

FRUITLAND PLANNING COMMISSION

The Fruitland Planning Commission met at City Hall on Tuesday, January 2, 2018, at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present:

Derek Bland, Darlene Kerr, Jason Pearce, Leland Bonneville and Roland Somers.

Also present were:

City Manager John Psota, City Solicitor Andrew C. Mitchell Jr. and Administrative Assistant Linda Powell.

Guests were:

John Nielsen and Rose Eastman.

Chairman Bonneville called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and acknowledged receipt of the minutes of the November 7, 2017, calling for additions or corrections. As there were none, **Mr. Bland moved to adopt the minutes as presented; Mrs. Kerr seconded and the motion was approved by five votes in favor.** After the voting, Chairman Bonneville offered best wishes to all for a prosperous New Year. He also extended a warm welcome to Mr. Roland Somers, newly appointed member to the Planning Commission. Immediately after, Chairman Bonneville proceeded to state that as he did not voice his opinion at the last meeting, he wanted to make it known that he was opposed to rezoning the parcels on West Main to residential use. He felt that that area would be better served by maintaining the commercial designation.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Rezoning Request for 403, 405 & 407 W. Main Street

Mr. John Nielsen came forward to further present his request to have his properties rezoned. Additionally he brought along Ms. Rose Eastman, a neighboring property owner whose property is also zoned commercial but has a residential use. He stated that Ms. Eastman was there to establish that she was in agreement with the request to change the zoning designation of Mr. Nielsen's parcels as well as her own. Mr. Nielsen went on to state that he's owned both parcels for about 7 years and that due to the present condition of the structure at 403 W. Main Street, he considers it non-salvageable and as he has a client interested in purchasing the property for residential use, he would demolish the current structure if he were granted the change in zoning designation.

Subsequent discussion among the Commission, Mr. Nielsen and Solicitor Mitchell finally resulted in a general consensus of the commission members that the zoning designation of the parcels in question should stay commercially zoned (C-2 Neighborhood Business). Mr. Nielsen was reminded, that while the Commission would not be offering a recommendation to the City Council in favor of the zoning request, he could still take his request before the Council for their consideration. Finally, Mr. Nielsen decided that he would not pursue the rezoning request any further, but would take some time to consider other commercial development options.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Variance Request for 310 Morris Street (Anthony Jones)

This item was not discussed as Mr. Jones was not in attendance.

2. Special Exception Request for Inspection Station Use - 402 S. Brown Street (Jim Biggs)

Discussion of this item was postponed at the request of the applicant.

Comprehensive Plan Review/Update

Chairman Bonneville informed the Commission that Tracey Gordy, regional planner, had completed the demographic charts for Fruitland but that he had not received them. He stated that he would make contact with Ms. Gordy to see if they would be available before the next meeting of the Commission.

Mr. Somers mentioned a few items of interest that he had observed while reviewing the Comprehensive Plan manual. First, he asked if the City could benefit from some of the State's funding programs such as Maryland Main Street as an option to redevelop the City's Main Street. Mr. Bland responded that it was unlikely that Fruitland's Main Street would be able to meet the historical criteria to benefit from those programs. Mr. Somers then asked if the City would consider looking into the installation of bicycle lanes along area streets as it relates to future transportation goals. The response and general consensus of the members was that the City's streets were not wide enough for bike lanes. Finally, as it relates to the Education section of the Comprehensive Plan, Mr. Somers asked if it would be of benefit to check with the Board of Education to see if there were any future plans to build another school in the Fruitland vicinity. The reply was that Fruitland does not have any available property and/or resources to support another school.

General Discussion

Chairman Bonneville informed the Commission that he had attended a "Better Maryland" session that was held at the government office building in Salisbury back in November and that the focus of the session was laden with complaints about the probability of the State imposing and/or adopting more laws that would burden its communities with a higher cost of living. There were complaints about water and sewer issues as well. He was of the opinion that very little was accomplished during the session.

With no further business to discuss, **Mr. Bland moved to adjourn and Mr. Pearce seconded. The motion was approved by five votes in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.**

Submitted by,

Linda J. Powell

Approved 2/6/18