

# Town of Upper Marlboro

## SPECIAL TOWN FORUM

### "Community Redevelopment"

November 21, 2017

Trinity Church/Parrish Hall

Approved Minutes

#### Call to Order

The Special Town Forum was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

Roll Call: James Storey, President of the Board of Town Commissioners;  
Nancy Clagett, Commissioner/Treasurer; Linda Pennoyer, Commissioner.

Staff present: Town Clerk/Administrator M. David Williams; SCW Chair Steve Sonnett;  
TUMHC Chair Brian Callicott; and, Town Attorney Kevin J. Best.

Also present: Town residents: Courtney Bernal-LeClaire, Kai Bernal-LeClaire, Pat Clagett, Jeremy  
Gunnoe, Ellen Storey, and Tonga Turner.  
Surrounding area citizens: Al Weaver, Regina Gilchrist and guest.

#### Introductions

President Storey thanked all for coming and introduced SCW Chair Steve Sonnett and Town Attorney Kevin J. Best, noting that both Executive Director Howard Ways and associate Steve Paul of the PGC Redevelopment Authority (RDA) could not be present due to scheduling conflicts. The President provided a brief history on the 3-year funding plan being offered through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and a handout detailing funding schedules for the "Town of Upper Marlboro Redevelopment" project for FY2017 & FY2018 were provided. He acknowledged previous meetings he and SCW Chair Sonnett attended with Mr. Ways and Tom Himler/Director of the Office of Central Services (OCS), where discussions involved the parameters of the program that define what can and cannot be done with the proposed funding. It was noted that the Town has a current MOU with the University of Maryland PALS Program, in conjunction with the RDA, to produce working plans for a Bike & Ped Trail to connect the Upper Marlboro Community Center on Racetrack Road to Water Street at the Western Branch.

SCW Chair Sonnett explained how funds flow through the CIP process, and also gave examples of some County redevelopment projects currently in the works. Commissioner Clagett added that the Town would do best to consider large enough projects that would greatly improve the quality of life for its citizens, emphasizing "green" ideas are what the RDA is looking for (i.e.; solar, pervious paving, etc.)

#### Discussion(s)

Tonga Turner: Asked if the Town has partnered with other Towns that have gone through this process already. Mr. Sonnett replied that it has been considered, but what is needed is a bigger "team" to see through those partnerships. He then noted that the Town's Sustainable Community designation has enabled a Façade Improvement Plan for Main Street which has produced many projects. He said that any other additional projects would require more staffing, particularly in the form of Project Managers.

Al Weaver: Cited conversations with other surrounding-area citizens who are excited at the prospect of the Town's redevelopment into a destination for shops, restaurants, etc., primarily because of the Town's history. He said current County redevelopment projects require largescale planning, and that the Town could see economic development if it had a really great plan.

Tonga Turner: Proposed trying to do things differently, as in, reaching out to the community's surrounding the Town. She questioned: What are the causes for citizens not to be engaged? It was noted that would be the issue to address first, as the community needs to be present to have Community Development.

Discussion ensued concerning outreach and the best ways to engage community development. Further topics discussed included: percentage of County-owned property, decorating Main Street, local events, and previous studies recently conducted on parking, trails, pedestrian safety and the Sub Region 6 Plan. It was also noted the Town needed to get more people in, to help develop those plans into action.

Commissioner Pennoyer: Said the Town needed to pick a direction and an identity. She noted the Old Marlboro Elementary School in disrepair and the lack of a destination point in the Town.

A discussion of ideas for adaptive reuse of the OMES ensued. Recommendations, contacts to help facilitate a plan were offered by Mr. Weaver, and, Town Attorney Mr. Best offered to send information on local Community Development Corporations (CDCs) who work with municipalities but are separate. He noted they can act as an engine for Economic Development. He added the Town has an advantage by having such a rich history.

Steve Sonnett: Suggested that the Town make a request to the County to list the OMES, the Old Jail and the Board of Education buildings as separate line items for redevelopment in their next Annual Budget.

More topics of discussion included: Financial investment by the Town; Fundraising; Non-profits; Private development; Alternate sources of funding; Schoolhouse Pond; and, Increased dialog with Town commercial property owners.

Recognizing many topics/issues discussed had been approached by the Town by one way or the other, an unofficial consensus was expressed that the Town needed to come up with a concrete plan for a single major project. Mr. Sonnett proposed the OMES as a central focus to spur redevelopment, noting its location between the Town's Residential Historic District and Dr. William & Sarah Beanes' Gravesite.

Those in attendance discussed sharing information and a suggestion was made to meet again to develop a proposal. It was noted that a volunteer group at this stage would make their own meeting structure and working schedule to develop a good concrete proposal.

## **Adjournment**

The forum/meeting was ended at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



M. David Williams  
Town Clerk/Administrator

