

FINAL SITE PLAN REPORT
to the
Carroll County Planning and Zoning Commission
June 16, 2026

Prepared by
David Becraft, Development Review Division

SUBJECT: S-20-0030, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church (EOTC) Bachman Valley

LOCATION: 2239 Bachman Valley Road, Manchester, MD 21102; C.D. 2

OWNER: Tserha Tsion Menfes Kidus Church Merafe Kidusan Kidist Arsema Andinet Monastery, 2239 Bachman Valley Road, Manchester, MD 21102

DEVELOPER: Same as owner

ENGINEER: ZTigers Consult, 5120 Willet Bridge Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

ZONING: Agriculture

ACREAGE: 25.45 acres

WATERSHED: Double Pipe Creek

FIRE DISTRICT: Manchester

MASTER PLAN: Agriculture –2014 Carroll County Master Plan, 2019 Amended

PRIORITY

FUNDING AREA: Outside

DESIGNATED

GROWTH AREA: Outside

❖ **Action Required:**

The plan is before the Planning and Zoning Commission per Chapter 155 of the Code of Public Local Laws and Ordinances of Carroll County for consideration and approval.

❖ **Existing Conditions:**

The subject property consists of 25.45 acres and hosts a religious establishment. The property is currently fixed with three buildings; an archive and prayer/holy water immersion building, an assembly hall, and a residence used by/for the priest before and after church service. The site is accessed from Bachman Valley Road (MD 496) by way of an existing drive that is utilized by two other properties and terminates at a gravel area. An access easement is in place for the portion of drive which is on neighboring private properties.

A stream crosses the western portion of the property with a wooded riparian zone. There are no 100-year floodplain designations on site. A pond lies between the stream and the existing improvements.

All adjoining properties are zoned Agriculture and either host farmland or private residences. The adjoining properties to the northwest, east, and south are encompassed by a MALPF

agricultural preservation easement. All properties in this area are served by private well and septic systems.

❖ **Plan Review:**

A concept plan of the development proposal was submitted to Development Review on January 1, 2021 after it was determined the site was in violation of operating without an approved site plan. The concept site plan was subject to citizen involvement at the February 22, 2021 virtual meeting of the Technical Review Committee with no citizens present. After the meeting, an email was received from an adjoining property owner which outlined concerns for safety along with questions relating to the proposed development (email attached). A phone call was also received after the meeting from another adjoining property owner who did not oppose the development but had concerns of traffic.

The concept site plan for the subject property was reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission on December 13, 2022. During this meeting, questions regarding the use of the house, parking, noise, lighting, and sign were brought up by the Commission; however, without a representative of the owner, developer, or engineer present, these questions remained unanswered. With that, the Commission requested a follow-up meeting to further discuss the plan before the request for final approval. After review of the minutes by the developer, a written explanation has been provided (attached). After the meeting, various phone calls and emails were received regarding concerns of noise, traffic, water and sewer usage, site access, and the use of the site (written correspondence attached).

A follow-up meeting was held by the Planning and Zoning Commission on June 20, 2023. During this meeting, discussions revolved around noise concerns, the height of the free-standing sign, the activities of the Church, There were also various citizens in attendance who voiced concerns of noise, traffic, and safety.

Since the meeting, the plan has been modified to help alleviate Commission and citizen concerns. The plan no longer proposes the construction of new buildings and only identifies expansions of the existing assembly hall building and existing archive and prayer building. There are no changes proposed to the existing priest house. There were also changes to the height of the free-standing sign and the addition of 3 bus-designated parking spaces.

The bulk requirements for a religious establishment are as follows:

§ 158.070 A AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT.

(H) **Bulk requirements.** The following minimum requirements shall apply, except as hereinafter modified in § [158.130](#):

(1) **Dwellings, schools, and the like.**

<i>Use</i>	<i>Lot Area</i>	<i>Lot Width (feet)</i>	<i>Front Yard Depth (feet)</i>	<i>Side Yard (Width Each Side Yard) (feet)</i>	<i>Rear Yard Depth (feet)</i>
Religious establishments	2 acres	200	100	50	50

Zoning has granted approval of the plan as presented, with the above bulk requirements being met.

