

**WASHINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
November 7, 2022**

The Washington County Planning Commission held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, November 7 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at the Washington County Administrative Complex, 100 W. Washington Street, Room 2000, Hagerstown, MD.

Planning Commission members present were: Clint Wiley, Chairman, David Kline, Denny Reeder, BJ Goetz, Jeff Semler, Terrie 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; and Travis Allen, Comprehensive Planner.

**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 October 3, 2022 Planning Commission meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reeder and unanimously approved with Mr. Wiley, Mr. Goetz and Commissioner Wagner abstaining from the vote.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**PRELIMINARY CONSULTATIONS**

**Trammell Crow – Rhoton Farm [PC-22-002]**

Ms. Kelly presented for review and comment a preliminary concept plan for the proposed construction of a 1 million square foot warehouse on 99 acres located along the east side of Greencastle Pike, just north of Huyett's Crossroads. The property is currently zoned P1 (Planned Industrial). Water service will be provided by the City of Hagerstown. The developer will need to extend the line off of the existing 12" water line. A pre-annexation agreement must be submitted and approved prior to approval from the City Water Department. The County will provide sewer services to the site. The developer will be responsible to install off-site sewer connections. The entrance and associated drive accesses should be designed to County standards to allow for the possible conversion to a public road in the future. A Traffic Impact Study was submitted and reviewed by the County Engineering Department and no major comments were noted. A preliminary concept for off-site mitigation should be formulated. Plantings are recommended along Greencastle Pike where there are steep slopes and sensitive areas. Landscaping buffers were also recommended for the existing residential properties next to the site. Any Zoning Ordinance modifications that are needed should be sought as soon as possible with the Board of Appeals. The developer should be cognizant of lighting on the property so there is no spillover on neighboring residential properties.

**Comments:** Mr. Reeder recommended considering solar panels on the roof of the warehouse.

**MODIFICATIONS**

**Sharpsburg Pike Holding LLC [OM-22-010]**

Ms. Kelly presented for review and approval a modification request from Section 405.11B of the Subdivision Ordinance. The property is located at 10319 Sharpsburg Pike. A previous request was submitted and granted approval in March for the creation of 4 commercial lots without usable public road frontage at this same location. The applicant is proposing the creation of 1 additional commercial lot. The property is currently zoned HI (Highway Interchange). The proposed access which will serve the 5 lots will be owned and maintained by the developer. There will be no direct access onto Sharpsburg Pike.

**Motion and Vote:** Mr. Semler made a motion to approve the modification request as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kline and unanimously approved.

## **SITE PLANS**

### **Valley Storage [SP-22-014]**

Ms. Kelly presented for review and approval a site plan to create 3 mini storage buildings on a 4 acre parcel along the southeast side of Robinwood Drive. The property is currently zoned BL (Business Local). Proposed Building 1 will be 12,000 square feet in size, Building 2 will be 30,000 square feet in size and Building 3 will be 13,615 square feet in size. Access will be from an existing entrance that currently serves another storage facility on the site. Hours of operation will 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. No water or sewer facilities will be used. Solid waste will be an inside collection facility. Lights will be building mounted. The site will be surrounded by an 8 foot black rod iron fence. Existing signage is located at the entrance and a building mounted sign will be installed on one of the new buildings. Forestation requirements were previously met in 2007 via a payment in lieu in the amount of \$4,443.12. A landscaped bed will be located along the front of the buildings. Evergreens will be planted along the length of the easement property line and along part of the northern boundary line.

**Motion and Vote:** Mr. Kline made a motion to approve the site plan as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Semler and unanimously approved with Mr. Goetz abstaining from the vote.

### **Cushwa Farm Warehouse [SP-22-027]**

Ms. Kelly presented for review and approval a site plan for a proposed 510,000 square foot warehouse with office on 60.2 acres along the south side of Hopewell Road, north of I-81. The property is currently zoned HI (Highway Interchange). The site will have two access points on Hopewell Road. Hours of operation will be 7 days per week, 24 hours per day. There will be 142 employees per shift in the warehouse and 16 employees per shift in the office. The site will be served by private well and public sewer service. Solid waste will be handled by a trash compacter in the bay. Lighting will be pole and building mounted. Signs will be building mounted with a monument sign constructed at the entrance. A variance was granted by the Board of Appeals on October 3, 2022 to reduce the required number of parking spaces from 453 to 316 spaces. A reduction in the 25 foot setback from street right-of-way to 0 was also granted for the monument sign. Landscaping will be added throughout the parking area and along the property lines. Forest conservation requirements will be met by planting new trees and retaining existing forest on-site for a total of 6.43 acres.

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

## **FOREST CONSERVATION**

### **Cushwa Farm Warehouse [SP-22-027]**

Mr. Allen presented for review and approval a request to remove 4 specimen trees from the proposed Cushwa Farm Warehouse site at 11159 Hopewell Road. Mr. Allen noted the specimen trees are not located within a qualified Forest Stand. All Forest Conservation requirements will be met by on-site planting and retention (most of which will be located in a flood plain area that will benefit water quality) and 15 specimen trees will be preserved on the site, 14 of these trees will be preserved in a permanent easement.

