

**WASHINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
December 7, 2020**

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, December 7, 2020 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; Rebecca Calimer, Chief of Plan Review and Lisa Kelly, Senior Planner.

Other attendees included: Trevor Frederick, Frederick, Seibert & Associates; Syd Machat, Jeff Pilot and Mark Srceek [16609 Shepherdstown Pike]; 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. Reeder made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 2, 2020 regular meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kline and unanimously approved.

**-NEW BUSINESS**

**SITE PLANS**

**Taylor Farms I LLC [SP-20-012]**

Ms. Kelly presented for review and approval a site plan for Taylor Farms I LLC for property located at 16220 Wright Road. The developer is proposing a warehouse and office building totaling 825,000 square feet on 53 acres of land currently zoned IG (Industrial General). Access to the site will be from Wright Road, which will be located further north from its current location. The new portion of Wright Road, closest to the proposed building when relocated, will create a single-family lot with an existing house and another lot without development. A plat is currently being reviewed by the Department of Plan Review – Land Development.

The site will be served by public water and sewer. Hours of operation will be 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. There will be 7 to 10 delivery trucks per day. There will be 42 office employees and 165 warehouse employees. Solid waste will be collected in a roll-off trash compactor at the bay. Lighting will be pole and building mounted as well as lighting throughout the parking lot. Parking spaces required is 656 spaces; 492 parking spaces will be provided. A variance to reduce the number of parking spaces was granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals in July 2020. Signage will be determined later and will meet the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Forest Conservation requirements will be met by retaining 1.69 acres of existing forest along Wright Road, and a 34 acre forest easement on Honeyfield Road near Greencastle Pike. Allocation letters from the Health Department are pending. All other agency approvals have been received.

**Discussion and Comment:** Mr. Semler asked if the railroad crossing on Elliott Parkway would be upgraded to current standards. Mr. Frederick stated that Elliott Parkway to Wright Road would be widened from Wright Road to the railroad tracks and from the railroad tracks east, a new road will be constructed. At the intersection of Elliott Parkway and Wright Road, the inside radius for trucks entering Wright Road will be increased to accommodate tractor trailers.

**FOREST CONSERVATION**

**Taylor Farms I LLC [SP-20-012]**

Mr. Allen presented for review and approval a request to establish an off-site forest easement and a variance to remove 7 specimen trees from property located at 16220 Wright Road. Specimen trees are trees greater than 30" in diameter at breast height. Disturbance of 58 acres on the site will require an

18.98 acre planting requirement. Article 10 sets forth the preferred sequence of forest mitigation preferences and the specimen tree variance is covered under Article 15 of the Forest Conservation Ordinance. Specimen trees are prioritized for retention under Article 8 of the Forest Conservation Ordinance.

The developer was originally proposing a 1.69 acre forest easement along Wright Road immediately below the relocated Wright Road. However, the county is requesting a right-of-way to provide access for future development; therefore, the easement would be bisected. The developer is now asking to utilize the payment in lieu method of mitigation for the area being displaced by the right-of-way, which will be .10 acre. The off-site forest easement must be mitigated at a 2:1 ratio; therefore, the off-site mitigation easement will be approximately 35 acres.

The developer is also requesting a variance for the removal of specimen trees on the site. In the justification letter provided by the applicant, development would not be feasible without the removal of the trees. The location of the trees and changes in topography would make retention difficult. The letter offered no evaluation of the effects that removing the specimen trees would have on water quality. The proposed easements would retain forest in the flood plain which would provide water quality benefits.

**Motion and Vote:** Mr. Goetz made a motion to approve the site plan, the on-site forest mitigation, the payment-in-lieu and the off-site mitigation as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kline and unanimously approved.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

##### **16609 Shepherdstown Pike**

Mr. Holloway presented a request to add additional uses on the property located at 16609 Shepherdstown Pike. The property is currently zoned RB – Rural Business. This property most recently housed an engineering firm. The new owners want to open a printing business on the second floor of the large structure located on this property and make the first floor a brewing company. The small outside building (approximately 400 square feet in size) would house a commuter/drive-up coffee house. The proposed uses are permitted by the Zoning Ordinance in the RB district.

**Discussion and Comment:** Mr. Mark Syreck, the purchaser, was present at the meeting. He stated that the property originally housed the Ferry Hill Restaurant, was then converted to the American Legion and finally the engineering firm. There was also a filling station on the property at one time that used the small building now proposed for a coffee house.

Several members expressed their opinions that this would be a minor change in use since the property was formerly a restaurant and American Legion.

**Motion and Vote:** Mr. Reeder made a motion that this request be designated as a minor change, not requiring a public hearing. The motion was seconded by Mr. Weddle and unanimously approved with Commission Wagner abstaining from the vote.

#### **Update of Staff Approvals**

Mr. Holloway presented the following information for the month of November for Plan Review – Land Use: 4 standard grading plans, 5 inspection and maintenance agreements, 2 storm water management concept plans, 2 site-specific grading plans, and 1 site plan; Permitting: 19 entrance permits, 15 grading permits and 2 utility permits.

##### **Solar Energy Generating Systems (SEGS)**

Mr. Weddle began a discussion regarding regulations pertaining to the placement of SEGS. He expressed his opinion that SEGS should not be placed on any lands with Class I, II or III soils. Members discussed the possibility of a meeting to establish some guidelines on the preferred placement and regulations of SEGS in Washington County. It was noted that currently, the County reviews applications and can participate in PSC meetings; however, the Public Service Commission has the final decision. Members discussed placing solar arrays over large parking areas or on rooftops of large buildings. Mr. Holloway suggested including the members of the Board of Zoning Appeals in these discussions so they can hear the concerns and ideas of the Planning Commission. Staff has been assigned the task of setting up a workshop meeting to discuss this issue further.

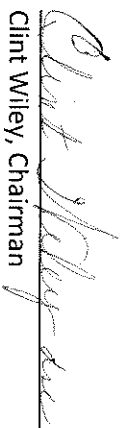
ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Weddle made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wagner and so ordered by the Chairman.

UPOMING MEETINGS

Monday, January 4, 2021, 7:00 p.m. – Washington County Planning Commission public rezoning input meeting and regular meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Clint Wiley, Chairman