

MEETING SUMMARY
Carroll County Planning and Zoning Commission

July 30, 2014

Location: Carroll County Office Building

Members Present: Alec Yeo, Chairman
Matthew S. Helminiak
Cynthia L. Cheatwood
Richard S. Rothschild, Ex-Officio
Daniel E. Hoff, Alternate

Members Absent: Richard J. Soisson, Vice Chair
Eugene A. Canale
Jeffrey A. Wothers

Present with the Commission were the following persons: Philip R. Hager, Department of Land Use, Planning, and Development; Lynda Eisenberg, Sandy Baber, and Mike Roberts, Bureau of Comprehensive Planning; Jean Knill; Joan Huff; Art and Linda Jenne; Wendy Bray; and Dr. Tom Hopkins.

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Chairman Yeo called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.

ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Philip R. Hager, Secretary, took the attendance of the Commission, noting that five members were present, and there was a quorum.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

OPENING REMARKS/ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Philip R. Hager, Secretary, noted that the Commission has another work session scheduled on Wednesday, August 6 at 6:00 p.m. The Board of County Commissioners will hold a public hearing on the proposed solar legislation next week. The regulations regarding large scale solar energy conversion system provisions in the Agricultural District were removed from the proposal for further review by a special study team.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Philip R. Hager, Secretary, reviewed the evening's agenda. It was the consensus of the Commission to approve the agenda as distributed.

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED CODE AMENDMENT

Mr. Hager noted that several citizens have come to the County requesting the ability to perform certain commercial activities in the agricultural zone, specifically, research and development

ventures. Thirty plus conditional uses are available in the Agricultural District that do not have much to do with agriculture. He questioned whether there is value in trying to create opportunities for uses that want to locate in the agricultural zone that have an agricultural appearance.

Chairman Yeo indicated aesthetics is only one of the issues that matter as opposed to traffic, parking, noise, etc.

Mr. Hager questioned whether, given the number of uses available in the agricultural zone, there is value to incentivizing agricultural appearances and character. He noted that before he directs staff to work on this proposal, he wanted to make sure the Commission had an interest.

It was the consensus of the Commission that staff should prepare a specific recommendation for review by the Commission if a formal reaction is desired. It was also noted that agricultural appearances, while desirable, are only one of many considerations.

MASTER PLAN DISCUSSION

Lynda Eisenberg, Bureau of Comprehensive Planning, indicated that tonight staff would be reviewing the Land Use Chapter. During next week's work session, the entire plan document will be provided to the Commission. Ms. Eisenberg indicated staff would be asking for the Commission to "Accept" the Plan and move it forward for 60-day review at the August 19 meeting. She explained that public information meetings will be held in each of the Commissioner districts prior to the Commission's public hearing on the Plan. Ms. Eisenberg suggested that no formal presentation be provided at the public information meetings, but map stations, and one-on-one opportunities for citizens with staff.

Ms. Eisenberg reviewed comments from Commission member Richard Soisson who was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Mr. Soisson had questioned why Goal 16 was removed from the Plan. This goal involved the increase of development within the Designated Growth Area and decreasing the development outside of the Designated Growth Area. Staff felt this was too detailed for a goal and read more like an implementation measure. The goal was removed from the Plan. Mr. Soisson also offered comments about the removal of a policy regarding recreation and parks. Ms. Eisenberg explained that staff will be concentrating on those details within the individual comprehensive plan updates.

Ms. Eisenberg reviewed the graphs on page 2 showing the distribution of land uses in 1973 versus 2010. She discussed how the Designated Growth Areas have shrunk since the 2000 Plan, addressing Table 16_1 on page 3. The Commission discussed the Finksburg area and how areas no longer included in the Finksburg Corridor Plan will now be covered under the County Master Plan. Ms. Eisenberg noted that 71,000 acres were covered in Designated Growth Areas in 2000, but only 52,822 are covered in 2013. She discussed Table 16_3, Future Land Use Acres.

Commissioner Rothschild indicated there will be confusion when the average person reviews page 9 Table 16_5 Master Plan Land Use 2000 to 2014. It appears that the residential acres increased from 7,000 acres in 2000 to 23,000 in 2014. It will create the impression that we have created additional residential land. A clarification needs to be made that the numbers increase because of the reduction in size of the Designated Growth Areas (DGAs). The component of the change to DGAs that made a change to these numbers needs to be highlighted in this table.

Cynthia Cheatwood, Commission member, suggested that the percentages be added to the pie chart on page 9.

Ms. Eisenberg requested handwritten comments from the Commission members with proposed changes to the Chapter.

Commissioner Rothschild provided a summary of the plan for the listening audience. He explained that the bottom line is that there is a slight increase in industrial/commercial land, approximately 1,600 acres, which is a fraction of what was proposed under Pathways. This small increase in commercial/industrial zoned lands provides an opportunity to increase the industrial tax base. With regards to residential zoning, once the adjustments with regard to the Designated Growth Areas are accounted for, the amount of residential land has remained almost the same. Commissioner Rothschild explained that the Plan preserves the existing land use designations to keep Carroll County a rural/agricultural county and provides a little industrial tax base increase without sacrificing the reason so many people moved to Carroll County which is the beautiful, rural, agricultural lifestyle.

Matthew Helminiak, Commission member, noted that anyone that watched the work sessions where the Commission reviewed the County property by property, saw that very few changes were made, all with landowner consent and very little controversy. This Plan is not very aggressive or controversial.

Arthur Jenne, Westminster, complimented the Commission on their efforts in reviewing the Master Plan and how well they worked together.

The Commission briefly discussed the interactive map tool that will be utilized during the 60-day review period.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

There being no further business, the Commission adjourned at approximately 7:20 p.m.

Secretary

Approved