**Motion and Vote:** Mr. Semler made a motion to approve the request as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kline and unanimously approved.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Update of Projects Initialized**

Ms. Kinzer provided a written report for the land development plan review projects initialized in October including 5 simplified plats, 4 preliminary/final plats, and 5 forest stand delineations. She noted that electronic plan review went live on October 31<sup>st</sup>.

### Proposed Text Amendment – Truck Stops and Warehouses

Ms. Baker announced that a majority of the County Commissioners have requested staff to prepare a text amendment to the County's Zoning Ordinance. The text amendment is proposing to remove truck stops as a special exception use in the HI district and that distribution centers/warehouses in any zoning district would be a special exception use rather than a principally permitted use. A special exception use would require a public hearing before the Board of Appeals. Ms. Baker stated that the County Commissioners have scheduled a public hearing on November 29<sup>th</sup> at 10:50 a.m.; legal notices have been submitted to the newspaper. She noted that normal protocols would be as follows: 1) amendments are first heard by the Planning Commission in a public information meeting taking public comment; 2) the Planning Commission makes its recommendation on the proposal to the Board of County Commissioners; 3) the County Commissioners hold a public hearing to take additional public comment; and 4) the Board of County Commissioners make their decision.

**Motion and Vote:** Mr. Kline made a motion to adjourn to *Executive Session*. The motion was seconded by Mr. Semler and unanimously approved.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

*To consult with staff on a matter relative to a proposed text amendment submitted by the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County.*

Mr. Semler made a motion to adjourn to Open Session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reeder and unanimously approved.

Mr. Goetz clarified that the Planning Commission has been asked by the Board of County Commissioners to hold a public input meeting relative to a proposed text amendment regarding the removal of truck stops as a special exception in the HI zoning district and require distribution centers/warehouses over 1,000,000 square feet to be a special exception use in any zoning district. The adopted County process states that the Planning Commission will hold a public input meeting prior to making its recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners.

**Motion and Vote:** Mr. Goetz made a motion to direct staff to schedule a public input meeting for the proposed text amendment during the next Planning Commission meeting to be held on December 5, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. Semler and unanimously approved with Commissioner Wagner abstaining from the vote.

### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Goetz made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:15 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Semler and unanimously approved.

### WORKSHOP

#### Comprehensive Plan Update

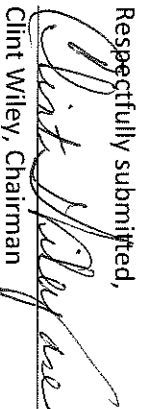
Ms. Baker presented a brief overview of the Land Use Plan which she explained provides policies for planning and applicable functional plans relative to the management of growth over the next 20 years. Included was an excerpt explaining what each of the land use policy areas means and recommendations that staff is proposing to the Commission members for consideration. She briefly described several changes being proposed as follows:

- Remove the Preservation Policy Areas from the rural area. Staff is proposing this as an overlay area which would include Rural Legacy and all designated priority preservation areas (PPA).
- Institute 3 main policy areas in the rural areas of the County: Rural Villages, Agricultural Rural and Environmental Conservation. The EC areas were compiled on a GIS map with consideration given to all environmental categories including stream buffers, steep slopes, forested areas, special planning areas, and endangered species habitats. Staff focused on areas where 4 or 5 of these criteria come together, such as major forested areas like Fairview Mountain, Elk Ridge, etc. and in areas of major stream buffers for the Potomac, Antietam, etc. Locations outside of forested areas and other significant environmental areas would be included in the Agricultural Rural category. The intent of the Rural Villages is to acknowledge existing areas of denser residential development and encourage infill development.

- In the Urban area, staff is recommending a Business/Commercial mix category to replace the Industrial Flex areas. This mixed use would be for employment, light industrial/manufacturing, office space, retail sales and services. Some areas being considered for this Business/Commercial mix are located around the Airport, south and east of Maugansville, and the Mt. Aetna Technology Park.
  - Community Facilities have been merged into a new category called Institutional. This includes government entities, the landfill, the hospital, schools, fire and rescue services, etc.).
  - The Industrial category remains relatively the same with locations close to the Interstates and major highways.
  - The Mixed Use category includes all existing PUDs (Planned Unit Developments).
  - The Residential category will be only one category instead of two (low density and high density) as it is now. We currently have very little land available in the MRGA due to restraints on utilities. The municipalities will need to absorb most of the residential development in the coming years.
  - The Urban Open Space category focuses on large, open regional parks.
- Staff is recommending the adoption of a new overlay that would be called a Mixed Use Corridor. The intent of the Mixed Use Corridor is to acknowledge areas of transition. This would create an opportunity for mixed use buildings. The corridor would be defined as 1000 feet wide or 500 feet on each side of the roadway. There are six areas within the Growth Area where this designation would exist:
- US Route 11 from I-70 to the City limits
  - US Route 11 from Maugans Avenue and Long Meadow Road intersection north to Showalter Road
  - Intersection of Jefferson Boulevard and Eastern Boulevard
  - Leifersburg Pike across Marsh Pike to the Growth Area boundary
  - Pocket of residential development along US Route 40 (Dual Highway)
  - Robinwood Drive from the City limits east to Hagerstown Community College

Staff would like to get a draft of the Comprehensive Plan out for public review after the first of the year.

The chairman adjourned the Workshop meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
  
 Clint Wiley, Chairman