meeting at 9:08 pm. The motion passed unanimously.