Access to the site will be via the existing access to Bachman Valley Road (MD 496). To ensure compliance with Code, the existing drive will be enlarged to 22' wide pavement. As the improvements and associated stormwater management practices exceed the physical

boundaries of the existing access easement, a revised easement will be required. A free-standing sign is proposed at the entrance to the site from Bachman Valley Road within the new access easement. The detail of this sign is shown on sheet 16 and provides a measurement of a 4-foot by 20-foot board on two stilts. The overall height of the sign is shown as being 10-foot maximum.

Based on the projected trip generations, a traffic study is required. However, as access is to a State Highway Administration (SHA) roadway and SHA is not requiring a traffic impact study, the Carroll County Department of Public Works has waived this requirement. The developer will be required to provide access improvements as outlined in the State Highway Administration Access Manual. SHA has approved the plan.

Chapter 158 of the Carroll County Code states that parking requirements for religious establishments are "1 for every 4 persons, based on the maximum capacity of the sanctuary". The parking tabulation identifies the maximum capacity for the uses on site is 500 people and thus would require 125 spaces; the plan proposes 132 parking spaces. Of the 132 proposed parking spaces, 7 of which are to be reserved for handicapped parking. Concrete pathways ranging from 5-feet wide to 7-feet wide are proposed to connect the proposed parking areas to the new/improved buildings. Site Compliance has granted approval of the plan.

Along with their normal service, the church also organizes 2-3 special events annually which can yield more participants than their normal service. For previous events, the Carroll County sheriff's office has been retained to help mitigate traffic stemming from these events.

The development is to be served by private well and septic systems. The developer proposes the installation of additional septic drainage fields north of the proposed church building that will work in conjunction with the existing septic field nearby. The well and septic plan can be found on sheets 86-90 in the plan set. This site is located within the No Planned Water Service Area and the No Planned Sewer Service Area, per the Carroll County Water and Sewer Master Plan. The Carroll County Health Department has granted approval of the plan as presented.

The building materials and colors vary between buildings. These materials comprise of metal, exterior insulation finishing system (EIFS), and siding. The colors range from brown, white/beige, and gold. Architectural elevations are provided on sheets 93-96 within the plan set.

A 5-foot-high retaining wall is proposed near the multi-purpose hall (former assembly hall). A detail and profile have been provided and can be found on sheet 79. A dumpster enclosure is proposed near the multi-purpose hall with a detail drawing provided on sheet 16.

Forest Conservation for the site is to be addressed by an easement over the wooded area surrounding the stream along with areas of afforestation. A variance was granted to allow for the removal of specimen trees. Landscaping is proposed throughout the proposed parking area. Water Resources will require an easement surrounding the stream crossing the western portion of the property. Floodplain Management has granted approval of the plan with an easement being required.

