

**Planning Commission  
MINUTES – Regular Meeting**

**February 24, 2016  
City of Hagerstown, Maryland**

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Douglas S. Wright, Jr., chair, called the meeting to order at 6:55 p.m., on Wednesday, February 24, 2016, in the Conference Room, Fourth Floor, City Hall. Also present were commission members M. Brubaker, R. Campbell, D. Miller, R. Thomas, and J. Wheeler. The following staff members were present: K. Maher, Planning and Code Administration Director; S. Bockmiller, Development Planner/Zoning Administrator; A. Rohrbaugh, Planner; and D. Calhoun, Secretary.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Roll Call.**

Commission member J. Stone was absent.

**Approval of Minutes:**

February 3, 2016 – Workshop Meeting.

Ms. Wheeler noted typographical errors on page 2 (last sentence before the motion, remove the word “not” to read “. . . assured Mr. Bockmiller that no store will exceed 75,000 square feet.”); and on page 4 (last line, change “before” to “be for”).

**MOTION:** (Miller/Thomas) I make a motion to approve with those changes.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (ABSTAIN - Wheeler)

**Development Review:**

**CortPark – Design of Eastern Boulevard Entrance.**

Mr. Wright and Mr. Miller indicated that they would not be participating in the discussion or any vote on this matter.

Staff Report: (Copy of staff report can be found in the meeting file.) When the Planning Commission approved the sketch plan for this development, there was a requirement that the right-in-right-out-only driveway entrance be designed to accommodate emergency vehicles entering the site from eastbound Eastern Boulevard.

A copy of a concept that removes the divided landscaped median near the entrance and controls access through the design of the island near the entrance and use of barriers on Eastern Boulevard was submitted for the commission’s review. Emergency vehicles would be able to enter the right-out-only exit against the flow of traffic for a few yards, then cross over to the northbound entrance road in the area where there is no divided median. Traffic control devices that include the landscaped triangle at the entrance and dividers would prevent exiting traffic from attempting to turn left, and non-emergency traffic eastbound on Eastern Boulevard from attempting to use the entrance to gain access to CortPark.

Since this site plan will be complicated, the applicant’s engineer requested feedback from the commission before going forward with the rest of the site plan. The design was created in conjunction with the City Engineer.

Commission/Applicant Discussion: Adam Hager of Frederick, Seibert, & Associates, engineer for the project, was present. Mr. Brubaker questioned the construction materials that will be used for the median in Eastern Boulevard. Mr. Hager indicated that the median will be approximately two to four feet wide. There will be no acceleration lane on the westbound side of Eastern Boulevard, only a deceleration lane. The City Engineer has approved this and it was part of his design. The outbound traffic lane will have a stop bar and a stop sign. The City Engineer has agreed to this arrangement, as well. According to Mr. Hager it was never the intent to include an acceleration lane.

Mr. Thomas asked how the parking lots will be affected when traffic is routed through the parking areas. Mr. Bockmiller stated that the area between the two buildings encountered when entering the site will be modified to remove two bays of parking and to add green space. The deleted parking will be made up other places on the site. Mr. Hager added that sidewalks are being installed from Leitersburg Pike to the YMCA.

**MOTION:** (Brubaker/Campbell) I’ll move approval based on the City Engineer’s recommendation.

**DISCUSSION:** It was noted that this approval is just for the entrance, and not the entire site plan. Mr. Brubaker amended his motion to state that this approval is for the concept plan. Ms. Campbell agreed to Mr. Brubaker’s amendment to the motion.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (ABSTAIN – Miller, Wright)

**Hagerstown Cultural Trail – Update.**

Staff Report: (Copy of staff report can be found in the meeting file.) This is the trail that is associated with Catalyst Project #5 of the Community’s City Center Plan. Part of the project was

to develop a public art master plan. Cochran Studio of Frederick, Maryland, was selected to create the plan. A steering committee comprised of members of the cultural community was formed to help guide the project. A charrette was held in January 2016 to gather public comments on the types of public art to be located along the trail.

Ms. Maher stated that the Mayor and Council approved the trail project on Tuesday, February 23, including the construction bids, Public Art Master Plan, funding for Phase I of the Public Art Master Plan, and the easements from the property owners along the off-road trail (Hagerstown Housing Authority, John Barr of Ellsworth Electric, the Herald Mail, and a small strip along the Antietam Paper Company Building). The Mayor and Council also accepted a state grant for a portion of the trail signage. The site plan for the trail is currently being processed and under review, as are the easement plats. The site plan will be coming to the Planning Commission for review in the near future. The City Engineer anticipates construction to begin in early April 2016, with completion sometime this fall. Sometime this summer the public art portions of the project will begin as well.

