

**WASHINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
February 1, 2021**

Due to current social meeting restrictions put in place by the Governor of Maryland because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Washington County Planning Commission held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, February 1, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. virtually using Zoom software. No physical meeting took place.

Planning Commission members present were: Clint Wiley, Dennis Reeder, Robert Goetz, David Kline, Jeremiah Weddle, Jeff Semler, and Ex-officio County Commissioner Randall Wagner. Staff members present were: Washington County Department of Planning & Zoning: Jill Baker, Director; Jennifer Kinzer, Deputy Director; Travis Allen, Comprehensive Planner; Meghan Jenkins, GIS Analyst; and Debra Eckard, Administrative Assistant; Washington County Department of Plan Review & Permitting: Ashley Holloway, Director; and Rebecca Calimer, Chief of Plan Review.

Other attendees included: Trevor Frederick of Frederick, Seibert & Associates; Clint Rock and Alex Shifler [S-20-034]; and Mike Lewis [Herald Mail].

CALL TO ORDER

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

MINUTES

Motion and Vote: Mr. Semler made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 4, 2021 Planning Commission public rezoning information and regular meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kline and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

The Shops at Sharpsburg Pike [PC-20-004]

Mr. Allen presented for review and comment a concept plan for a proposed mixed-use development at 10319 Sharpsburg Pike near the I-70 interchange. Currently, the property is zoned HI (Highway Interchange) which does not allow for residential development. This is the first step by the developer to establish a mixed-use zoning district. The developer is proposing to rezone the property to MXC (Mixed-Use Commercial) which would permit both residential and commercial uses. A preliminary consultation was held on December 3, 2020 that included representatives from the Washington County Department of Planning & Zoning, Washington County Plan Review, Soil Conservation District, Washington County Health Department, Washington County Public Schools, City of Hagerstown Utilities Department and the applicant where comments were provided. A copy of the plan was routed to the State Highway Administration; however, no comments were received from them. Mr. Allen noted that one of the most significant issues is school capacity within the South Hagerstown High School district where this development would occur. A preliminary school test was run under the County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) which shows that this proposed development would cause the school district to exceed 120% of the State rated capacity. When this occurs, the developer must work out school mitigation with the Board of County Commissioners in conjunction with the Washington County Board of Education. This process would take place after the rezoning phase is completed. Mr. Allen noted there are several other developments within the City and the County that are already on-line or being proposed which would also fall within this school district. This could necessitate significant facility improvements or other measures which could cause considerable contributions by the County to meet the needs of new students generated by these developments. The next step for the developer, if he wishes to pursue this development, would be the formal submittal of a rezoning application for the property.

Discussion and Comments: Mr. Kline expressed his concern for open space area for the residential units. Members also expressed their concerns regarding the school capacity issues. There was a brief discussion regarding traffic and traffic flow. Mr. Frederick stated that a traffic impact study for a complete build-out of this area was previously approved by both the County and the State Highway Administration and includes a traffic signal at the new intersection by the commercial development entrance. The study was completed using a higher, more intensive use (a hotel) rather than the residential (apartments) development.

Arnett Farms Apartments [PC-20-005]

Ms. Baker presented for review and comment a proposed mixed-use development located just south of the previously discussed property [10319 Sharpsburg Pike] on the opposite side of Sharpsburg Pike. The

original concept plan included 212 apartment units and a small amount of commercial area. A revised plan was submitted as a result of agency comments received during the preliminary consultation which shows a reduced number of residential units (12 units per acre) and increases the commercial area. Major concerns of the proposed development are the school adequacy issue and roads. Ms. Baker noted that an overwhelming amount of traffic from this development would be on private roads which causes a concern with regard to long-term maintenance. There will be two entrances onto public roadways. In the adopted Comprehensive Plan for the County, this property is targeted for commercial uses, not residential uses, thereby making this proposal incompatible with the Comprehensive Plan.

Discussion and Comments: Members expressed many concerns with regard to school capacity issues, lack of open space area within walking distance of the residential units, traffic flow, the back-up of traffic on the I-70 ramps, and improvements to the interchange, which was recently updated.

FOREST CONSERVATION

Stoner Family Farms, Lots 1 and 2 [S-20-034]

Mr. Allen presented for review and approval a request to use natural regeneration to meet Forest Conservation requirements for property located at 17904 College Road. The property owner is subdividing this property into two lots. Lot 1 is exempt from Forest Conservation because they are using the intra-family transfer in order to meet requirements. Therefore, a .59 acre planting requirement for Lot 2 is being proposed within an existing span of trees on Lot 1 that did not qualify as forest at the time of the Forest Stand Delineation in 2016. A justification letter was received from a qualified professional stating that this would be a suitable location for natural regeneration if the surrounding agricultural activities cease in the vicinity of the forest stand. On-site trees on this property adjoin existing trees on other properties.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Kline made a motion to approve the request to use natural regeneration to meet Forest Conservation requirements as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reeder and unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS

Staff Approvals

Mr. Holloway presented the following information for the month of January for Plan Review – Land Use: 2 site plans, 1 grading plan, 2 preliminary/final plats, 1 traffic impact study, and 1 storm water concept plan were submitted.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Semler made a motion to adjourn to Closed Session at 7:37 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Weddle and so ordered by the Chairman.

CLOSED SESSION

To discuss potential candidates to be recommended to the Board of County Commissioners for appointment to the Planning Commission to fill two upcoming vacancies.

Closed session ended at 8:15 p.m.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Semler made a motion that members of the Planning Commission would make a formal presentation to the Board of County Commissioners reiterating their previous recommendation due to concerns regarding the completion of the Comprehensive Plan in 2021. The motion was seconded by Mr. Weddle and unanimously approved with Commissioner Wagner abstaining from the vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kline made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Goetz and so ordered by the Chairman.

Respectfully submitted,


Clint Willey, Chairman