

**WASHINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
May 8, 2023**

The Washington County Planning Commission held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, May 8, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Washington County Administrative Complex, 100 W. Washington Street, Room 2000, Hagerstown, MD.

Planning Commission members present were: BJ Goetz, Denny Reeder, Teresa Shank and Ex-officio Randy Wagner. Staff members present were: Washington County Department of Planning & Zoning: Jill Baker, Director; Jennifer Kinzer, Deputy Director; Lisa Kelly, Senior Planner; Travis Allen, Comprehensive Planner; and Debra Eckard, Administrative Assistant.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

In the absence of the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Goetz called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

MINUTES

Motion and Vote: Ms. Shank made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 3, 2023 meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reeder and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

RZ-23-001 – Text Amendment – Convenience Stores – Recommendation

Ms. Baker noted that due to the lack of availability of Commission members at this evening's meeting, staff recommends that the discussion and vote regarding the text amendment for convenience stores be tabled until a later date.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Reeder made a motion to table the discussion and vote on the proposed convenience store text amendments. The motion was seconded by Ms. Shank and unanimously approved with Commissioner Wagner abstaining from the vote.

NEW BUSINESS

PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION

PC-23-002 – 13610 Pennsylvania Avenue

Ms. Baker presented for review and comment a concept plan for a proposed 5,900 square foot convenience store with 8 pumps and canopy. The site is located along Pennsylvania Avenue next to the Sprint/T-Mobile store located at the northwest corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Maugans Avenue. The developer is proposing 57 parking spaces on the site. Most of the storm water management and sediment and erosion control elements have been addressed. A traffic scope needs to be finalized for the State Highway Administration as well as the County Engineering Department. Two entrances are proposed including a flagstaff panhandle on the west side of the Sprint/T-Mobile store and a new entrance will be created off of Pennsylvania Avenue. The developer is planning to address most of the forest mitigation on-site. Public water and public sewer are available in the area.

SUBDIVISIONS

Gateway Business Park – Lots 5, 6 and 3R [S-23-003]

Ms. Kelly presented for review and approval a preliminary and final plat for Gateway Business Park, Lots 5, 6 and 3R. The subject site is located west of Sharpsburg Pike, adjacent to Arnett Drive and is currently zoned HI (Highway Interchange). The developer is proposing to subdivide the existing Lot 3R (11.75 acres) to create Lot 5 (1.94 acres), Lot 6 (.60 acres) and Lot 3R will contain the remaining 9.22 acres. The lots will have access onto Arnett Drive and will be used for commercial purposes. The site is served by public water and public sewer. Forestation requirements were previously met in 2015 when the original lot was created under the Arnett Farms subdivision. All agency approvals have been received.

Discussion and Comments: Commissioner Wagner asked if the remaining lands could be further subdivided. Mr. Trevor Frederick of Frederick, Seibert & Associates, the consultant, stated that it could be further subdivided because it will have road frontage on the proposed new road going behind the site.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Reeder made a motion to approve the preliminary/final plat as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wagner and unanimously approved.

SITE PLANS

Shops at Sharpsburg Pike – lots 4-8 [PSP-21-002]

Ms. Kelly presented for review and approval a site plan for Lots 4-8, Shops at Sharpsburg Pike. The site is located along the east side of Sharpsburg Pike and is currently zoned HI (Highway Interchange). The developer is proposing to create 5 commercial lots: Lot 4 will be 1.0 acres with a proposed car wash; Lot 5 will be .81 acres with proposed retail/auto parts store; Lot 6 will be 1.70 acres with a proposed restaurant; Lot 7 will be .78 acres with retail uses; and Lot 8 will be 7.84 acres with nothing currently proposed. A modification was approved by the Planning Commission in 2022 that permitted the creation of 5 commercial lots without public road frontage. All lots will have access to a private roadway to be constructed and maintained by the developer. The road will access Sharpsburg Pike and Col. H.K. Douglas Drive. All lots will be served by public water and public sewer. Based on the proposed uses, 86 parking spaces are required; 118 parking spaces will be provided. All lots will have building-mounted and pole mounted lighting; signage will be building mounted with pole mounted signs on Lots 4, 5 and 7. Trash will be collected inside with a dumpster on-site. Hours of operation will vary depending upon the proposed use: Lot 4 – car wash, 24 hours/day, 7 days/week; Lot 5 – auto parts store, 7:30 am to 10 pm, Monday thru Saturday and 8 am to 9 pm on Sunday; Lot 6 – restaurant, 6 am to 10 pm; and Lot 7 – retail, 6 am to 10 pm. Landscaping will be provided throughout the parking lots and along the border of the site. Forestation requirements were met when Lots 1-3, Sharpsburg Pike Shops, was approved several years ago using the payment-in-lieu of planting method.

Discussion and Comments: Ms. Shank asked if any improvements are proposed for Sharpsburg Pike. Mr. Frederick stated that the State Highway Administration has indicated that Sharpsburg Pike will become a five-lane road from Col. HK Douglas Drive south to at least Poffenberger Road. Widening will occur as both sides of Sharpsburg Pike develop and will include acceleration lanes and turning lanes.

