

Minutes of Special Meeting of Youghal Town Council held on 22nd October, 2013 in the Mall House, Youghal at 10.00 a.m.

Present:

Mayor Sammy Revins presided.

Cllrs. Linehan-Foley, Hennessy, Burke, O' Sullivan, Flanagan, Beecher & Murray.

Officials Present:

Mrs. Helen Mulcahy, Town Clerk.

Mrs. Geraldine O' Connell, Clerical Officer.

Opening Prayers:

The members and officials recited the opening prayers.

Presentation of Retail Strategy on the Former Seafield Textiles Site by Cunnane Stratton

Reynolds:

The Mayor welcomed officials from Cunnane Stratton Reynolds along with John Martin & Barry Sharkey. The Mayor informed the Meeting that he was disappointed in the manner in which the meeting was arranged without proper and prior consultation with the Town Clerk and the Mayor. He stated that Standing Orders dictated that 3 clear days notice were normally required to arrange a special meeting and this had not been the case. Finbarr Barry apologised for the confusion and said it was due to a misunderstanding on his part.

Mr. Finbarr Barry, Planning Consultant with Cunnane Stratton Reynolds gave a presentation to the Members on the Retail Strategy of the former Seafield Textiles Site.

Cllr. Burke asked if a 1200 sqm retail development would be in keeping with An Bord Pleanala principles. The Planning Consultant informed the Members that this is the normal square footage for any retail development.

Cllr. Murray stated that she would be concerned regarding issues on discount stores versus convenience stores and also on protecting the town centre. Finbarr Barry informed the Members that in reality people mix and match between discounters and mainstream retailers, he also raised the issue of towns such as Kenmare and Shannon which have quite a sophisticated retail core with supermarkets being pushed to the edge of the town.

Cllr. Murray informed the members of her surprise that the report showed that the leakage of people shopping out of town was geared more towards Midleton than Dungarvan. Cllr. Beecher stated that free parking in Midleton was an added attraction for people.

The members stated that they fully supported and would welcome an application to vary the current Youghal Town Development Plan for a retail centre at the former Seafield Textiles site. Cllr. Murray enquired what the timeframe would be for the variation to go out to public consultation. The Town Clerk informed the Members that the variation process was a considerably long one and would take several months to complete.

The Members raised the issue of the X-01 Special Policy Area Objective which Cunnane Stratton Reynolds were proposing and asked if there was a number of sites where this has been used and also if the applications was going to be lodged for just the Aldi element of the site.

Barry Sharkey informed the members that they had 2 operators interested in the original plan but the plan at present was to apply for with just Aldi in mind as the long term tenant.

John Martin thanked the Members for their time and stated that their positive reaction to the project was very encouraging.

The officials from Cunnane Stratton Reynolds along with Barry Sharkey & John Martin left the meeting. The Town Clerk informed the members that a number of factors needed to be taken into consideration before deciding to commence this process. It seems to be common knowledge that Aldi have expressed interest in 3 sites in the Town i.e Seafield, Indian Point & Store Street. Two of those sites have been the subject of planning applications in the past which were granted by Youghal Town Council and refused on appeal to An Bord Pleanala. The Store Street Site which had also been identified appeared to ticks all the boxes in relation to conforming with the zoning and principles of the current Youghal Town Development Plan. The members needed to be aware that re-zoning the Seafield Site alone may not be sufficient to receive a positive decision from An Bord Pleanala as the terms of their refusal was very particular in relation to leakage from the Town Centre etc.

However, the Town Clerk stated that the varying of the Development plan is still a matter for the Members as it is a reserved function.

Arising from this the Members requested that the wording of the proposed variation as suggested by the prospective developers, namely “ X-01 – SPECIAL POLICY AREA OBJECTIVE - Mixed Use Development Site suitable for a mix of commercial uses to include local retail services, restaurant, business incubator units, offices and a convenience retail supermarket where the maximum permissible net retail sales area would not exceed 1,000 square metres. Any development on site should also seek to reflect the heritage status of existing structures” be referred to the Planning Policy Unit of Cork County Council for a report and recommendation prior to commencing the variation process.

On the proposal of Cllr. Murray which was seconded by Cllr. Beecher the Members unanimously agreed in principle to commence the variation process of the Youghal Town Development Plan subject to the report of the Planning Policy Unit of Cork County Council.

Social Housing Needs:

Cllr. Hennessy raised the issue of disability grants and stated that she had been lobbied by certain tenants in relation to house adaptation due to disability/mobility issues. Cllr. Hennessy asked if it was possible that the members consider setting aside funding in the 2014 Budget and prioritise a number of cases.

The Town Clerk informed the Members that there were quite a number of tenants with disability/mobility issues and that several applications were on hand. An application was made through Cork County Council under the 2013 Disability Grants Programme and no funds were made available. The Town Council were told that as a result in cut backs funds would need to come from its own revenue Budget. The Town Clerk said that the County Council Members should be doing everything possible at County level to try to secure funding. In relation to the Budget 2014 – even the smallest job is very costly and the Members would have to be conscious of this.

The Town Clerk informed the Members that a large percentage of houses have been costed for adjustment works and the average cost is €8,000 for the smallest of jobs. The Town Clerk stated that this is a matter for the Members themselves if they wish to set aside funding for such works. However this would have to be done bearing in mind a balanced Budget would have to be adopted. The Town Clerk suggested the Members give the matter some thought for the Budget meeting.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.