

MEETING SUMMARY
Carroll County Planning and Zoning Commission

March 4, 2015

Location: Carroll County Office Building

Members Present: Alec Yeo, Chairman
Richard J. Soisson, Vice Chair
Matthew S. Helminiak
Cynthia L. Cheatwood
Daniel E. Hoff, Alternate

Members Absent: Eugene A. Canale
Jeffrey A. Wothers
Richard S. Rothschild, Ex-Officio

Present with the Commission were the following persons: Roberta Windham, County Administrator; Philip R. Hager, Mary Lane, and Kelly Martin, Department of Land Use, Planning, and Development; Scott Graf, Bureau of Comprehensive Planning; Gail Kessler, County Attorney's Office; Lynn Wheeler; and Jane Sewell.

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Chairman Yeo called the meeting to order at approximately 6:05 p.m.

ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Kelly Martin took the attendance of the Commission, noting that four members were present, and there was a quorum.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

OPENING REMARKS/ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Secretary Hager welcomed the Commission to the first Wednesday evening of the month work session. He indicated he had no changes to the agenda.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Commission, on motion of Mr. Soisson, seconded by Mr. Helminiak, and unanimously carried, approved the agenda.

2030 PRESENTATION

Lynn Wheeler and Jane Sewell from the Carroll 2030 Focus Group made a brief presentation to the Commission. Ms. Wheeler explained that she served as Co-Chair of the Group which was derived from a vision that Commissioner Howard had. The Charge of the Group was to gather information as to what the top priorities would be that the County would face in 2030 that would need to be addressed in order for the County to continue to be successful. A packet of information was distributed to the Commission detailing the Initial Findings and Discussion

Points. Ms. Wheeler highlighted the nine clusters of activity that were identified, including: Agriculture and Environment; Arts, Culture, and Recreation; Business; Education; Health & Well Being; Infrastructure: Roads, Housing, Transportation; Municipalities; Public Safety; and Technology.

(Ms. Cheatwood entered the meeting.)

Ms. Wheeler explained that each cluster met individually to develop a vision for the future and identify top needs to be addressed to meet the vision. Then the full Group met to rank the top needs and develop a list of priorities. Technology was the number one priority, followed by Infrastructure and then Education.

Chairman Yeo expressed his concern for the disconnect between the Planning Commission and the 2030 Group in that the Planning Commission was in the process of developing the County's Master Plan at the same time the 2030 discussions were occurring. There was no interaction between the two groups while many of the topics overlap.

Daniel E. Hoff, Commission member, suggested that the Commission focus on how to use the 2030 Group and their report in developing future plans. He suggested incorporating the idea of a subcommittee of the 2030 Group working with Commission members to increase public input from the community.

Ms. Wheeler noted that the full Group has not met since the presentation to the Board of County Commissioners, but she believed members would be agreeable to partnering with the Commission in any way that might be helpful.

Secretary Hager offered to meet with Ms. Wheeler and other members of the Group to develop a strategy moving forward.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

Secretary Hager introduced Roberta Windham, the newly appointed County Administrator.

FY 16-21 PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDED CIP – RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

A draft letter to the Board of County Commissioners was presented to the Commission for their review. The letter stated that the Commission found the Preliminary Recommended CIP to be consistent with the County Master Plan.

Richard Soisson, Commission member, suggested the letter include a recommendation that the Board of County Commissioners and Board of Education work together for creative solutions to expand the Career and Technology Center to allow more students to take advantage of the skills being taught.

Chairman Yeo suggested that the letter also highlight the importance of the Fiber Optic Network.

It was the consensus of the Commission that the letter be revised to include these two items.

The letter will be placed on the March 17 letter for final approval and signature.

UPDATE: JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS

Scott Graf, Bureau of Comprehensive Planning, reviewed a revised survey prepared based upon the Commission's feedback at the previous meeting. A spelling error was noted along with a request to add MACo to question 2. It was the consensus of the Commission to approve the survey as amended for distribution. Mr. Graf noted that a transmittal letter will be prepared by staff for Chairman Yeo's signature.

