

Advisory Committee Meeting
Chestertown Gateway Master Planning Project
August 7, 2007

Mayor Bailey called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. In attendance were Morgan Ellis of the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, Susie Hayman, Kent County Administrator, W.S. Ingersoll, Town Manager and Zoning Administrator representing Chestertown, Jim Gatto of the Chestertown Planning Commission representing Chestertown, John Seidel representing Chestertown, Beverly Birkmire representing Chestertown, Tony Prochaska, Chester River Riverkeeper representing ESLC, Bill Susen representing ESLC, Melanie Culp representing ESLC, Max Ruehrmund representing Kent County, Bernie Kohl representing Kent County, Megan Bramble representing Kent County, and Marion Fry representing Kent County, Jennifer Stead, Stenographer, and guests.

Mayor Bailey thanked the Committee for coming together to meeting on such short notice. Introductions were made.

Mayor Bailey stated that each member of the Advisory Committee received a binder, which also included the agenda items for this meeting.

Mayor Bailey gave an overview of what was included in the Chestertown Gateway Master Planning Project binder.

Ms. Ellis stated that the information sheet was in the process of being updated and copies would be distributed when available.

Mayor Bailey stated that the Town of Chestertown was in no way committed to annexation and all language pertaining to it should be removed from all documents.

Mayor Bailey stated that on the map page the Town boundaries were shown as well the property they were discussing for the master plan. Ms. Ellis stated that the Town and County plans both had this property as a development area.

Mayor Bailey stated that there was information on the next map marking where there were agricultural and land preservation, easements, and the greenbelt area.

Mayor Bailey said that there were copies of the Memorandum of Understanding and the Request for Proposal included in the binders as well.

Mayor Bailey stated that the Maryland State Department of Planning had long recommended Towns and Counties working together when planning for future growth. She said that the State was hoping to use this undertaking as a pilot program for other jurisdictions.

Mayor Bailey stated that the RFP that was sent out to consultants was very broad in its nature. She said that in the vision was to see diversity in the residential blend that would

meet the needs of the community and a variety of financial backgrounds. A walkable community, referencing the historical town should be kept in the design, and “green” building practices would be important.

Mayor Bailey stated that she, Morgan Ellis of ESLC, and William Pickrum, one of the County Commissioners, were the members of the Management Team. She said that their job would be to govern the responsibilities set in the contract with the consultant, schedule public meetings, prepare and disseminate public announcements and notices, and prepare and disseminate all media and public relation activities. They would develop and implement public outreach, provide information to the public via the internet web sites, and tape and document all meeting minutes.

Mayor Bailey stated that there were links on both the Chestertown and Kent County web sites to the ESLC. Ms. Ellis stated that on the site there was a calendar, press releases, maps, names and contacts for the committee members, along with other general information. Ms. Ellis stated that there was also an area on the site where those interested could sign up for email alerts and updates. She said that all of the information should be updated on the website by next week.

Mayor Bailey stated that this would be a community based master plan project. She said that the purpose of the advisory team was to meet with the consultant for planning, who would be announced within the next couple of weeks. Mayor Bailey stated that the main idea of the advisory committee was to bring information from the community to the consultant. She said that each member of the team was asked to serve because of their expertise in certain areas of development.

Ms. Ellis listed the roles and responsibilities of the advisory team as follows:

- Attend the Advisory Committee Meetings, which will be held once a month;
- Monitor and interact with the consultant to ensure the project is in accordance with the MOA, the consultant’s contract, and is continuing in a direction that represents the community of Chestertown;
- Educate and inform the public of the project and the current status of the project.
- Represent the community to the fullest throughout the project; and
- Participate in the community processes developed and implemented by the consultant.

Mayor Bailey stated that in choosing a consultant, the set budget was \$60,000.00. The Management Team received thirteen (13) proposals, of which some were immediately set aside because their bids were higher than the budget allowed. The rest were then judged upon how well they understood the character of the Town and how well the Committee thought they could produce results. Mayor Bailey stated that the consultant the Management Team wanted to sign the contract was their first choice.

Mayor Bailey stated that the Advisory Committee had to decide when to meet and said that there should be at least one standing meeting a month. A decision was made to meet on the third (3rd) Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. Mayor Bailey stated that meetings

would be held on the second floor of the Town Hall building and the public was welcome to attend.