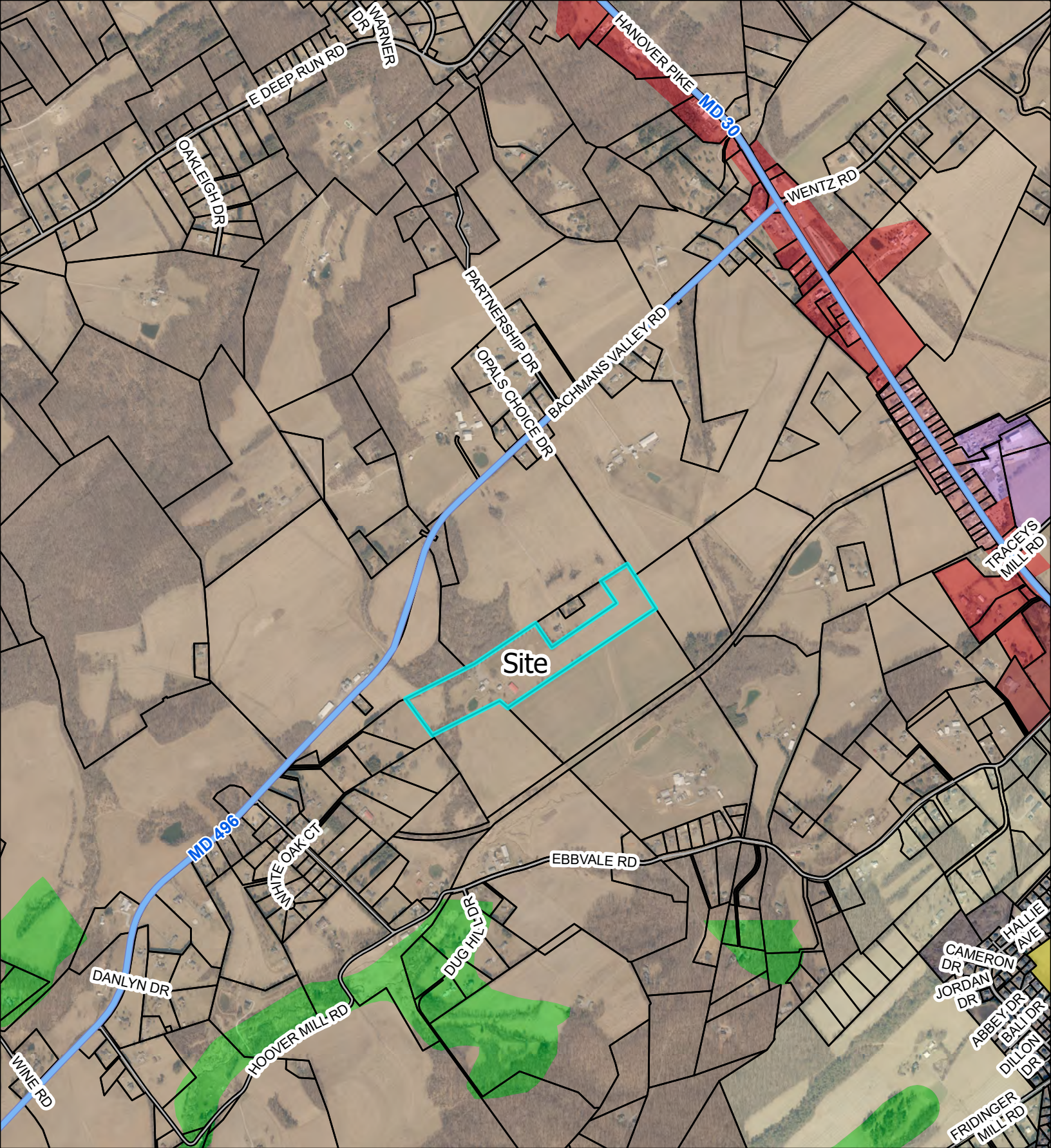
Stormwater management will be provided through the construction of multiple micro-bioretenion facilities throughout the site. Stormwater management has granted final approval of the plan.

❖ **Recommendations:**

Pursuant to Chapter 155, staff recommends approval of the site development plan subject to

the following conditions:

1. That the Developer enters into a Public Works Agreement with Carroll County that guarantees completion of the improvements.
2. That a Stormwater Management Easement and Maintenance Agreement be granted to the County Commissioners of Carroll County as an easement of access to the County Commissioners or authorized representatives by a deed to be recorded simultaneously with the Public Works Agreement.
3. That a Forest Conservation Easement be granted to the County Commissioners of Carroll County simultaneously with the Public Works Agreement.
4. That a Forested Water Resource Protection Easement be granted to the County Commissioners of Carroll County simultaneously with the Public Works Agreement.
5. That a Landscape Maintenance Agreement be recorded simultaneously with the Public Works Agreement.
6. That a Floodplain Easement be granted to the County Commissioners of Carroll County simultaneously with the Public Works Agreement.
7. That a private ingress and egress easement reflecting the new easements boundary be recorded simultaneously with the Public Works Agreement.
8. That any changes to this plan will require an amended site development plan to be approved by the Carroll County Planning and Zoning Commission.



Legend

- Zoning_County R-20,000
- Zoning C-1
- C-2
- C-3
- I-1
- Conservation
- R-40,000
- Agriculture

**EOTC Bachman Valley
S-20-0030**



Property line shown hereon are from tax maps and therefore are approximate and are shown for illustrative reference only. Photograph date: 2023



Site

Legend

— Streams

EOTC Bachman Valley S-20-0030



Property line shown hereon
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for illustrative reference only.
Photograph date: 2023

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

A. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Secretary Heyn introduced himself as the new Secretary of the Planning Commission and Acting Director of the Department of Planning. Secretary Heyn noted the next meeting will be July 18th.

B. PLANNING UPDATE

Secretary Heyn reported the Board of County Commissioners will be holding a work session to discuss non-agricultural uses in the Agricultural zone and there may be topics brought before the Planning Commission as a result of that work session

. EXTENSIONS

David Becraft reported there was one extension since the last meeting, Stillwater Minor Subdivision.

