

OFFICIAL MINUTES
Carroll County Planning and Zoning Commission

May 4, 2016

Location: Carroll County Office Building

Members Present: Matthew S. Helminiak, Chair
Richard Soisson, Vice Chair
Alec Yeo
Eugene A. Canale
Jeffrey A. Wothers
Daniel Hoff, Alternate
C. Richard Weaver, Ex-Officio

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

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Chairman Helminiak called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 P.M.

ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Pamela Hare took the attendance of the Commission, noting that seven members were present, and there was a quorum.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

OPENING REMARKS

Secretary Hager welcomed everyone and thanked the Planning Commission for coming, asked all members of the public in attendance to silence their phones, and notified the public that these meetings are being video-taped.

He asked that a short recess be taken after the discussion on the April 27th public outreach meeting and noted that there were no changes proposed to the previously distributed agenda and recommended approval.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

FREEDOM COMMUNITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DISCUSSION

Work Session: Element 8, Cultural, Historical, and Tourism Amenities

Mary Lane briefed the Planning Commission on Element 8 and entertained questions.

Secretary Hager reminded the Planning Commission to keep in mind that the goals and objectives were strengthened in this Element so as to serve as a resource for planners and staff in the County and the residents to make them aware of the resources in the Freedom area.

Commissioner Weaver asked if these were distributed into the school system or anywhere else. Secretary Hager stated that they would be when the plan is complete. He also noted that after tonight, this would be made available on the website and in libraries.

Mr. Yeo asked about the significance of a scenic road designation and the impact it might have on any action the Planning Commission may take (e.g., Would it be something the Planning Commission would need to take into consideration if they were looking at a site plan that was on a scenic road?)

The consensus of the planning staff was that there is no formal designation or standard. Ms. Eisenberg stated that if there were any concerns or suggestions now would be a good time to present them

Alec Yeo stated that he didn't want it to be something that may be used for or against someone planning to develop a property.

Secretary Hager indicated that the Planning Commission should continue to review the document and that the topic would be revisited at the meeting on May 17th.

Report and Discussion: April 27th Public Outreach Meeting

Lynda Eisenberg briefed the Planning Commission on the April 27th Community Outreach Meeting. She noted that 120 people had signed in and over 100 information guides had been distributed. Ms. Eisenberg stated there were 25 comment cards submitted and seven emailed comments received; all of which have been forwarded to the Planning Commission.

Ms. Eisenberg stated that since the meeting, all new email addresses were added into the .gov email delivery service and notice of tonight's meeting was sent out. Only about 180 people on the listserv opened the email notice.

Ms. Eisenberg conveyed that the website is being made as user-friendly as possible and that the Freedom Plan is on the front page of the County website.

Commissioner Weaver stated that the Carroll County Government website is not very user-friendly and with the technology available to us today staff need to work towards making it more so.

Ms. Eisenberg told the Planning Commission that there is an interactive map, a comment card, and a general email address that are being added to the Freedom website. She then demonstrated the map but said that staff would be adding it to the site when a Land Use map is available.

Staff and the Planning Commission discussed holding another Community Outreach meeting and Chairman Helminiak gave suggestions on how the next might be laid out.

Commissioner Weaver stated that he had contacted Secretary Hager prior to the meeting and suggested a change to the planned lay out and that this change made the meeting appear a bit disorganized.

Mr. Canale suggested that this modification was probably the best course of action under the circumstances.

Mr. Hoff suggested having the ability to be more flexible, depending upon the number of people showing up for the outreach, and give the attendants the opportunity to separate to ask questions pertaining to their area of interest.

Secretary Hager pointed out that other towns and counties do not do any outreach mid-plan; they usually do it when the plan is starting and again when the plan is complete. Secretary Hager

noted that when most people see a map such as the ones the staff had displayed, they think that it's written in stone. He stated that it is important for the citizens to know that their participation and comments can still go into the process. The additional input opportunities offered by the processes that the County is using may be causing some confusion for some people. It is ironic the County's efforts to promote transparency may actually be contributing to confusion.

Secretary Hager noted that content and process are equally important and that people are more confident with the outcome if they feel they have had an opportunity to participate in the process.