UPDATE: CARROLL COUNTY MASTER PLAN

Secretary Hager reported that the 2014 Carroll County Master Plan was Adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on February 26. He thanked the Commission for their efforts in the development of the Plan. Mr. Hager explained that the Commissioners scheduled several lengthy briefings with staff to provide opportunities for questions and answers. He highlighted the efforts of the staff in the GIS Office who worked within tight timeframes to provide information for the Board's analysis. Mr. Hager explained that before the Board Adopted the Plan, a Resolution was Approved with regard to the DiMaggio Property. This Resolution exempted that property from the comprehensive rezoning process subject to Court order. Mr. Hager explained that staff is completing a Master Plan Map document which will be placed on the Commission's March 17 agenda for action.

Chairman Yeo acknowledged the participation and hard work of former Commission members in the development of the Master Plan.

STATUS OF SOLAR LEGISLATION

Secretary Hager provided background regarding the solar legislation that was eventually approved by the Board of County Commissioners. He noted that just before the Board's deliberations, concerns were raised regarding the use of these facilities in the Agricultural District. The Commissioners directed staff to form an advisory group consisting of representatives from the agricultural community, Ag Commission, Ag Preservation Advisory Board, and a number of citizen volunteers. Mr. Hager indicated he would be moving forward with the scheduling of the meetings, but asked whether any members of the Commission would be interested in participating.

Daniel E. Hoff, Commission member, indicated he would be willing to attend, but not Chair, the advisory group.

Chairman Yeo suggested that staff reach out to the 2030 Group to see if there was a representative from that Group that wished to attend.

The Commission, on motion of Mr. Soisson, seconded by Mr. Helminiak, and unanimously carried, established a committee to investigate solar energy use in the Agricultural District. The Committee is specifically charged with investigating and producing draft recommendations for amendments to the Zoning Code.

PENDING STATE LEGISLATION

- A. Stormwater Remediation Fee Repeal
- B. Planning Visions, House Bill 881
- C. Comprehensive Plan Approval and Adoption Processes, Senate Bill 551

A. STORMWATER REMEDIATION FEE REPEAL

Secretary Hager reported that last year the County was successful in getting a decision from the Attorney General that the requirements of the Rain Tax Bill were being met. The new Governor has been very vocal about getting the rain tax repealed. Mr. Hager explained that there are six pieces of legislation that have been introduced to repeal the rain tax. The County supports all of those bills except one that creates requirements for annual reporting and evaluation in addition to what is already done to address permit requirements.

B. PLANNING VISIONS, HOUSE BILL 881

Mary Lane, Special Projects Analyst, explained that the ramifications of this bill are not easily determined as requirements would be added to the construction of state highways which could affect projects being approved in the County or the cost of those projects. She reviewed a 13th Planning Vision that would be added by this bill which calls for the consideration of climate change risks. The Board of County Commissioners has written letters to the Delegation and members of the Committee opposing this bill.

C. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN APPROVAL AND ADOPTION PROCESSES, SENATE BILL 551

Mary Lane, Special Projects Analyst, explained that this bill was proposed by the Maryland Municipal League (MML) to address specific problems occurring in municipalities. The provisions of this bill would allow the Board of County Commissioners to adopt or modify the Master Plan with a public hearing which staff believes politicizes the process.

Daniel E. Hoff, Commission member, suggested that the Planning Commission send a letter in opposition to this legislation.

Ms. Lane explained that the bill also proposes to add four months to the process, allowing six months for the Board to act on the Plan versus the current 60 days.

Gail Kessler, County Attorney's Office, suggested that the bill contradicts the law.

Secretary Hager noted that this bill will make the change/mistake rezoning process chaotic.

The Commission, on motion of Mr. Hoff, seconded by Mr. Soisson, and carried, directed staff, in cooperation with the County Attorney's Office, to prepare a letter in opposition of this bill for the Secretary's signature.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:55 p.m.

Secretary

Approved