

Planning & Zoning was held on Wednesday, August 11, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the Mayor & Council Chambers at Laurel Town Hall. The following members were in attendance Planning Chair Brent Boyce, Planning Members: Angie Calio-Quillen, Bill Hearn, Randy Hill, Randy Radish, Dan Ash, and Bill Martin. Also in attendance were Director of Code Enforcement Ken West and Town Manager Jamie Smith.

Planning Chair Boyce opened the Public Hearing at 7:00 p.m. regarding the Mariana Laurel Residential, Subdivision + LPD Request, Discount Land Road, Tax Map #232-12.00-65.00. Planning Chair Boyce advised copies of the Preliminary Plans were available at Laurel Town Hall for public review. Planning Chair Boyce inquired if the public hearing was properly advertised. Town Manager Smith advised yes, both certified mail notices were mailed and the public notice was advertised in the newspaper. Planning Chair Boyce advised the purpose of the public hearing is to allow the public to address any questions, concerns, or comments regarding the proposed development.

Planning Chair Boyce stated Mr. David Kuklish from Boehler and developer Mr. Lou Ramunno are in attendance tonight to give a presentation regarding the proposed development. Mr. Kuklish stated the proposed development is 77 acres located on Discount Land Road that will connect south on Rt.9. The proposed development will feature 410 dwellings consisting of 63 single-family homes, 179 townhomes, and 168 condominiums. Mr. Kuklish advised the wetland areas in the south will not be encroached on the site. Mr. Kuklish advised in reference to the parking per the request of Planning & Zoning per town ordinance the single-family homes require 126 spaces, they're proposing 189 spaces, the town homes require 448 spaces, they're proposing 716 spaces and the condominiums require 420 spaces, they're proposing 420 spaces. He stated there will be 65 on street parking spaces for a total of 1,390 parking spaces. Mr. Kuklish advised the garage will be excluded as a parking space. Mr. Kuklish explained they have met with Del-DOT and Del-DOT is conducting and reviewing the Traffic Impact Study. He advised he met with the State Planning Office for PLUS where it was recommended to:extend the right away for potential connectivity to future development and provide pedestrian access of Discountland Road. Mr. Kuklish stated the development is intended for no rental units.

Mr. Mark Sikora, resident of 302 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, inquired if the proposed development is in or out town of limits at Discountland Road, he also inquired about the traffic flow pertaining the development, and the benefit of this development for the Town of Laurel. Town Manager Smith advised the benefit of this project is that it would help increase our tax base in town. Mr. Sikora inquired why the towns water rates are higher than other towns water rates. Town Manager Smith advised our rates are based on our costs to operate the Water and Wastewater Plants.

Mr. Herschel Edwards, resident of County Seat Highway, stated the traffic is heavy on Georgetown Highway and questioned where the traffic will go with the new proposed development. Mr. Edwards advised he can't see how this development will help the town. It was explained the traffic will enter and exit on Discount Land Road.

Ms. Carol James, resident of Discountland Road, inquired how 1,400 cars can come down a two-lane road. She advised there is not enough access which can create accidents and bottlenecks on the highway. Ms. James inquired what the Fair Market Value is. Mr. Kuklish stated the Traffic

Impact Study will be conducted by Del-DOT to determine the traffic flow. Mr. Ramunno anticipates the townhomes to be approximately 1,250 square feet and starting around \$240,000, the single-family homes to be approximately 1,250 square and starting around the low \$200,000's between the high \$300,000's, and the condominiums to be approximately 1,200 square feet. Mr. Ramunno advised he's working with Del-DOT regarding the widening of the road. Ms. James advised she is concerned with the one-way entrance and exit into the development.

Mr. Mark Sikora, resident of East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, inquired if the development will be incorporated in the town with voting privileges. Town Manager Smith advised this property is already annexed into the town allowing town services and they will be eligible to vote.

Ms. Morgan Kissmore inquired if this development will create an impact on the school district. Town Manager Smith advised the plans went through the PLUS Process with the State Board of Education part of the process and they had no concerns. Ms. Kissmore inquired if additional police officers will be needed with this development. Town Manager Smith advised yes, at some point.