D. BZA CASES

Mary Lane introduced Randolph Mitchell as a new member of the Department of Planning. Ms. Lane reported there were two BZA cases since the last meeting; Case No. 6387 and Case No. 6450.

E. OTHER

There were no other reports.

BOARD OF EDUCATION FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

Mr. William Caine was present to answer any questions regarding the Education Facilities Master Plan. On motion of Mr. Lester, seconded by Mr. Smith and carried, the Commission approved the Education Facilities Master Plan per the language in the letter and voted to authorize the Chair to sign and forward the letter to the Board of Education.

CONCEPT SITE PLAN

SUBJECT: S-20-0030, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church (EOTC) Bachman Valley

LOCATION: 2239 Bachman Valley Road, Manchester, MD 21102; E.D. 6

OWNER: Tesfaye Mekoya Assegid, 2239 Bachman Valley Road, Manchester, MD 21102

DEVELOPER: Same as owner

ENGINEER: ZTigers Consult, 5120 Willet Bridge Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

ZONING: Agriculture

ACREAGE: 25.45 acres

WATERSHED: Double Pipe Creek

FIRE DISTRICT: Manchester

MASTER PLAN: Agriculture –2014 Carroll County Master Plan, 2019 Amended

PRIORITY

FUNDING AREA: Outside

DESIGNATED

GROWTH AREA: Outside

❖ **Action Required:**

The plan is before the Planning and Zoning Commission per Chapter 155 of the Code of Public Local Laws and Ordinances of Carroll County for review of a concept site plan. **No action is required.**

The Planning Commission may consider delegating approval of the final site plan to the Planning Commission Chair.

❖ **Existing Conditions:**

The subject property consists of 25.45 acres and hosts a religious establishment. The property is currently fixed with three buildings; an archive and prayer/holy water immersion building, an assembly hall, and a residence used by/for the priest before and after church service. The site is accessed from Bachman Valley Road (MD 496) by way of an existing drive which is utilized by two other properties and terminates at a gravel area. An access easement is in place for the portion of drive which is on neighboring private properties.

A stream crosses the western portion of the property with a wooded riparian zone. There are no 100-year floodplain designations on site. A pond lies between the stream and the existing improvements.

All adjoining properties are zoned Agriculture and either host farmland or private residences. The adjoining properties to the northwest, east, and south are encompassed by a MALPF agricultural preservation easement. All properties in this area are served by private well and septic systems.

❖ **Plan Review:**

A concept plan of the development proposal was submitted to Development Review on January 1, 2021 after it was determined the site was in violation of operating without an approved site plan. The plan identifies the construction of new buildings as well as improvements to existing buildings. New construction consists of a 10,000 square-foot church and an estimated 6,600 square-foot holy-water immersion building. Expansion is proposed for the existing assembly hall building and existing archive and prayer building. There are no changes proposed to the existing priest house.

Religious Establishments are principal permitted uses in the Agricultural zoning district. The bulk requirements for a religious establishment are as follows:

§ 158.070 A AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT.

(H) **Bulk requirements.** The following minimum requirements shall apply, except as hereinafter modified in § [158.130](#):

(1) **Dwellings, schools, and the like.**

Use	Lot Area	Lot Width (feet)	Front Yard Depth (feet)	Side Yard (Width Each Side Yard) (feet)	Rear Yard Depth (feet)
Religious establishments	2 acres	200	100	50	50

Zoning has granted approval of the plan as presented, with the above bulk requirements being met.

Access to the site will be via the existing access to Bachman Valley Road (MD 496). To ensure compliance with Code, the existing drive will be enlarged to 22' wide pavement. As the improvements and associated stormwater management practices exceed the physical boundaries of the existing access easement, a revised easement will be required. A free-standing sign is proposed at the entrance to the site from Bachman Valley Road within the new access easement. The detail of this sign is shown on sheet fifteen and provides a measurement of a 4-foot high by 20-foot-wide board on two stilts. The overall height of the sign is shown as being 30-foot maximum.

Based on the projected trip generations, a traffic study is required. However, as access is to a State Highway Administration (SHA) roadway and SHA is not requiring a traffic impact study, the Carroll County Department of Public Works has waived this requirement. The developer will be required to provide access improvements as outlined in the State Highway Administration Access Manual. SHA has approved the concept plan.

