

Caroline County Planning Commission



Hannah Cawley, Chairman
Charles Mosca, Vice Chairman
Travis Breeding, Commissioner Member
Jeff Jackson, Member
Keith Bilbrough, Member

Health & Public Services Bldg.
403 South 7th Street, Suite 210
Denton, Maryland 21629-1335
Telephone: 410-479-8100
Facsimile: 410-479-4187

May 10, 2023

CAROLINE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

The Caroline County Planning Commission held its regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, May 10, 2023. Planning Commission members and staff attended in person. Members of the public were invited to attend the meeting both in-person and/or virtually using a website link provided.

Attending the meeting were: Hannah Cawley, Chairman; and members, Chuck Mosca, and Keith Bilbrough. Also present were Katheleen Freeman, Director of Planning and Codes; Matt Kaczynski, Development Review Coordinator; Stewart Barroll, Attorney and Beth Beales, Long Range and Agricultural Planner.

Agenda:

- Approval of April 12, 2023, Meeting Minutes
- Chris Fox-Scarlette Ridge Stables- Final Site Plan
- Gray's Gas- Text Amendment Zoning Ordinance
- Review of Waypost Solar Landscape Plans-Vernon Husted, Landscape Architect

Chairman Cawley called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Cawley asked the members if they had reviewed the minutes from the April 12, 2022, Planning Commission meeting. No changes were noted.

Motion: Mr. Bilbrough made a motion to approve the minutes as written

Second: Mr. Mosca seconded the motion.

In Favor: All members voted in favor of the motion (3-0).

Chris Fox- Scarlett Ridge Stables- Final Site Plan

The applicants, Chris and Laura Fox, have requested a Major Site Plan Approval for a Commercial or Club Stable located at 24082 Carryln Drive, Ridgely. Mr. and Mrs. Fox currently lease their property to Megan Dixon, a local instructor who teaches proper care for horses, tack, and grooming procedures, as well as riding lessons. Currently, Megan teaches English styles riding techniques, hunter/jumper courses and prepares riders for off-site horse shows.

The applicants purchased the property in 2019. The existing horse stable and barn shown on the site plan were properly permitted structures in 2002 and 2008. Both structures were permitted as horse barns for private use by previous property owners. It should be noted that commercial stables require a 200-foot setback from property lines. The existing structures used in conjunction with the operation do not meet the minimum required setbacks; therefore, the applicant applied to the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) for a variance.

The Planning Commission reviewed the Preliminary Major Site Plan at the January 2023 meeting and made a positive recommendation for the applicant to proceed to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a Variance. The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) held a public hearing for the Variance Application in conjunction with this project on February 21, 2023. The BZA unanimously approved the Variance. The applicant is now seeking a Final Site Plan Approval. Staff has reviewed the application and supporting documents and has found that the proposed use of a Commercial or Club Stable conforms to the intent of the Zoning Chapter. It is the staff's opinion the proposed site plan is following the design standards associated with Major Site Plan Applications and should be permitted as proposed.

The Board had no additional comments or concerns.

Motion: Mr. Bilbrough made a motion to approve the final site plan.

Second: Mr. Mosca seconded the motion.

In Favor: All members voted in favor of the motion (3-0).

Gray's Gas- Text Amendment Zoning Ordinance

The owners of Gray's Gas would like to relocate their commercial sales from Greensboro to a building located on their property in West Denton, which is currently zoned I-2 Light Industrial. Commercial sales are not permitted in the I-2 zoning district. Mr. Gray would like to have a small showroom, with sales and repairs and some offices. The Planning Commission discussed a text amendment that would allow a small-scale commercial retail business as an accessory use to Trucking and Service Businesses in the I-2 Zoning District at their April 12, 2023, meeting.

The expansion of accessory uses in the I-2 District will be addressed in a larger scope during the Comprehensive Rezoning process that the County will undertake in 2025, after completion of the Comprehensive Plan update. Mr. Bilbrough asked when the Comprehensive Plan will be started. Ms. Freeman stated that Planning and Codes have started working on the update and anticipates it being completed within a year or two. The proposed text amendment affects very

few areas in the County. Ms. Cawley asked if there were any I-2 districts in the towns. Ms. Freeman stated that the towns all regulate their own municipal zoning codes. All the industrial parks in the County are located within town limits. Each town has different regulations depending on their own needs. The County has very little industrial zoning.