Ms. Jill Cramer, resident of Airport Road, inquired when the project will begin and end. Town Manager Smith proposed it will take up to 6 months to a year for the development to receive all town and state approvals. Ms. Cramer inquired if they will be using in-state subcontractors. Mr. Ramunno advised yes; they will be utilizing in-state subcontractors. Mr. Ramunno proposed they will build 40 to 50 units a year and the construction of houses will depend on the market. Ms. Cramer explained the town only has on grocery store as of right know. Town Manager Smith explained businesses look at the town's additional growth and increase of income when selecting a town. Ms. Cramer inquired who cover the water costs to the development. Town Manager Smith advised the developer will cover the costs of the water/sewer at Discountland Road and they must meet the town specs.

Ms. Jennifer Webber inquired why the town selected to hold a meeting the same night as the Laurel School District Board Meeting. Town Manager Smith advised Planning & Zoning has always met the second Wednesday of each month. Mrs. Webber advised our schools can't provide competitive education and our town has no employment opportunities and there is an increase crime that will lead to our house values going down. Mrs. Webber questioned how the tax revenue is a benefit and explained that the tax benefit will level out leading to an increase of taxes.

Mr. David Rushing, resident of West Sixth Street, stated the town has had no change or no improvement.

Ms. Brittany Rolac, resident of Discountland Road, inquired if the towns zoning laws will require residents who live outside town to connect to town water/sewer. Town Manager Smith advised no; they do not have to connect. Ms. Rolac inquired if they will have to pay town taxes. Town Manager Smith advised; no Sussex County Tax Assessment will conduct your tax assessment. Ms. Rolac stated the Town of Delmar added a new development, which lead to a police officer being killed due to limited staffing. Ms. Rolac inquired about livestock zoning and would she effected. Town Manager Smith advised no because she lives outside the town limits.

Mr. Mark Sikora, resident of East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, stated we need to look at what we really want, and we need to make people aware.

Mr. Bobby Raleigh inquired how the road will be widened. Mr. Kuklish stated the Traffic Impact Study will provide that information when completed.

Mr. Jeff Hill, Fire Chief of the Laurel Fire Dept. clarified the town doesn't pay a fee for the fire services and the fire department receives funding from the state and the Sussex County Council. Mr. Hill advised the biggest load will be on our EMS, but we will be able to handle it. Mr. Hill's two concerns is the one entrance/exit and the on-street parking. Mr. Hill stated he was originally told there was no-on street parking. Mr. Hill suggested it would be great if there was another entrance and exit to the development. Mr. Hill stated he would support the development if it doesn't turn into subsidized housing or low-income housing.

Ms. Jill Cramer, resident of Airport Road, inquired if the development will have HOA's, and include tennis courts and pools. Mr. Ramunno advised yes, and the amenities will be just for the homeowners in the development. Ms. Cramer inquired if it will be a gated community. Mr. Ramunno, advised no. Ms. Cramer inquired if the hospital and doctors would be able to handle the increase growth. Town Manager Smith advised that would be a question for them. Ms. Cramer inquired about the next steps for approval. Town Manager Smith advised the Planning & Zoning Committee would recommend approval to the Mayor & Council. Final Approval will be given once the developer receives all state approvals. Ms. Cramer inquired if businesses had contacted the town in the last couple of years. Town Manager Smith advised yes, and businesses are looking for additional growth in population and an increase in income levels.

Planning Chair Boyce advised the biggest input we've heard tonight is the impact on Discountland Road. Planning Chair Boyce stated copy of plans were made available for the public to review prior to the meeting. Planning Chair Boyce stated no decision is going to be made tonight.

Mr. Charles James, resident of Discount Land Road, stated in regards to US 13 + Discount Land Intersection during the summertime it is difficult to get into the two lanes to go South and then turn around to go North. Mr. James inquired if Del-DOT will be holding a meeting to explain the traffic control pertaining the proposed development. Planning Chair Boyce stated Del-DOT'S Traffic Impact Study will be available before Final Approval, but not by public meeting.

After general discussion, Planning Chair Boyce closed the public hearing at 8:40 p.m.

Planning Chair Boyce stated the Planning & Zoning Committee's goal is to make sure the proposals submitted to Planning & Zoning meet the towns zoning standards. He advised we have to appreciate that the investor wants to invest in the Town of Laurel. Planning Chair Boyce stated we will be holding another meeting to address the public concerns and to vote on the site plan LOPD Request on 9-8-21.

The Planning & Zoning Minutes of Wednesday, July 14, 2021, were presented for review and adoption. Planning Member Hearn made a motion to accept the July 14, 2021, minutes as presented. Planning Member Calio-Quillen seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

With there being no further matters to discuss, Planning Member Hearn made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Planning Member Calio-Quillen seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:41 p.m.