Chapter 155 of the Carroll County Code states that parking requirements for religious establishments are "1 for every 4 persons, based on the maximum capacity of the sanctuary". The parking tabulation identifies the maximum capacity for the uses on site is 500 people and thus would require 125 spaces; the plan proposes 126 parking spaces. Of the 126 proposed parking spaces, 10 of which are to be reserved for handicapped parking. Concrete pathways ranging from 5-foot wide to 7-foot wide are proposed to connect the proposed parking areas to the new/improved buildings. Site Compliance has granted concept approval of the plan and is requiring additional details for the review of the final plan.

Along with their normal service, the church also organizes 2-3 special events annually which can yield thousands of participants. To help mitigate traffic with the most recent event, the Carroll County sheriff's office was hired.

The development is to be served by private well and septic systems. The developer proposes the installation of additional septic drainage fields north of the proposed church building that will work in conjunction with the existing septic field nearby. The well and septic plan can be found on sheet 30 in the plan set. This site is located within the No Planned Water Service Area and the No Planned Sewer Service Area, per the Carroll County Water and Sewer Master Plan. The Carroll County Health Department will require additional details for the review of the final plan.

The building materials and colors vary between buildings. These materials comprise of metal, exterior insulation finishing system (EIFS), and siding. The colors range from brown, white/beige, and gold. Architectural elevations are provided on sheets 33-43 within the plan set.

A 5-foot-high retaining wall is proposed near the multi-purpose hall (former assembly hall). A dumpster enclosure is also proposed near the multi-purpose hall. Details, including height, materials, and colors of the retaining wall and dumpster enclosure will need to be provided on the final plan set.

Forest Conservation for the site is to be addressed by an easement over the wooded area surrounding the stream along with areas of afforestation. A variance was granted to allow for the removal of specimen trees. Landscaping is proposed throughout the proposed parking area. Water Resources will require an easement surrounding the stream crossing the western portion of the property with additional details to be provided during the review of the final plan. Floodplain Management has granted concept approval of the plan with an easement being required.

Stormwater management will be provided through the construction of multiple micro-bioretenion facilities throughout the site. Stormwater management has granted concept approval of the plan.

The concept site plan was subject to citizen involvement at the February 22, 2021 virtual meeting of the Technical Review Committee with no citizens present. After the meeting, an email was received from an adjoining property owner which outlined concerns for safety along with questions relating to the proposed development (email attached). A phone call was also received after the meeting from another adjoining property owner who did not pose opposition to the development but had concerns of traffic.

The concept site plan for the subject property was reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission on December 13, 2022 (minutes attached). During this meeting, questions regarding the use of the house, parking, noise, lighting, and sign were brought up by the Commission; however, without a representative of the owner, developer, or engineer present, these questions remained unanswered. With that, the Commission requested a follow-up meeting to further discuss before the plan was brought back for final approval. After review of the minutes by the developer, a written explanation has been provided (attached). After the meeting, various phone calls and emails were received regarding concerns of noise, traffic, water and sewer usage, site access, and the use of the site (written correspondence attached).

On October 11, 2022, the Design and Architectural Review Committee (DARC), an advisory group, met to review the project. Comments and suggestions include:

1. Has an ornate architecture and appears to be upgrading the looks of the existing buildings
2. Roadside sign is approximately as large as a highway billboard – may want to consider a more modest size

The final site plan will be tested and reviewed for adequacy of public facilities in accordance with Chapter 155 of the Code of Public Laws and Ordinances of Carroll County Maryland.

Discussion:

At the time of the initial plan submittal, religious establishments were a principle permitted use within the Agriculture District.

David Becraft presented the staff report.

Charles O. Fisher, Jr., Attorney, and other principal members of the project were in attendance including the Engineer, Architect and Priest.

Mr. Fisher noted there was a misunderstanding at the last meeting and that is why church officials and engineers were not in attendance. Mr. Fisher stated this particular church has been designated as a feast day location which draws many people.

Mr. Becraft stated no action is required; this plan is being reviewed as a concept plan.

Mr. Lester stated there have been numerous amounts of emails concerning noise and hours of operation. Mr. Lester questioned bus parking and the size of the sign.

Tesfa Bogale stated the engineering team is here to answer questions about the project. Mr. Bogale stated the activities will be held inside the building once it is constructed. Mr. Bogale stated the goal is for buses to drop people off, leave and then return to pick them up. He stated they are trying to find places for the buses to park. Mr. Bogale stated the sign proposal follows the requirements in the County Code.

