



Mayor & Council of Berlin

10 William Street, Berlin, Maryland 21811

Phone 410-641-2770 Fax 410-641-2316

www.berlinmd.gov

**Town of Berlin
Planning Commission
March 8th, 2023– 5:30 PM
Berlin Town Hall – Council Chambers**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Agenda Adoption**
- 3. Approval of Minutes: January 1st, 2023**
- 4. Election of Chairman & Vice Chairman**
- 5. Discussion of updating Berlin's Animal Ordinance**
- 6. Discussion of Berlin Growth Element**
- 7. Comments from the Public**
- 8. Comments from the Staff**
- 9. Comments from the Chairman**
- 10. Comments from the Commissioners**
- 11. Adjournment**

Any persons having questions about the above-referenced meeting or any persons needing special accommodations should contact Dave Engelhart at 410-641-4143. Written materials in alternate formats for persons with disabilities are made available upon request. TTY users dial 7-1-1 in the State of Maryland

Town of Berlin
Planning Commission
January 18, 2023

Chairman Chris Denny called the January 18th, 2023, meeting to order at 5:30PM. Members present were Chris Denny, Matt Stoehr, Pete Cosby, Austin Purnell, and Phyllis Purnell. Members absent was Newt Chandler and Ron Cascio. Staff present was Planning Director Dave Engelhart and Permit Coordinator Carolyn Duffy.

Chairman Chris Denny called for a motion to adopt the January 18th, 2023, agenda. Mr. Pete Cosby made the motion to adopt the January 18th, 2023, agenda. Mr. Austin Purnell seconded the motion, and it was unanimously accepted by the commission. Chairman Chris Denny called for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 16th, 2023, meeting. Mr. Pete Cosby made the motion to approve the minutes from the November 16th, 2022, meeting. Mr. Matt Stoehr seconded the motion, and it was unanimously accepted by the commission.

Chairman Chris Denny called the first item on the agenda for a revision to the Site Plan for West View. Mr. Mark Cropper Attorney, 6200 Coastal Hwy Suite #200 Ocean City Maryland for the applicant representing Mr. Jason Malone, along with Mr. Malone was Mr. Shawn Waters of D. R. Horton. Mr. Cropper stated it was the desire to request a revision from the previous requesting to change the design of the structure to have no garage doors. The elevation would not change nor the setbacks. Mr. Shawn Waters stated this would help with affordable homes. Mr. Matt Stoehr asked about the parking. Would they have double parking. Mr. Malone stated they would have extra parking. Mr. Austin Purnell asked if they were three bedrooms. They replied yes. Mr. Pete Cosby asked about the recessed front doors he thought it took away from the living space and not that attractive. He said doors should be flush. Mr. Shawn Waters stated it was just to give room to get you out of the weather. Mr. Cosby said you could do a portico over doors. Mr. Austin Purnell asked if they were using real brick. Mr. Waters replied yes. Chairman Chris Denny asked Mr. Cosby if he wanted to ask about the doors. Chairman Denny said he thought they would go with what they had shown. Mr. Shawn Waters stated they had put lighting underneath. They would have to go back and ask that question. Mr. Dave Engelhart asked Mr. Stoehr if he preferred the recess door. Mr. Stoehr thought it would be a better look if the doors were flush.

Mr. Cropper stated they can go back and ask but couldn't commit tonight. They don't know the cost of this and don't have the authority to do so. Mr. Waters asked if they show the doors flush, and a cover could they proceed. Mr. Cropper asked if they could vote on what they had requested tonight, and they would get back with Mr. Engelhart about the doors. The commission asked they get it to Mr. Engelhart, and he would get it to the members to look at. Chairman Chris Denny asked if there were any public comments. There was none. Chairman Denny called for a motion. Mr. Pete Cosby made the motion to approve the removal of the garage doors. Mr. Matt Stoehr seconded the motion, and it was unanimously accepted by the commission.

Chairman Chris Denny called the next case for Site Plan Review for Hebron Saving Bank located at MD Route 50 & Route 818. Mr. Chris Carbaugh Atlantic Group of Old Ocean City

Blvd. Jason Lindsey of Atlantic Group and Dave Peralta of Atlantic Group. Mr. Engelhart explain this was a review for site plan for Hebron Bank of the lot. He stated for many years it was used for a Convenience Store located near Berlin Main Place. Mr. Engelhart asked Mr. Carbaugh was it a review or was he seeking Site Plan approval. He replied Site Plan approval. Mr. David Peralta gave an overview of the project. He stated it is located on Main Street Map is 0025 Parcel 0483, 1.5 acres and in the B-2 district. It would consist of 32 parking spaces. They have talked to Maryland State Highway and a right in and a right out would be allowed. They would have 50% of open space. State Highway suggested the right in and right out. Mr. Cosby asked about the inter connection had they asked neighbors about that. Mr. Carbaugh stated they had reached out to Mr. Gillis, and he had advised them that his property had been turned over to the association and they advised they were not interested in granting connection.

