

MEETING SUMMARY
Carroll County Planning and Zoning Commission

September 30, 2015

Location: Carroll County Office Building

Members Present: Alec Yeo, Chairman
Richard J. Soisson, Vice Chair
Eugene A. Canale
Matthew S. Helminiak
Jeffrey A. Wothers
Cynthia L. Cheatwood
Daniel E. Hoff, Alternate
C. Richard Weaver, Commissioner

Members Absent: Richard S. Rothschild, Ex-Officio

Present with the Commission were the following persons: Philip R. Hager and Mary Lane, Department of Planning; and Lynda Eisenberg, Bureau of Comprehensive Planning.

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

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

ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

OPENING REMARKS

Secretary Hager indicated he had nothing to report.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Commission, on motion of Mr. Wothers, seconded by Mr. Helminiak, and carried, approved the revised meeting agenda as distributed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE

Secretary Hager noted that the next Commission meeting will be held on October 20 instead of October 7. There was a very light agenda for the business meeting on October 20, so the agenda items for tonight's meeting, the meeting on October 7, and October 20 were combined into two meetings instead of three. Secretary Hager noted that the October 14 meeting with the Town of Mount Airy has been cancelled by the Town. It will be rescheduled in early 2016. On November 4, the Commission will hold a brief meeting prior to their joint meeting with the Town of Sykesville. Meetings for the remainder of the year include: November 17 regular business meeting, December 2 evening meeting, and December 15 regular business meeting.

A NOTE ON FREEDOM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROCESS

Secretary Hager explained that staff is building a schedule for the completion of the Freedom Plan. If everything works out as scheduled, the Commission could have a completed draft of the Plan at this time next year. Secretary Hager noted that the schedule is predicated upon the Department making this its number one priority, with modifications to the Zoning Code to implement the Master Plan as a close second. Staff has developed a process for the review of Chapters as follows: (1) distribute chapters to Commission with quick briefing, (2) opportunity for Commission questions two weeks later at regular business meeting, (3) full work session on the Chapters at the next evening meeting (approximately one month after original distribution), (4) edits as developed during the work session provided to the Commission at next business meeting (approximately six weeks after original distribution) and "concurrence" of Commission requested, and (5) chapter would be posted on the web, and one month later, the Commission would be asked to "endorse" the chapter. This process would be repeated for each chapter. Once all the chapters are completed, the Commission will be asked to "Accept" the document which begins the 60-day review process followed by a public hearing. Following the public comment phase, the Commission can "Approve" the Plan and forward to the Board of County Commissioners for "Adoption".

Daniel E. Hoff, Commission member, requested that when copies of the chapters are distributed to the Commission that they also be distributed in "pdf" format.

Commissioner Weaver questioned whether individual chapters would also be reviewed with the Board of County Commissioners.

Secretary Hager indicated that was not the normal process, but staff would be happy to if requested by the Board.

Lynda Eisenberg, Bureau of Comprehensive Planning, noted that a mid-point meeting was planned between the Board and Planning Commission in the February/March timeframe.

Chairman Yeo suggested that following tonight's review and staff's edit of the text, the chapters could be provided to the Board of County Commissioners for review. He asked Commissioner Weaver that the Board provide any citizen comments received to the Planning Commission for their use and information.

Mary Lane, Department of Planning, explained that all of the agencies on the displayed distribution list were forwarded copies of Elements 1-3 and asked to provide their comments by

September 30. A few agencies had no comments, while several agencies had significant comments which have been incorporated into the draft. Each chapter will be handled in this manner with more topic-specific chapters distributed to only those agencies with that expertise.

Secretary Hager indicated Chapter 4 was to be distributed to the Commission on October 7. Because that meeting was cancelled, staff will be distributing the chapter via regular mail and e-mail. Staff would request any questions regarding the demographics chapter at the October 20 meeting.

WORK SESSION ON FREEDOM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CHAPTERS 1-3 – EDITS

Mary Lane, Department of Planning, reviewed the chapters page-by-page highlighting the changes made based on Commission, staff, and agency comments.

Cynthia Cheatwood, Commission member, suggested eliminating bullets two and three on page 1 and just keeping the more general information in bullet four.