Chairman Helminiak stated he was asked if Baltimore City owned Piney Run Park. Ms. Eisenberg answered that Baltimore City did not; the only property they owned was Liberty Reservoir.

Report on Staff Mapping Research and Reconciliation

It was general consensus of the Planning Commission that Lynda Eisenberg would run through all of the reconciliations first and then revisit the ones they felt necessary.

At 7:00 Alec Yeo left the meeting.

Ms. Eisenberg reviewed the map with the Planning Commission.

The Commission, on motion of Mr. Soisson, seconded by Mr. Wothers, and carried, approved the staff recommendation to change the Bartholow Road Land Use Designation to make it consistent with the Master Plan.

The next item was the White Rock Road designation. Mr. Hoff stated that he wanted to talk about this a little further because he wanted to know what it is if it isn't an employment campus.

The Commission, on motion of Mr. Hoff, seconded by Mr. Canale, and carried, approved the staff recommendation to change the Nell's Acres Land Use Designation to Commercial Low.

RECESS

Land Use Discussion

Ms. Eisenberg stated that staff had handed out some additional materials for the discussion. She noted that there were a lot of questions at the April 27th meeting concerning Obrecht Road and how this property, had received the Employment Campus designation. Ms. Eisenberg stated that there had been an Economic Development Study done in 2007 (EDLENS) where it identified potential clusters of land suitable for rezoning or Land Use categorization to promote economic development opportunities either in the forms of employment campuses, industrial, or commercial. Ms. Eisenberg noted that this specific designation was not a staff recommended designation but that as part of their review of all Freedom Area properties, the Planning Commission had chosen to apply that designation to that property following a review of the EDLENS information.

Ms. Eisenberg reviewed other properties that had been identified as potential areas for an employment campus.

Ms. Eisenberg stated, for the viewing audience, that these are also done for the entire Master Plan and not only in the Freedom area as seems to be a misconception on the part of some of the public.

Ms. Eisenberg explained how all the Agricultural land had been designated.

Commissioner Howard, who was a member of the audience for this meeting, came to the microphone. He wanted to confirm that the plans cover a 30 year window but are updated every ten years. The Planning Commission and Planning Staff confirmed that this was correct.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gary McGuinness from the Freedom Area, noted the stream near Bennett Road the staff had just discussed was home to an endangered species. Mr. McGuinness asked the Planning Commission to identify on their maps the two natural gas pipelines. Stormwater – is there anything that you can use to show that on the maps. Mr. McGuinness asked if there had been a decision made in regards to the White Rock Employment Campus. The Planning Commission answered they had not.

Mr. McGuinness told the staff that there has been some new construction along Streaker Road and he wasn't sure if their maps indicated such. He suggested that the area isn't suitable for anything.

Wendy Burger, stated that she had two requests. The first of her requests was for future meetings on the Freedom District to be held in the Freedom District so more people could attend. Her second request was to ask if it would be possible to have a Freedom resident be part of the board as a liaison. Ms. Burger also noted that there were conditions put on Bennett Road when the post office was built in 1997. The Planning Commission and Secretary Hager provided explanations to her questions.

Bettina Westlow – thanked Chairman Helminiak for responding to her on Facebook and stated that she had two questions. The first of her questions concerned Bennett road. She asked if that was a downgrade and would that lessen the property value.

Secretary Hager told her that a myriad of factors go into property value forecasting. He stated that what the staff and Planning Commission were referring to here is a Land Use designation. Secretary Hager noted that on a scale of intensity, Industrial has a greater intensity than Commercial.

The second question Ms. Westlow had concerned the Hobie Wolf property. She asked if the quarter acre lot size would be about the same size lots as those in Oklahoma Estates. Ms. Eisenberg answered that, yes, the lot sizes would be very similar to those in Oklahoma estates.

Chairman Helminiak indicated to the audience that members of staff and the Planning Commission would stay for a while if anyone would like to ask them questions regarding the maps that were on display and/or questions about the Freedom area.

There being no further business, the Commission, on motion of Mr. Soission seconded by Mr. Wothers, and carried, adjourned at approximately 8:10 PM.

Secretary

Approved