

Minutes

Sandy Spring Civic Association
Ross Body Community Center*, Sandy Spring, MD 20860
(Meeting Virtually During Covid-19 Pandemic) *

March 8, 2021

Attendance: Board Members – Dr. Daryl Thorne, President; Basile “Whit” Whitaker (absent), Vice President; Christine Hill Wilson, Treasurer; Audrey Dutton, Parliamentarian (absent); Douglas Farquhar, Recording and Correspondence Secretary

Attendance: General body – Approximately 19

Guest(s): Stacy Kaplowitz, Vice President, KCG Development

Attendance Total (approximate): 22

Meeting called to order: 6:32 p.m. by Daryl

Agenda

New Business:

The agenda was rearranged to permit our guest speaker, Stacy Kaplowitz, Vice President, KCG Development, to speak before we turned to our routine business. Stacy was present to talk about her company’s proposal to convert the Moore and Bentley Buildings on Meeting House Road (originally built to house the headquarters of the Montgomery Mutual Insurance Company, now used as rental office and studio space) and the nearby Stabler Building on Route 108 (the original headquarters of the same company) into 56 apartments for senior independent living, available to individuals who meet moderate annual income requirements. Stacy presented a PowerPoint about the use of the buildings, which is attached. Overall, though, the plans will not affect the exterior of the buildings: rather, existing inside space will be converted to one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments. There will also be extensive landscaping changes to provide recreational and meditation areas. Stacy said that the company commits to running the buildings for 30 years in cooperation with the Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission and other local groups. The schedule is to finish the permitting process in May or June of this year, and to begin construction later this year.

Questions: Daryl asked what will happen in 30 years. Stacy said that there is not a lot of history for this type of project at the end of KCG Development’s commitment, since this type of project is relatively recent. She said, though, that typically these types of buildings would continue on as some type of senior housing.

Someone asked if the rents would be set at market rates. Stacy said that the apartments would be rented to individuals and couples over the age of 62 with income levels matching at most 60% of the Montgomery County average, and rent would be maximized at 30% of their income.

In response to other questions, Stacy said that

- there are no changes contemplated to Meeting House Road in connection with the project, although there may need to be some new curb cuts.
- The only exterior changes to the buildings may be that some of the below-grade units may need to have window wells installed.
- Each apartment would contain between 500 and 900 square feet of usable space.
- The public will have access to the green spaces around the buildings.

Andrea Guy-McFarland expressed concern about access to nutritious food for the elderly residents, since healthy food options and grocery stores are not within walking distance. Stacy said that Habitat America will be the property manager for the buildings, and that group has experience ensuring that residents have access to healthy food and groceries through regular deliveries. She mentioned that Habitat America manages several projects in Texas, and, in the recent severe snow and ice storm in Texas, Habitat America managed to ensure that regular food and grocery deliveries continued when the residents were home-bound. It was suggested that perhaps a Farmers' Market could be held on or near the property to ensure adequate fresh produce for residents. Andrea also asked whether the parking would be adequate, and Stacy responded that there are County requirements for parking that KCG Development would meet or exceed.

Minutes:

The February 2021 Minutes were summarized and approved without amendments.

Committee Reports:

Christine delivered the Treasurer's report, which is attached.

Christine said, on behalf of the Scholarship Committee, that an application had been received from one student for college assistance grants for the 2021-22 school year.

Marie Slater, on behalf of the Transportation Committee, said that a virtual public meeting had been held on the Heritage Triangle Trail (which will link Norwood Road from Woodlawn to Route 108 and Dr. Bird Road from the Olney Ale House to its intersection with Norwood Road) and that comments could be submitted by members of the general public until March 15. Marie also said that concerns about potholes should be reported to the County's 311 assistance line.

A question was asked about when the Ross Boddy Community Center would be reopened, and the answer was that the reopening date is uncertain.

Old Business:

The remainder of the meeting included a discussion of the Montgomery County Council public hearing on the proposed Ashton Village Center Sector Plan, which has been approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board and transmitted to the County Council for its consideration. Doug said that the letter approved at the prior SSCA meeting had been delivered to the County Council, and noted that an online petition had been started and had already gathered many signatures, seeking that the zoning densities and heights for buildings on the Southeast Corner of

the Ashton intersection be scaled back. Kathleen Wheeler mentioned that it would be helpful for SSCA members to write letters to Council members expressing their feelings. At Doug's request, the membership agreed that the link for the online petition could be circulated to SSA membership, along with a copy of Stacy's presentation, after the meeting.

Announcements

Daryl reminded those listening that the SSCA leadership would very much appreciate responses to the SSCA survey sent out a month or so earlier. Christine announced that the Thrift Shop supporting MedStar Montgomery County Medical Center had reopened for the first time since the COVID crisis shut it down in March 2020.

On a properly raised motion, the meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Farquhar
Recording Secretary