Motion: Mr. Mosca made a motion to forward a recommendation to the County Commissioners for their review and public hearing.

Second: Mr. Billbrough seconded the motion.

In Favor: All members voted in favor of the motion (3-0).

Review of Waypost Solar Landscape Plans

Vernon Husted, Landscape Architect reviewed the Waypost Solar landscape plans. He stated that the design is a good one. Mr. Mosca asked if Mr. Husted felt like Waypost plan is well thought out. Mr. Husted agreed but stated that the timing of the growth of the plants may need to be changed.

Mr. Husted stated that his biggest concern is that Waypost will hire the cheapest landscaping company and they will just dig holes and add the plants. They will not add extra soil and dig holes big enough. Also, watering is very important. Mr. Husted would like Waypost to add a provision that they will be watering every week through June-August.

Mr. Husted stated that there is a difference between a landscape stock and reforestation stock material. Landscape stock is healthier with more robust plant shape and size. Reforestation stock is plant material that typically comes for the Carolinas and does not have the same quality or shape of a plant. He recommends that a provision be added that requires landscape stock material be used at least for the evergreen trees and evergreen shrubs. Mr. Husted recommended changing some of the trees due to the way that they grow or how fast.

Mr. Husted recommended Ernest Seed Company, which is one of the main seed producers on the East Coast for pollinator species as it is a better selection of plant species that will cater to pollinators.

Mr. Husted also recommended that the County extend the timeframe for meeting the 3-foot-high screening to a 5- or 6-year time frame. Adding more plants would not be wise since when they mature the plants will grow into each other and several of them would need to be removed. Also, he suggested that the planting be completed at the beginning of the project opposed to the end, this will allow more time for the plants to grow and meet the screening requirement.

Mr. Mosca asked if the order of the plants would make a difference. Mr. Husted stated that if you put the trees in the front then when everything matures you would not see the other plantings. Ms. Freeman stated that the County wants the screening to look natural.

Ms. Freeman suggested that the places that are more critical for screening, for example near homes, the Board state as a condition, that those areas need to be planted first. The Board also suggested to add another row of evergreens near the critical areas. Another suggestion from Mr. Husted is the reference that “No substitutions shall be made without approval of the owner”, the “Owner” be changed to “County”.

Mr. Barroll asked if the plan calls for built-in irrigation. It does not, but the County can add a provision that Waypost have a water truck to come in and water the new plantings. Mr. Barroll also inquired on how it would be monitored. The County could require a 3rd party to inspect the plantings.

BZA Update

The Board of Zoning Appeals met on April 18, 2023, to hear the following applications:

Application No. 23-0009: A request by **Danny’s Grinding Service, LLC** for a **Variance and Special Use Exception** in accordance with Zoning Chapter 175, Article XVI, Article XVII and §175-28 of the code of Public Local Laws of Caroline County Maryland to establish a natural wood waste recycling facility. Said property is located on Tax Map 13, Grid 5, Parcels 24 and 73, north of Ridgely, Maryland.

The special use exception variance application was approved by the Board with the following conditions:

1. The Applicant must receive Final Site Plan Approval from the Planning Commission prior to the issuance of any Building Permit and/or Zoning Certificate associated with the project.
2. A Building Permit and/or Zoning Certificate will be required prior to any proposed development and must be accompanied by all the necessary documentation and site plan requirements.
3. The Board’s decision shall be void one year from the date of approval unless a plat is recorded or a zoning certificate and/or building permit is issued and construction has begun in accordance with the terms of the decision.

DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Ms. Freeman stated that the Department will be changing the way we process Special Use Exceptions and Major Site Plans. The current process requires an applicant who is requesting a Special Use Exception to come before the Planning Commission as well as the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). The Department has been doing this for about 5-6 years and have decided that unnecessarily prolongs the application process by a few months. To streamline the process the applicant will not be required to come before the Planning Commission for preliminary site plan approval prior to going before the BZA.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Mr. Mosca made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Second: Mr. Bilbrough seconded the motion.

In Favor: All members voted in favor of the motion (3-0).



Katheleen Freeman, AICP
Director
Planning & Codes


Hannah Cawley, Chairman
Prepared by Elizabeth A. Beales

