

WASHINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
February 26, 2014

The Washington County Planning Commission held a public meeting on Wednesday, February 26, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the Town of Smithsburg, at the Town Hall, Smithsburg, Maryland for the purpose of reviewing proposed zoning and town growth area boundary changes.

Members present were: Chairman Terry Reiber, Clint Wiley, Drew Bowen, and Denny Reeder. Staff members present were: Planning Director Stephen Goodrich, Chief Planner Jill Baker, Associate Planner Justin Lindley and Administrative Assistant Debra Eckard.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Reiber called the public meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

STAFF PRESENTATION

Ms. Baker began the presentation by stating that changes are being proposed in order to help prepare for future growth. Growth is an inevitable side effect of our County's proximity to the large metropolitan areas such as Washington, DC and Baltimore. Ms. Baker explained that the County is not promoting or forcing development into communities. Development is a personal decision that lies solely with the land owner. County staff is trying to help citizens understand that development is part of the future and help decide how to manage the effects. Planning for growth does not start with zoning, but with an acknowledgement of how the community is today, how we want it to look in the future, and how to get there through the transition period. Ms. Baker stated that the County adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 2002. The recommendations made to manage growth now need to be implemented. Ms. Baker discussed the goals and recommendations as follows:

- Plan for development to be as cost-effective as possible for taxpayers
- Preserve agricultural/rural way of life
- Plan for compatibility with existing uses

Ms. Baker discussed the proposed changes to the zoning and adjustments to the Town Growth Area boundary. She briefly explained the differences between the RR (Rural Residential) and RT (Residential Transition) zoning districts. Ms. Baker briefly reviewed the changes from requests by individual property owners following the August 2013 public meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Joe Lane, 12030 Hippan Hill Road: Mr. Lane expressed his opinion that the Town of Smithsburg is almost at capacity for sewer and water and with the proposed changes infrastructure would need to be expanded. This would be a considerable cost for both the Town of Smithsburg and its residents. Mr. Lane expressed his opinion that some of the properties proposed to be zoned residential were previously or are currently orchards and rezoning them for residential uses will encourage development. He stated, "The sole purpose of this rezoning is to make it possible for Smithsburg to increase by approximately two Whispering Hills worth of development". Mr. Lane also expressed concern for school capacity issues and traffic issues on Maryland Route 66.

Thomas Britner, 37 North Conococheague Street: Mr. Britner, general counsel for Bowman Cavetown LLC which owns property at the intersection of Maryland Routes 64 and 66, does not want its zoning changed from Business Local.

Barry Martin, 12508 Bradbury Avenue: Mr. Martin expressed his opinion that the Town's infrastructure is outdated and cannot support additional development.

Bill Wivell, P.O. Box 73: Mr. Wivell submitted a formal zoning request for a small parcel at the intersection of Cavetown Church Road and Maryland Route 64.

Evan Price, 12539 Bradbury Avenue: Mr. Price stated that he is adamantly opposed to the Town Growth Area proposal.

Nancy Hall, P.O. Box 177, Cavetown: Ms. Hall expressed her opinion that a rural community does not need 24-hour businesses. She is opposed to the change from RR (Residential, Rural) to RT (Residential Transitional).

Doug Leather, 12032 Mapleville Road: Mr. Leather, facilities manager for the George M. Bushey & Sons companies, stated that a formal request was made for Parcel 422 to be zoned IR (Industrial Restricted). This parcel is currently being used as a drainage easement for the 4 lots currently zoned IR that surround it.

The Commission took a 10 minute recess to answer specific questions.

Leigh Zahm, 113 Sherri's Way: Mr. Zahm expressed his opinion that there is value in being proactive and planning for the future. He expressed concern for additional infrastructure when development occurs. He

- would like to see concentrated growth. Mr. Zahm stated he is against the proposed Sheetz at the intersection of Maryland Routes 66 and 64 due to traffic issues.

Eric Davis, 12525 Bradbury Avenue: Mr. Davis expressed his concern with regard to the parcels owned by his family that are currently being used for agricultural purposes. He also expressed concern regarding the aging infrastructure, school capacity, traffic, and water and sewer capacity issues.

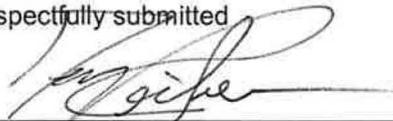
Matt Horsh, 13220 Edgemont Road: Mr. Horsh owns a parcel along Fruit Tree Drive (78 acres). He believes that the neighboring property should not be in the Town Growth Area and should not be zoned RT because it is a wetland and grown up with woods.

Mr. Bowen explained that the zoning that is implemented in Washington County and the municipalities is granted by State Law (Article 66B). State law requires that the County's Comprehensive Plan must be updated every few years. Mr. Bowen noted that the Town Growth Area boundary identified on the County's map came directly from the Town of Smithsburg. He explained that the Town of Smithsburg can expand its boundaries through annexation.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Reiber adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted



Terry Reiber, Chairman