Chair Kirkner stated she feels the height of the sign is too high.

Vice Chair Kane stated he feels the sign should be smaller.

Chair Kirkner asked what will be happening with the existing barn.

Mr. Fisher stated the barn will be used for archives.

Mr. Bogale stated the baptisms occur by request and the hours of the proposed project are from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Mr. Robertson asked for clarification regarding the length of the events, overflow parking and if the water and septic is adequate for the number of people.

Mr. Bogale stated the events are usually half day events and the events attract roughly 800 – 900 people. Mr. Bogale stated this number was higher for past events, but Covid made an impact on the level of attendance. Mr. Bogale stated many people carpool and bottled water is used for events.

Mr. Almon stated the BZA has the authority to attach outdoor hours of operation, the Planning Commission does not.

Mr. Almon stated the only way this project would go to the BZA is if the Planning Commission would deny the plan.

Chair Kirkner asked for clarification regarding bathrooms.

Mr. Bogale stated that will be addressed during the final design process.

Mr. Robertson asked how the existing dwelling is being used.

Mr. Bogale stated it is a rest area for visiting Priests.

Mr. Smith expressed his concern with the traffic and parking.

Chair Kirkner asked if there was an alternative color for the proposed gold dome. Mr. Bogale stated they are trying to find a balance between local architecture and abiding by the bible.

Mr. Fisher stated once the project is approved and the structures have been built, the events will take place inside and sound dampening materials are to be used for the new structures.

Chris Baker, citizen, is concerned about noise.

Chair Kirkner stated most of the emails received have noted noise complaints and traffic complaints.

Patsy Dahlberg, citizen, stated noise echoes in this area. Ms. Dahlberg stated a child fell into the pond on the site and has safety concerns. Ms. Dahlberg stated there have been five buses entering the property at times and also stated she does not feel like the public was properly informed about the project.

Chair Kirkner advised the applicant to look into fencing around the pond.

Mr. Becraft addressed the public meeting requirements and public notification of events.

Wilbur Glover, citizen, read the email he submitted. The email addressed proper construction and permitting, noise and fire safety.

Shirley Appleby, citizen, opposes the project.

Mike Lang, citizen, has plumbing and water concerns for the wells in the area, has concerns about the noise and the traffic and the size of the sign.

Kristin Coyne, citizen, moved to the area for the country views and serenity. Ms. Coyne is opposed to the project and worries how the church activities will negatively affect the area.

John Trimeloni, citizen, is concerned about the number of buildings, the noise and the traffic.

Edgar Grimes, citizen, has seen multiple busses on Bachman Valley Road causing traffic problems, has concerns about noise and safety.

Ken Miller, citizen, would like notifications extended to a one mile radius from the church site.

Holly Davenport, citizen, opposes project, has concerns regarding safety, traffic, and noise.

Ken Nusbaum, citizen, has concerns about traffic, trespassing and noise.

Andy Davenport, citizen, has concerns about traffic, accessibility of emergency equipment and safety.

Chair Kirkner stated the project will go through the development review process and all agencies will review the plan and will have the opportunity to make comments.

John Shifflett, citizen, is concerned about the traffic and the noise.

Mike Boggs, citizen, is concerned about the noise.

Judy Gehr, citizen, is concerned about traffic, noise and the large sign.

Decision:

Concept Site Plan, no action required.

NECESS

CONCEPT SITE PLAN

SUBJECT: S-22-0010, 4400 Goddard Park
LOCATION: 6300 Goddard Park Dr., Eldersburg, MD 21784, C.D. 5
OWNER: HLB Properties LLC, 804 Kingsbridge Terrace, Mt. Airy, MD 21771
DEVELOPER: Same as Owner
ENGINEER: CLSI 439 E. Main St., Westminster, MD 21157
ZONING: C-2, Medium Intensity Commercial
ACREAGE: 4.59 acres
WATERSHED: Liberty Reservoir
FIRE DISTRICT: Sykesville Freedom District Fire Company
MASTER PLAN: Commercial Medium Intensity- 2018 Freedom Community Comprehensive Plan
PRIORITY
FUNDING AREA: Freedom
DESIGNATED
GROWTH AREA: Freedom
WATER/SEWER
DISTRICT: Freedom