

**WASHINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
REZONING PUBLIC INPUT AND REGULAR MEETING
July 6, 2026**

The Washington County Planning Commission held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, July 6, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. at the Washington County Administrative Complex, 100 W. Washington Street, Room 2000, Hagerstown, MD.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Planning Commission members present were: Jeff Semler, Chairman, Jay Miller, Vice-Chairman, Laura Lane-Unsworth, BJ Goetz, Doug Wright, Jr. and Ex-officio County Commissioner Randy Wagner. Staff members present were: Washington County Department of Planning & Zoning: Alyssa Sabetto, Director; Jennifer Kinzer, Deputy Director; Travis Allen, Senior Planner; Misty Wagner-Grillo, Planner; and Debra Eckard, Office Manager.

NEW BUSINESS

MINUTES

Motion and Vote: Mr. Miller made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2026 Planning Commission meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lane-Unsworth and unanimously approved, with Mr. Goetz and Commissioner Wagner abstaining from the vote.

ORDINANCE MODIFICATION

Hope Valley Farm [OM-26-002]

Ms. Wagner-Grillo presented an ordinance modification for Hope Valley Farm located at 1055 Valley Road in Knoxville. The property is 29.7 acres in size and is zoned EC (Environmental Conservation). The owners operate their business called "Wild Sprouts" which is a nature based educational facility, as well as a self-pick flower farm and farmstand. On December 18, 2024, the Board of Zoning Appeals held a public hearing for a special exception request for an environmental conservation education and banquet/reception facility and for a variance for off-street parking requirements. Proposed events will be hosted in the farm accessory building. The request was granted by the BZA; however, the Engineering Department at that time sent correspondence regarding road adequacy to the BZA. A minor site plan was submitted to the Department of Planning & Zoning on April 17, 2025 for this permitted use. During the minor site plan review (which is still on-going), the Engineering Department commented that Valley Road was inadequate for additional commercial development without improving it to 18 feet in width. The width is based on the number of trips the business would generate. Valley Road currently ranges from 15.6 feet to 24 feet in width. The Engineering Department, in its comments, is requiring the owners to widen sections of the road that are not 18-feet in width along the property lot frontage to the nearest road that is adequate (State Route 340).

The owners are requesting a modification from Article 4, Section 4.3 of the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) which requires all new development to be served by an adequate network of existing and proposed new roads. The owners are asking the Planning Commission to allow them to proceed with the business without improving Valley Road to 18-feet in width. Ms. Wagner-Grillo stated that if the Planning Commission were to approve the modification, the Engineering Department is requesting that a special condition be placed on the approval that the owners will be required to widen the pavement along the property frontage to a minimum of 18-feet.

Discussion and Comments: Mr. Goetz asked if the banquet/event facility will be tied to the educational facility. Mr. Fred Frederick of Frederick, Seibert & Associates, the consultant, stated that the BZA, in its approval, limited the business to one event per weekend from April 1st to October 30th each year. There is a limit of 99 people that can attend the events, including staff.

There was more discussion regarding the minimum requirement that the Engineering Department is requesting. Mr. Frederick stated that the BZA discussed the width of Valley Road in great detail during its public hearing. The BZA acknowledged that this business will not be detrimental to the area. He believes that the variation in width brings traffic calming to Valley Road. In his estimation, it would cost the owners approximately \$250,000 to widen the road to 18-feet. Mr. Frederick noted that traffic counts were performed on Valley Road in front of the property for one week while school was still in session, May 18th to 26th, with an average ADT of 125 at this location.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Wright made a motion to approve the ordinance modification request with no road improvements or exceptions. The motion was seconded by Mr. Goetz and unanimously approved.

SITE PLANS

Bridgestone – Hagerstown [SP-25-047]

Ms. Wagner-Grillo presented a site plan for the proposed construction of a Bridgestone auto repair business on 1.85 acres located at 13324 Pennsylvania Avenue. The property is zoned BG (Business General). The existing 19,749 sq. ft. building will be demolished; the proposed building will be 6,607 sq. ft. Parking required is 26 spaces; 30 spaces will be provided. Ten to twelve employees are proposed. The hours of operation will be 7 am to 7 pm, Monday through Saturday and 9 am to 5 pm on Sunday. One freestanding sign is proposed. Lighting will be building mounted and pole mounted; a photometric plan was included in the site plan submittal. Water service will be provided by the City of Hagerstown; sewer service will be provided by Washington County. Landscaping is proposed along the parking space in front of Pennsylvania Avenue while existing vegetation at the rear of the property will remain. Storm water management requirements will be met by a micro-bioretenention facility on site. Forest Conservation requirements will be met by a payment-in-lieu of planting in the amount of \$3,659.04.

