

Planning commission accepts plat consolidation

Members discuss procedure on zoning requests

By CHARLIE WRIGHT
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The Indian Head Planning Commission on Wednesday reviewed changes to a Sixth Street property and responded to queries from a councilman which led to a deeper look at the municipal government correspondence.

The application for the consolidation of a plat in Indian Head was briefly reviewed by the commission and approved unanimously, with a few conditions. The property is 31 Sixth Street, Parcel 311 Lot 1 and 2, with the plan being recently adjusted in order to comply with a handful of commission alterations. Although the new plan hadn't been fully examined by the commission, as it had just

been drawn up, members were generally satisfied with the changes. There are two houses near the area owned by other residents, but nothing has been built on this property.

"Currently there's no building on lots one or two, that's why they're consolidating," said zoning administrator Scott Longstreth.

Following the plat discussion, a conversation took place in response to an email sent to the commission by Councilman Curtis Smith. The communication centered on interactions between the commission and the council, namely the distribution of information and onus of responsibility in zoning matters. Smith laid out several questions for the commission to consider, including whether it was up to the council or the commission to rule on zoning changes and how requests would be addressed if either

group was unavailable.

"In my experience on the planning commission and the town council, someone asking for a zoning amendment should come before the planning commission before it goes to the council," said member Warren Bowie in response to Smith's inquiry. "The planning commission would make a recommendation to the council."

The typical chain of command for zoning issues is the commission and then the council, from a review of the request to the public hearings, despite the council having the final decision toward ratification. The commission makes rulings along the way to influence the council based on their own research and expertise, and no matter which department residents or organizations initially reach out to, the commission is the start. Longstreth echoed Bowie's sentiments on the mat-

ter, though members Thomas Blake and Thomas Gordon suggested a formal note of this procedure to the council.

Smith also asked the commission's future plans, to which Blake answered "continuing working on the comprehensive plan, be prepared to respond to any requests or any questions that's put forth to the council going forward." The commission is currently finishing up a review of the fourth chapter of the plan, slowed by a few other issues that came to the table. Smith also wondered whether the council would be solicited for input along the way, but the commission agreed this wouldn't be prudent to its process. Blake and Town Clerk Annie Brady pointed out the typical flow for these types of projects would be to complete the plan and do a final review before involving the council, because of continuity concerns.

"A change in one chapter can affect other chapters," Longstreth noted.

Brady gathered the various responses to Smith's questions and was given permission from the commission to send the culmination of answers over to all members of the council. The minutes from the meeting will also be submitted as a response, though Brady's document will provide the thoughts of the commission as a whole, instead of simply individual perspectives.

The commission and the council had a joint meeting several months back to discuss cooperation within the Indian Head government, and this back and forth may add to any progress made in that gathering. The council representative for the commission, Vice Mayor Ron Sitoula, was unable to attend Wednesday's meeting to provide any further comments.

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Charles County Public Library celebrates Pride Month

P.D. Brown to host LGBTQ Cafe event on Saturday

By CHARLIE WRIGHT
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The Charles County Public Library is recognizing contributions made by members of the LGBTQ community during Pride Month with a display at P.D. Brown Library and a celebration this Saturday.

The library's fourth annual pride event will feature screenings of a few LGBTQ film titles, engaging discussion of similar media and light refreshments. Billed as a laid back, cafe-styled gathering, the event will

be from 2-4 p.m. and is recommended for residents 16 years of age and older. Saturday's gathering will mark the first time the event has been held at P.D. Brown.

"We are so excited at P.D. Brown to be hosting CCPL's fourth annual Pride event," P.D. Brown Branch Manager Mariana Sprouse wrote in a comment to the Maryland Independent. "This year, we're hosting a Pride Cafe, which is more relaxed and customer-driven. Customers can come in and casually talk with others in the LGBTQ+ community about whatever they want."

Per the Library of Congress, Lesbian, Gay, Bi-

sexual and Transgender Pride Month is observed in June every year to commemorate the Stonewall Riots of 1969, with the focus being to recognize members of the LGBTQ community who have had a significant local, national and international impact on history. The riots took place in Manhattan and turned public sentiment in favor of the Gay Liberation Movement in the United States, and were initially memorialized with a single day, the last Sunday in June. The celebration soon expanded to the entire month of June and includes remembrances of individuals who have lost their lives due to hate crimes or HIV/AIDS in addition



SUBMITTED PHOTO

P.D. Brown Library has many reading options on LGBTQ topics written by a variety of significant individuals in the community.

to parades and concerts highlighting achievement in the community.

The P.D. Brown display includes selections by Chaz Bono, Laverne Cox and Sarah McBride. Some of the books focus on the lives and struggles of the authors themselves, while others are novels with LGBTQ content and subject matter.

"The materials we select include as much of the LGBTQ+ community as possible and show that

CCPL is an open, welcoming place for everyone," Sprouse said. "We think it is so important to have these materials in the library because books and movies serve as mirrors and windows for people; they show you are not alone and what is possible no matter who you are."

CCPL isn't the only organization with ample Pride Month opportunities, as the Library of Congress held conversations with authors of crit-

ically-acclaimed novels with LGBTQ themes in early June, and the American Library Association offers free bookmarks and posters with artwork celebrating the occasion. P.D. Brown's LGBTQ Pride Cafe also coincides with a few national events, including San Francisco's Pride Celebration starting June 23 as well as New York's Pride March and the Chicago Pride Parade on June 24.

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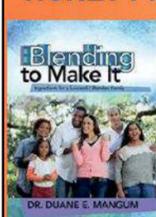
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