Staff reviewed the scope of work with the Planning Commission. Excerpts of the plan recommendations were distributed to commission members. Since staff typically brings City projects to the commission for input, Mr. Bockmiller asked if the commission wanted to review the easement plats. Under the ordinance, the commission is not charged with reviewing easement plats. In addition, the easement language will be shown on the site plan and the final plat. Planning Commission members agreed that if it is not a requirement under the ordinance, they do not need to review the easement plat.

### **Planning Commission Business:**

#### **View Street Diner Local Conversion District – Request for Extension.**

Mr. and Mrs. Clingan were not present. Commission members noted that the Clingans have requested at least three or four extensions. The last extension request included direction by the commission that the project needs to be completed within the new time frame suggested by applicants. Commission members were inclined to conditionally approve the latest extension request but deferred making a final determination until the Clingans can be present.

This item will be placed on the March 9 agenda.

#### **2016 Land Management Code Text Amendments Package.**

This discussion will be continued to the March 9 meeting.

**Comprehensive Plan Update: Community Facilities Element.**

Review of the updates to the Comprehensive Plan continued. Mr. Rohrbaugh reviewed changes proposed for the Community Facilities Element (staff report is in the meeting file). Since the packet was mailed out, comments were received from the Fire Chief, and Mr. Rohrbaugh revised the packet material to include the Fire Chief's comments.

This element discusses community facilities and services provided by the City of Hagerstown and services provided by others such as Washington County Public Schools, libraries, emergency services, solid waste management, and broadband. The Community Facilities Element of the plan explores ways to ensure that the city is being adequately served by these services.

While several major action steps recommended in 2009 Plan were implemented, many of the goals and issues are still relevant for the *visionHagerstown 2035*. Updates were provided by Fire, Police, Emergency Services, Parks/Recreation, and Washington County Public Schools. In addition, two major additions to this element are proposed: broadband and a park equity analysis.

With regard to broadband, staff believes this is an issue that needs to be addressed. It is a recommendation from the City's Technology and Support Services Department. Technology and Support Services has been working on gigabyte service with Antietam Cable with the goal of higher speed internet connections. Staff believes this will be an economic development tool. This is relevant to community facilities because the internet has become an essential tool/service to many residents and businesses.

The second big item is the Park Equity Analysis. A year ago staff initiated a discussion with the commission which included a map based on census tracts indicating where park space is needed. The City Engineer agrees with Planning staff that this analysis is an important tool to identify park space needs in the city. The focus is not on the amount of park space, but rather whether park space is readily accessible to city residents.

Commission members reviewed the Community Facilities Element and had the following comments or observations:

Chart:

- No. 2 under "Issues to be Addressed" – It was noted that the School Board has loosened its recommendations on adding schools in the period covered by the plan.
- No. 9-2 under "Actions" – Mr. Wright questioned whether a new fire station is still planned near I-81, since the map in the plan still shows a station. Staff will check in with the Fire Chief.

- No. 9-9 under “Actions” – Mr. Wright questioned why the City is not pursuing agreements with the Board of Education to allow school facilities to be used for public recreation areas. If the school properties are included, some of the underserved areas identified in the Park Equity Analysis could be covered. If school facilities can be used, the City could include them in the plans and those goals could be met, rather than spending more money to replicate recreational spaces. Mr. Rohrbaugh will discuss this with the Board of Education to find out if this could be accomplished.

Community Facilities Element:

- In the revised language, page 9-2, there might be a consistency issue concerning the number of Fire Department employees. Mr. Rohrbaugh will consult the Fire Chief for more accurate employment figures.
- Staff was asked to confirm the information in the last sentence of the “Fire Department” section on page 9-3.
- On page 9-5, Solid Waste Management, there was a recommendation to be more specific about the twice-a-month “bulk trash pickup.”

There was discussion about the minimum amount of space that could be considered as sufficient recreation area. In particular, there is a single tot lot in CortPark and the question was whether that tot lot is sufficient for the area identified by the half-mile radius shown on the Park Equity Analysis map. Mr. Wright stated that if the Potomac Heights Elementary site was included, that park space could contribute to the amount of recreation area for this section of Hagerstown. The same could be said for the Langley Park area. The need for park space might be mitigated if Eastern Elementary School/Ruth Ann Monroe Primary School is included as a recreation area. It was pointed out that Mt. Aetna Road is a heavily traveled road that might be too dangerous for children to cross.

Mr. Rohrbaugh asked if the commission believes the CortPark area would benefit from additional park space. Mr. Brubaker said if staff means to imply that there is a public need for a public park, he would be uncomfortable with that assertion. Mr. Rohrbaugh stated that if the County follows through on its plans to build a park along the proposed northeast connector, that need would be addressed for this area. He also noted that Map 9-5 notes that the Department of Natural Resources data is based on census tract information and does not take into account the different density levels in the city.

Mr. Rohrbaugh will make the recommended changes and bring this element back to the commission for discussion at the March 9 meeting.

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**Adjourn.** It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (8:13 p.m.)

3/9/2016  
Approved

  
Debra C. Calhoun - Secretary