

**WASHINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**October 2, 2023**

The Washington County Planning Commission held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, October 2, 2023 at 7:00 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 7:00 pm.

Planning Commission members present were: Clint Wiley, Chairman, David Kline, BJ Goetz, Denny Reeder, Terrie Shank, Jeff Semler, and Ex-officio County Commissioner Randy Wagner. Staff members present were: Washington County Department of Planning & Zoning: Jill Baker, Director; Jennifer Kinzer, Deputy Director; Meghan Jenkins, GIS Coordinator; and Debra Eckard, Administrative Assistant.

**PUBLIC INPUT MEETING**

**Jeffrey and Laura Unsworth [RZ-23-007]**

**Staff Presentation**

Ms. Baker presented a proposed map amendment application for property located at 13215 Smithsburg Pike. The applicant is requesting the Historic Preservation overlay for property currently zoned A(R) – Agricultural Rural. The overlay imposes different types of regulation and guidelines for new construction and modifications of existing structures located on the property as it relates to historic preservation. Ms. Baker noted that only a portion of the property around the existing structures is being proposed for the overlay. Structures include a stone dwelling, a stone bank barn and a brick smoke house. The property is listed on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Places (MIHP). One unique feature of the property is the house is located over a spring in the basement of the home, which is associated with a nearby stream. Environmental features associated with the spring include flood plain, wetlands, and state endangered species habitats.

Ms. Baker stated that this request is consistent with policies of the County's adopted Comprehensive Plan based on plans for the continued use, restoration and preservation of the property. The HP overlay can assist the owners in restoring a portion of the dwelling structure which is located within the flood plain. The property is surrounded by agricultural uses with a scattering of residential development; there are approximately 20 historic sites located within one mile of this property.

Ms. Baker noted that in order to evaluate the appropriateness of the zoning, specific criteria must be considered as listed in Section 20.5 of the Washington County Zoning Ordinance. Criteria includes, but is not limited to: the historic resource being listed in the MIHP or National Register of Historic Places; cultural or historic significance; and architectural or design significance.

Based on the information provided by the applicant and the analysis completed, staff is recommending approval of the request. The application was reviewed by the Historic District Commission who unanimously supported this request; one public comment was received that also supported the request.

**Applicant's Presentation**

Mr. Jeffrey Unsworth and Laura Lane-Unsworth, 9701 Larkspur Lane, Hagerstown, were present at the meeting. Mr. Unsworth stated that the property is of the revolutionary war/civil war era and it is their wish to restore and preserve the property as much as possible. The Unsworth's understand that the HP overlay applies additional restrictions on the property.

**Public Comments**

- Ann Aldrich, 13302 Unger Road, Hagerstown – Ms. Aldrich stated she is a member of the Historic District Commission, she lives in a historic house, and she is active in the restoration of the Saylor House at Kiwanis Park in Hagerstown. She commends the Unsworths for their efforts to preserve this historic property and fully supports this request.
- Jefferson Boyer, 68 S. Main Street, Smithsburg – Mr. Boyer stated he is the President of the Smithsburg Historical Society and they fully endorse this application.

**Motion and Vote:** Mr. Goetz made a motion to recommend approval of the request to the Board of County Commissioners because it meets the spirit and intent of the HP overlay zone based upon the findings of fact listed in the Staff Report. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kline and unanimously approved with Commissioner Wagner abstaining from the vote.

The Chairman adjourned the public input meeting at 7:15 p.m. and opened the regular meeting.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **Update of Projects Initialized**

Ms. Kinzer provided a written report for land development plan review projects (56 total) initialized during the month of August including 7 site plans and 6 preliminary-final plats. A six lot residential subdivision on Fairplay Road was submitted in August. Mr. Reeder asked if road widening improvements would be required. Ms. Kinzer stated the plan was routed to the State Highway Administration and the County Engineering Department for review. She will check if any comments have been received and follow-up with Mr. Reeder.

#### **Comprehensive Plan Update**

Ms. Baker reported there are two more meetings – one in Smithsburg on October 10<sup>th</sup> and one in Williamsport on October 25<sup>th</sup> to finalize our public input meetings around the County. Official comments have been received from the City of Hagerstown; we have also received comments from the Maryland Department of Planning. The comment period remains open until our public input meeting closes in Williamsport.

Following all public input meetings, staff will bring the document to the Planning Commission to decide on any revisions that are necessary prior to forwarding the document to the Board of County Commissioners. We anticipate getting the finalized document to the Commissioners after the first of the year.

Ms. Baker noted that public comments continue to be focused on warehouses and traffic concerns around the County.

#### **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

1. Washington County Planning Commission regular meeting, November 6, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Kline made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Goetz and so ordered by the Chairman

Respectfully submitted,



Clint Wiley, Chairman