

Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting

A meeting of the Pocomoke City Planning and Zoning Commission was held in the Council Chambers at City Hall on Wednesday, July 17, 2019. The meeting was called to order at 5:32 PM.

Present: Chairman: Alex Kagan-Not Present
Commissioners: Steven Mills, Ryan Hurley, Rebecca Skorobatsch,
Kyle Pilchard
Director of Planning: Dan Brandewie
Councilmember: Diane Downing
City Clerk: Michelle Beckett-El Soloh

Approval of Minutes from March 20, 2019:

Motion to approve the minutes of March 20, 2019 with the amendment 'Rebecca Skorobatsch not present' on March 20, 2019 (Mills, Hurley passed) at 5:37PM.

Acclamation: Mills-aye, Hurley-aye, Kagan-not present, Scorobatsch-aye, Kyle Pilchard-abstain; none opposed, motion carried.

Approval of Minutes from June 19, 2019:

Motion to approve minutes from June 19, 2019 as written (Skorobatsch, Mills passed) at 5:40PM

Acclamation: Mills-aye, Hurley-aye, Kagan-not present, Scorobatsch-aye, Kyle Pilchard-abstain; none opposed, motion carried.

Zoning Code Update (materials to be provided).

- a. R-2 Zoning Code text amendment to allow two-family and multi-family uses.
- b. Neighbor Revitalization Plans from Cambridge, MD.

Planning Director Dan Brandewie discussed a redevelopment zone for older parts of the City. He believes that the City can develop new text revisions that allow two-family dwellings to blend in with the older style buildings. Parking requirements also would have to be revised. Rental registration might be an option to consider. For example, inspections would be required each time a tenant change occurred to bring any property maintenance issues up to code. Commissioner Hurley said periodic inspections are definitely needed in all rentals to maintain property values. Pocomoke has a large number of rentals and most of them are in need of major updates. Most rentals in City limits are low-income and are not putting money into the local economy. Commissioner Skorobatsch said the condition of a rental makes a difference in the quality of renter. Commissioner Pilchard agrees that passing an Ordinance to control quality of rentals would be beneficial. It would help owners be aware of issues and to take pride in their properties. Gentrification is happening in Baltimore and we cannot afford to have it happen in our City. Planning Director Brandewie said that largest properties that are sitting vacant and abandoned could be transitional housing or another shelter. The Zoning Code might need to be amended to accomodate these types of uses. The Zoning code might need to be amended to accommodate these types of uses. Mr. Brandewie will draft new zoning regulations for discussion for the next meeting.

New laws in Maryland it easier to acquire abandoned properties. Commissioner Pilchard said the most recent four abandoned properties that the City acquired, what is the next process for them? Planning Director Brandewie said owners have been sent notices Demolition will most likely be in the future. Commissioner

Skorobatsch said there are still no sidewalks by end of Market St area. That is a high foot-traffic area. Planning Director Brandewie said City is still looking into grants. The City has applied for Safe-Routes-To-School grants to study this area but there are some stipulations with that money, if approved. The money can only be used in the area of elementary schools. Commissioner Hurley asked if there is anything that can be done with sidewalks in town? Planning Director Brandewie said there might be some money available from grants. More evaluations need to be done on that.

Commissioner Pilchard asked if there are any plans for clean-up of the old Armory or old firehouse buildings? Planning Director Brandewie said there are still old police records and other items in storage there. It's possible to try and refurbish the old gym area or give it back to the State. Those possibilities are being looked at. There is heavy damage to the building. Councilmember Downing said it would be a good idea to fix it up and use it as a tribute/museum for veterans. Commissioner Pilchard asked about the grant payback situation. Planning Director Brandewie said he is working on that to come up with a final total amount and work with the State on matching records.

Motion to adjourn (Hurley, Skorobatsch passed) at 6:22PM

Acclamation: Mills-aye, Hurley-aye, Kagan-not present, Skorobatsch-aye, Kyle Pilchard-aye; none opposed, motion carried.

Approved: K.M. Beckett-El Soloh
City Clerk