Mayor Bailey stated that she would like both committees to meet with the consultant on Monday, August 20th. There would be an open Town meeting for the public on Tuesday, August 21st at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Bailey asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Gatto stated that he would like the marks on the protected land area map defined for the Committee. Ms. Ellis stated that she would get the definitions for the Committee. She said, however, that she thought the marks indicated either easements in perpetuity or high priority areas.

Mr. Gatto stated that the Chestertown Comprehensive Plan had reviewed this area and he thought that the Committee members should have a copy of that plan as well as the County Zoning information as a foundation for discussions.

Mr. Ingersoll stated that he would like the Advisory Committee to meet with the consultant as soon as possible. He said that the consultant should reconcile the County zoning with the Town Comprehensive plan and recognize the issues of water and sewer capacity, public facilities, police protection, and all other things needed to plan for when a community is doubled in size.

Mr. Ingersoll stated that this project was a large responsibility and each member of the Committee was chosen for their expertise. He said that this project would cover everything from zoning to architecture, growth, and protection of the environment.

Mr. Seidel stated that he was nervous about reviewing this property in isolation. He said he would like to get a sense of the entire vision of the growth of the Town. Mr. Seidel stated that visioning was a public process throughout and he thought there were some who did not think this was being handled in a very public way. Mr. Seidel stated that the RFP also did not seem to define the number or nature of public meetings. He said he would like to include as many people as possible in the planning process.

Mayor Bailey stated that there would be a public process six (6) days long that would break down into several different categories and at that time the public would get a chance to convey their ideas and scenarios for the area. The public could also attend any of the meetings throughout the process.

Mayor Bailey stated that this was going to be a very transparent process. She said that there would be constant information through all avenues until the plan was completed.

Mayor Bailey stated that when the consultant arrived in Town they were going to do the site visit, obtain the base map zoning information, document the site and the surrounding area information. There would be a stakeholders meeting with the Town staff, fire and

police, elected officials, Chamber of Commerce, downtown business association, main street programs, merchants, property owners, citizens groups, and environmental groups.

Mayor Bailey stated that the Town and County role in this project was planning. Mayor Bailey stated that any comments or questions should be forwarded to Ms. Ellis.

Mr. Ingersoll stated that he thought the meeting scheduled for Tuesday, August 21st might be too soon to have a public meeting if they were just meeting with the consultant on the 20th. Mr. Ingersoll stated that the advisory committee and the consultant meeting and coming up with a skeletal outline would be important for a first blush with the public.

Mr. Ruehrmund asked who would be present from Kent County Planning. Ms. Hayman stated that Ms. Owings felt conflicted when asked to serve on the Advisory Team, but would be a resource to the project. Mayor Bailey stated that there should be a member of County Planning involved in this process. She said that the Town had the Zoning Administrator and Chairman of the Planning Commission on the Committee and someone from County planning should represent the County to answer technical questions.

Mr. Ingersoll stated that he wanted to make it clear that there were no guarantees for annexation. He said that the process was a good one, but anything pertaining to annexation had to be stricken. Mr. Ingersoll stated that the property, at this point, was not immediately contiguous to the Town and not possible to annex.

Mr. Ingersoll stated that worries about who would buy this property at the end should not be part of the Committee's conversation. He said that it was not the Committee's responsibility to see that this project was economically viable for a developer. Mr. Ingersoll stated that the purpose of this was to have an open and meaningful study of the area.

Mayor Bailey stated that she knew there was a limited timeframe and if this project was ever developed, it would go through an entire process with the Planning Commissions. Ms. Ellis stated that the ESLC entered into this contract in an attempt to fight against large scale development and annexation. She said that she would like to see everybody work together to illustrate that there is a choice, other than allowing large developers to decide what they are going to build.

Ms. Bramble asked if the Comprehensive Plan would be amended at the end of the process to include these plans. Mayor Bailey stated that this plan would travel with the property.

Mayor Bailey asked that nobody hesitate to contact her or Ms. Ellis with any questions. The next meeting would be on Monday, August 20, 2007 at 5:30 p.m.

Submitted by:

Jennifer Stead

Stenographer