

Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting

Minutes, September 18, 2024

A meeting of the Pocomoke City Planning and Zoning Commission was held in the Council Chambers at City Hall on Wednesday, September 18, 2024.

Commissioners Present: Nola Tullar, Anne Copeland,
Jessmin Duryea, Michael Blake,
Stephen Mills

Director of Planning: Dan Brandewie
City Attorney Erica Witz

Nola Tullar. Chairwoman, opened the meeting at 5:15PM.

New Business

Discussion on House Bill 538-Housing Expansion and Affordable Act. Mr. Brandewie provided a new hand-out put out by the State. It provides more detail on how to interpret the new state law. It suggests to staff that while the local governments may be required to allow manufactured homes and modular homes within single family zoning districts, it appears that we can regulate them. For example, the City could impose certain designs standards on the units to make them more compatible. Staff is still in the process of drafting Neighborhood Compatibility zoning regulations on this subject.

Cypress Park Flood Impact Study (Rauch Engineering). Staff from Rauch provided three berm and fill options to mitigate some degree of flooding with possible cost estimates. The final report should be completed in October for further review.

Neighborhood Compatibility Recommendations: Replacement homes at 408 Linden Avenue and 706 Fourth Street funded by Worcester County Housing Department. Staff was contacted by Davida Washington, the County's Housing Coordinator, to obtain feedback on replacing two existing single-family dwellings with replacement housing to be funded by County Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) received by the County. Because this is being funded with federal grants, local and state agencies can offer comments. Recommendations from the Planning Commission would be advisory in nature as this is not a public hearing. Staff received a detailed assessment of the conditions of both houses from Ms. Washington and they are in poor condition. While the specific model of what was proposed for each house was not provided, Ms. Washington sent an example of a one-story house that was recently constructed in Snow Hill. Staff noted that there are no specific standards that would prevent such homes to be constructed provided zoning and building codes are complied with. Mr. Brandewie presented photographs and aerials of surrounding properties. This property is within the nationally recognized historic district. Discussion followed.

Ms. Linda Williams, owner of 408 Linden Avenue, spoke in favor of the application. She noted the poor condition of the existing house. Discussion followed. Motion made and seconded to raise the pitch of the roof and add a front porch deck or structure if the proposed model is similar to the concept plan as presented for replacement.

Mr. Brandewie presented additional photographs associated with nearby properties of 706 4th Street. This block contains mostly all 2 story older homes of a historic character. An adjacent house was demolished and removed due to its condition about two years ago according to Mr. Brandewie. No specific models were made available from Ms. Washington other than the example home built in Snow Hill. No one spoke in favor or against the application. This block and specific property are also located with the historic district's boundaries. Discussion followed.

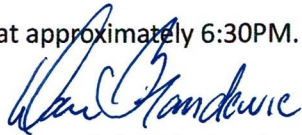
A motion was made and seconded by Planning Commission members to encourage the addition of a front porch structure. Motion carried. Mr. Brandewie noted that since these recommendations were advisory only, staff will bring back the designs to the Planning Commission for further review. Staff will forward these recommendations to the County's Housing Coordinator.

Zoning Map Amendment Corrections and Sustainable Community Boundary Changes. Mr. Brandewie noted that a request was made by a City Councilman to review some of the properties along Market Street for zoning map consistency and appropriateness. Staff noted that there are at least four properties toward the south end of Market Street that logically should be zoned B-2, (General Business) but are zoned R-2, (Single Family-Residential). This issue also came up when reviewing the City's Sustainable Community (SC) Boundary map as several properties along Market Street were left out of the SC designation, thus making them ineligible for grant resources. After further discussion, staff stated they will move forward with a zoning map amendment at some point in the future.

There were no new developments associated with old business. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:30PM.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Brandewie noted that there are no minutes available from the July and August meetings for review. No action taken.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:30PM.


Respectfully submitted

Daniel L. Brandewie,
Planning Director