Matthew Helminiak, Commission member, noted that the fifth bullet should be deleted because the Warfield Complex is covered in the final bullet.

The Commission briefly discussed how old the data was that is being utilized in the trend analysis on page 6. Daniel E. Hoff, Commission member, suggested that the title be changed to: “Changes in the Freedom Community Since 1990”.

Chairman Yeo asked for a rewording of bullet 5 under Land Use Related Changes on page 10 to clarify the developer-funded road projects language.

Secretary Hager suggested the wording be reworked to state: “private funded road projects emanating from development review projects”.

Ms. Cheatwood expressed concern regarding the choice of wording for the underlined, italicized portion of the first paragraph on page 23, specifically the way “accessory dwelling units” and “cluster development patterns” were characterized and the mention of “young families” and “civil servants”.

Staff suggested this section would be removed and reworked following Commission review of the Housing Element.

Ms. Cheatwood suggested that the wording for the second italicized paragraph be reworked to make it less negative.

After discussion, Secretary Hager indicated he would work with staff from Economic Development to develop a new italicized second paragraph.

Secretary Hager suggested that use of the words “growth” and “development” throughout the plan needs to be reviewed. In most cases where growth is referred to it should really be “development”. Staff will work on making those adjustments.

Ms. Lane began the review of Element 3.

Chairman Yeo asked that language be added to the text to acknowledge that public comment was received during all Planning Commission meetings.

The Commission members discussed developing language for goals to be shared with other Commission members and reviewed at future work sessions rather than staff preparing all the draft language.

Acknowledging that many different staff members have had a hand in developing the language for the draft plan over the years, Chairman Yeo asked that staff be careful to ensure that it sounds like it was written by the same person. For example, all of goals 1-7 on pages 28 and 29 start with "To", but goal 8 does not.

FREEDOM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – LAND USE DISCUSSION

Lynda Eisenberg, Bureau of Comprehensive Planning, discussed how the entire Freedom Area is not a growth area. She asked the Commission to consider how the Growth Area Boundary for Freedom is defined, suggesting it be called the "Freedom Planning Area".

Chairman Yeo suggested that the Boulevard District and MD 26 Corridor be outlined in maps because they are called out in the Plan.

Staff indicated that the Boulevard District was abandoned in the previous Plan and is only mentioned in connection with the previous Plan.

Chairman Yeo asked that text be revised on page 28 to indicate that the Boulevard District was never implemented.

Ms. Eisenberg presented very preliminary information related to future land use which reflects what is currently on the ground. She reviewed the zoning map amendments (rezoning cases), Board of Zoning Appeals cases, development projects, etc., in the Freedom Area since 2001.

Ms. Eisenberg explained that October 8 is the deadline for property owners to submit a petition for rezoning prior to the deferral. Letters were sent to each of the property owners that had expressed an interest in a land use change through the Freedom Plan update process. Only two applicants have submitted petitions at this time to proceed with the accelerated rezoning process. She reviewed the location of each of the requests for change in land use that had been received by staff to date. Ms. Eisenberg encouraged discussion from the Commission regarding whether the Conservation land use designation would still be used for government, recreational, and homeowners association parcels. She noted that the Master Plan Code development would run on a parallel tract to the establishment of land uses for the Freedom Area.

Chairman Yeo suggested that staff provide photos of different uses so that the Commission can agree what they are comfortable with in each district.

Ms. Eisenberg noted that the Freedom Planning Area, including the reservoir, is 28,000+ acres. Thirty-six percent is Resource Conservation; 14 percent is Reservoir; 9 percent is Agriculture; and 5 percent is Transportation. She explained that when you take out those categories and discount the built categories, almost half of the area is Medium Density Residential; 19 percent

Low Density Residential; and 13 percent is High Density Residential. This is information to consider when the Commission discusses adjusting the growth area boundary. Ms. Eisenberg indicated she is currently working with GIS staff to review the Buildable Land Inventory for this area. She reviewed maps detailing the service categories for water and sewer. In future discussions, the Commission will need to consider whether the best plan for the area is reallocation of the available water/sewer capacity.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 20. The Commission adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Secretary

Approved