Mr. Cosby asked if there would be a sign stating right in only. They replied they would do whatever State Highway asked. Chairman Chris Denny asked if the site lined up with Athena Plaza. Mr. Engelhart stated Athena Plaza is further down. They had one entrance given to them and it is south of this one. Mr. Stoehr asked if cones could be place there to stop traffic. Mr. Carbaugh stated it is a state road and they can only control what's on their property. Mr. Carbaugh stated this is probably one of the best uses for the corner. He stated there has been a change in banking you have mobile banking. And not that many visits to the bank. Mr. Austin Purnell asked about the square footage of the building. Mr. Carbaugh replied 1800 sq. feet. Mr. Engelhart replied like a small cape. Chairman Denny asked would it be brick. They replied that is the plan. He stated this would be the same building as the one located in Cambridge.

Mr. Austin Purnell asked about the signage would it be an electronic message board. Mr. Carbaugh said again it would be the same sign as they have in Cambridge. Mr. Stoehr asked where the sign was going. Mr. Carbaugh stated on the corner. Planning Director stated the code said the maximum height is 25 feet so at 18 feet they are not there. Chairman Denny asked if they had anything else from the public. Mr. Engelhart said you usually ask about the lighting and plants. Mr. Cosby than asked would it be down lighting. Mr. Carbaugh stated they would have native plants. Mr. Cosby asked about the trees. Mrs. Phyllis Purnell asked if the sign would be lit 24/7. Mr. Carbaugh stated it would have some type of lighting during the night depending on the hours. Mr. Stoehr asked about the message board being electronic. Mr. Engelhart stated it is not in a residential area. He stated that it is a good use for the parcel. He said the impact would be less. He stated all signage with the right in right out will be specified by state highway.

Chairman Chris Denny called for a motion. Mr. Austin Purnell made the motion to approve the site plan for Hebron Savings Bank. Mrs. Phyllis Purnell seconded the motion, and it was unanimously accepted by the commission.

Chairman Chris Denny asked Mr. Engelhart if he had anything else. Mr. Engelhart replied the mayor wanted him to talk about the growth Element of the Comprehensive Plan. He stated in this year's budget they had a small amount of money set aside for municipal growth budget. Directed by an outside group or person to talk about where the town is going or if they would have an urban growth boundary talk about elements of the comp plan. The mayor wanted to know what you as the Planning Commission wanted, he would like to have a public discussion.

Have a presentation on small towns comparable to Berlin. The county is reviewing their comprehensive plan this year. Some people may not want growth and there are some who do so that it helps keep the cost down. Mr. Engelhart stated a few years ago they had a few different meeting places for the strategic plan. Some things they pursued and completed but they had a lot of good ideas. He said so now it's time to refresh and think about how we keep going. Chairman Denny asked about the amount of money they had. Mr. Engelhart said they have some ARPA funds covid money, and the town had budgeted 30 thousand dollars. Chairman Denny didn't think the other meetings they had were attended well. Mr. Stoehr stated he had lots of questions he would like to ask would like to figure out what went wrong. He said he would like to see towns with similar tax rates, also the utilities rates. He also questioned if the town added more new homes how would that affect the EDU's. Mr. Engelhart stated for about two years now they have been looking at the design not the expansion, so this process has begun. The system we have was designed to be expanded. This is a part of the growth we are discussing.

He asked so what is the boundary or green belt. Mr. Cosby said they must maintain the southwest boundary. Mr. Stoehr said around town people think the town is losing with annexation to Casual Design. Mr. Engelhart stated if any annexation made since that does just like Auto Zone. He stated right now it's in the county we get nothing. The commercial pays a part of that, the services that the residents receive like Police. He stated when coming into town they pay for the EDU's, water & sewer bill each month also they pay for stormwater review, and we get real estate taxes from then on, every year. These places are already built.

Mr. Engelhart told the commission they have done a good job protecting the town. He said he doesn't live in Berlin but it's his town he is the sheriff. Mr. Stoehr said some merchants with businesses want lower taxes. Mr. Cosby stated westerly they need a Berlin beltway from Route 50 to West Road. Mr. Engelhart stated it's in the county comp plan. Mr. Cosby said he would like to hold the line where we are right now. Discussion continued about the Abbott Farm which is in the county. Mr. Cosby asked would the person come talk to them about TDR's. Chairman Denny said he wants to make sure the monies are spent on what they are set aside for.

Mr. Engelhart told them there is a process to amend the comp plan. He explained the process that it took to get Arby's & Royal Farms annexed into town. Mr. Engelhart went over some of the projects that had been approved by the commission in the last 10 years and how it has improved the town. The living conditions of many substandard housings has improved for many people. Mr. Cosby stated it had been a good meeting tonight. Chairman Denny called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Cosby made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Austin Purnell seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned 6:49PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carolyn Duffy