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

Virginia Avenue LLC [SP-22-032]

Ms. Kelly presented for review and approval a site plan for a 489,000 square foot warehouse with office located along the southeast side of Virginia Avenue adjacent to the I-70 overpass. The site is 33.7 acres in size and is currently zoned IR (Industrial Restricted). There are 354 parking spaces required; 354 parking spaces will be provided. The site will be served by public water and public sewer. Hours of operation will be 24 hours/day, 7 days/week. There will be approximately 200 trucks per day for freight and delivery. The estimated number of employees is 25 for the office and 75 maximum per shift in the warehouse. There will be a trash compactor in the bay for refuse. Lighting will be pole and building mounted; one ground mounted sign is proposed. Landscaping will be located throughout the parking lot, along the property line that borders the single-family residences and in the storm water management ponds. Forestation requirements will be met by on-site retention and off-site retention of existing forest at a 2 to 1 ratio for a total of 27.24 acres.

Discussion and Comments: Ms. Shank asked what accommodations will be made for the additional truck traffic coming through the residential area. Mr. Frederick stated that a Traffic Impact Study was conducted and no off-site traffic improvements are required with the exception of widening across the frontage of the site. He explained that most of the traffic will be coming from I-81, north on Virginia Avenue turning right onto the site via a dedicated decel lane; trucks will not have to wait to cross traffic. Heading south on Virginia Avenue, a dedicated left-turn lane will be installed. Ms. Shank asked if a traffic signal will be installed for trucks leaving the site and turning left to return to I-81. Mr. Frederick stated that a traffic signal is not warranted at this time per SHA guidelines. Members expressed concern regarding the increase in traffic through the residential areas.

Mr. Reeder asked if the roof is being constructed to accommodate solar arrays in the future. Mr. Frederick did not know.

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

FOREST CONSERVATION

Virginia Avenue LLC [SP-22-032]

Mr. Allen presented for review and approval two requests to meet Forest Conservation requirements for the above referenced site plan. The first request is to utilize off-site retention to satisfy part of the 14.75 acre planting requirement and the second request is to remove 10 specimen trees from the site proposed for development. The developer is proposing to retain 2.26 acres of forest on-site and retain a forest buffer off-site along Licking Creek which will positively affect water quality in that area.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Reeder made a motion to approve the two requests as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Shank and unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS

Forest Conservation Annual Report Summary

Mr. Travis explained that per Article 17 of the Maryland Annotated Code – Natural Resources, a Forest Conservation Annual Report is required each year. He briefly reviewed data from FY 2021 and FY 2022 reflecting development activity in the County. During the past fiscal year, approximately 195 acres of forest was permanently retained as part of the program. There was an increase of 31.3% of bond money posted from FY 2021 to FY 2022. Approximately \$299,441 was collected in payment-in-lieu fees with approximately \$152,527 being expended from the fund. About \$65,636 were expended in implementation costs for the program. A graph was presented showing a summary of the PIL program since its inception in FY 1995. Mr. Allen noted there was no activity in the forest banking program or enforcement activities during the past fiscal year.

Update of Projects Initialized

Ms. Kinzer provided a written report for the land development plan review projects initialized during the month of March including 3 site plans and 5 preliminary-final plats. She noted that activity has remained fairly consistent and there has been more non-residential activity than residential activity.

Comprehensive Plan Update

Ms. Baker noted that copies of the draft of the water resources element and the historic element were included in the agenda packets. The water resources element explores our water quality resources, public water and sewer infrastructure, and storm water resources as well as the impacts of development on our resources. We anticipate additional chapters being finalized and sent to members throughout the next few weeks. The goal is to have the draft document ready by the first week in June. We will be having a 90 day comment period with public meetings throughout the County.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

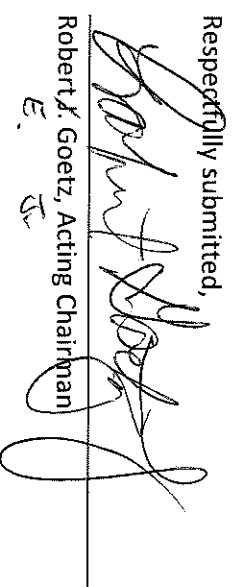
1. Washington County Planning Commission regular meeting, June 5, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Members held a brief discussion concerning the public input meeting that was postponed this evening regarding the truck stops text amendment. It was decided that we try to hold the public input meeting on June 5th at 6:00 p.m. Ms. Baker stated that the members that cannot be present at the meeting could listen to the public input meeting and participate in the discussion and vote at the July meeting. Mr. Goetz expressed his opinion that at least four voting members (this does not include Commissioner Wagner) should be present at the public input meeting. Staff will be in contact with members to verify who can and cannot attend the June meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Shank made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wagner and so ordered by Mr. Goetz.

Respectfully submitted,


Robert J. Goetz, Acting Chairman