Discussion and Comments: Mr. Wright asked if the photometric plan included the lighting from the signs. Ms. Wagner-Grillo stated that generally the photometric plan only includes the building mounted and pole mounted lights. Mr. Wright believes that internally lit signs should be included in the photometric plans in the future.

Mr. Wright asked if some of the space behind the building could be used for Forest Conservation. It was noted that a large sanitary sewer easement is located there. Mr. Allen stated that the developer was eligible for the “express procedure” which does not require Planning Commission approval for the mitigation.

Mr. Miller asked about the movement of large trucks within the site. It was noted that movements were run that will allow the trucks full access to the site.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Miller made a motion to approve the site plan as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Goetz and unanimously approved.

FOREST CONSERVATION

Jamison Door [GP-26-007]

Mr. Allen presented two requests to meet forest conservation requirements on property located at the intersection of Yale Drive and Professional Boulevard. The developer is proposing the construction of a large industrial facility at this location and is requesting the establishment of an offsite easement to meet the majority of the project’s planting requirements and to remove four specimen trees from the site. The 7.45-acre total planting requirement is a result of the disturbance of 24.18 acres of land. Mr. Allen noted that all acreage not being used for development has been utilized for onsite retention or planting purposes and the offsite easement being proposed is immediately outside the Urban Growth Area close to the same watershed. The off-site easement will consist of 12.88 acres of forest. Mr. Allen stated that the specimen trees are located where substantial grading will occur. Storm water management features will mitigate water quality impacts from the removal of these trees.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Goetz made a motion to approve the off-site mitigation and the removal of four specimen trees. The motion was seconded by Mr. Miller and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Washington County Board of County Commissioners [FCO-26-001]

Mr. Allen reminded members that a public input meeting was held on June 1, 2026 to consider amendments to the Forest Conservation Ordinance. These amendments are primarily mandated by the passage of SB256 (required to be adopted by July 1, 2026 by Maryland counties). In addition to the State-mandated changes, additional changes were recommended by staff to bring the Ordinance in compliance with State regulations that have evolved over the past 30 years. Two letters of support were received prior to the public input meeting, one verbal comment in support was made during the public input meeting, and two letters (neither in support or in opposition) were received following the public input meeting primarily asking for clarification on the Federal facilities exemption (included in the Federally mandated changes) and changes to the mitigation ratio in Priority Funding Areas; staff has responded to these inquiries.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Miller made a motion to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners approval of the proposed amendments as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lane-Unsworth and unanimously approved with Commissioner Wagner abstaining from the vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Update of Projects Initialized

Ms. Kinzer provided a written report for land development plan review projects initialized during the month of May including 4 site plans.

Ms. Kinzer announced that the Board of County Commissioners approved a 12-month moratorium on data centers so the subject can be further studied and refined in anticipation of changes to the Zoning Ordinance in the future. The Board also discussed extending the moratorium beyond 12 months, if needed. A data center impact analysis and assessment is currently being undertaken in Frederick County. Following a brief discussion, members recommend working closely with the City of Hagerstown to present a united front and would like to be involved throughout the decision-making process.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Motion and Vote: Mr. Goetz made a motion to nominate Mr. Semler as the Chairman and Mr. Miller as the Vice-Chairman. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lane-Unsworth and unanimously approved.

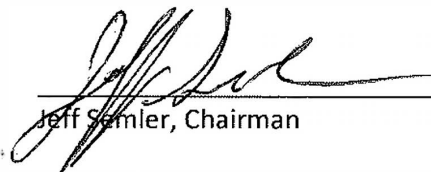
ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Miller made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lane-Unsworth and so ordered by the Chairman.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

1. August 3, 2026, 6:00 p.m. – Washington County Planning Commission regular meeting

Respectfully submitted,



Jeff Semler, Chairman