

**Planning Commission
MINUTES – Regular Meeting**

**April 26, 2017
City of Hagerstown, Maryland**

Douglas S. Wright, Jr., chair, opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m., on Wednesday, April 26, 2017, in the Conference Room, Fourth Floor, City Hall. Also present were commission members D. Miller, J. Stone, R. Thomas and J. Wheeler. The following staff members were present: K. Maher, Director of Planning and Code Administration Department; S. Bockmiller, Development Planner/Zoning Administrator; A. Rohrbaugh, Planner; and D. Calhoun, Secretary.

REGULAR MEETING

Roll Call.

The chair noted that commission members R. Campbell and P. Corderman were absent.

Approval of Minutes:

March 29, 2017 – Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: (Wheeler/Miller) I'll move approval of the minutes.

DISCUSSION: Top of page 5, second line should be “they” not “the.” Ms. Wheeler and Mr. Miller had no issues with the correction.

ACTION: APPROVED (ABSTAIN - Miller)

Development Review:

Proposed Washington County Forest Conservation Easement – End of Professional Court.

Staff Report: (Copy of staff report is in the meeting file.) This matter was discussed at a recent meeting, but at the time staff was unable to reveal details of the project. This is a situation where Washington County would like to locate a forest conservation easement inside the city limits for a project in Washington County. Staff raised the question of whether the Hagerstown Planning Commission wanted to have a role in this process.

Since the last discussion the property owners involved have been approached. Andrew Eshleman of Washington County Division of Engineering & Construction Management was present. The project is the construction of Professional Boulevard and is part of the plan to lock up forest conservation easements in the floodplain on two properties at the cul-de-sac of Professional Court on the west side of Antietam Creek. In addition, staff would like to discuss a second issue.

Just north of this property is Kiwanis Park. Consideration has been given to the idea of providing a pedestrian walkway from Professional Court to Kiwanis Park. Mr. Bockmiller noted that the City Engineer's office has already been discussing this with the owner of the affected property.

Mr. Eshleman stated that he has been talking with the owner about the bridge project and the associated easements. He has been working with the City Engineer and Mr. Bockmiller. Mr. Eshleman was hopeful that a board meeting could be arranged in the future to discuss these plans. Washington County has taken the lead on the entire design of the bridge project. Antietam Creek is the dividing line. If the pedestrian path becomes a deal breaker, Washington County will step back from the trail since the bridge is most important. As far as forest conservation, the property owner seems open to the forest conservation easement, but the parties still need to reach an agreement. This also applies to the property owner on the south side, Broadmoor. Mr. Bockmiller noted that the topography issues may preclude a trail from being located on the Broadmoor site. Most likely any trail will be on the east side of the creek south of the bridge.

Commission Discussion: Mr. Stone questioned what development is triggering the forest conservation requirements. Mr. Eshleman stated that the development is construction of Professional Boulevard. Overall they will be clearing approximately 3.8 acres of forest and they have completed the forest conservation worksheet to determine what their forest conservation requirements will be for mitigation. The city location will only meet a portion of their requirements and will impact two properties on the east side of the Antietam Creek (County) and two properties on the west side (City). Despite the County's best efforts, they tried to do the mitigation on the project site. Mr. Stone asked if the trail will be accessible from the bridge and was told that there will be sidewalks on each side of the bridge, including overlook locations, and the trail will be accessible from the bridge. Mr. Bockmiller stated that the City Engineer would like to work with an additional property owner for a spur trail that would allow access into the west side of Kiwanis Park. The Comprehensive Plan advocates for trails that improve access to Kiwanis Park.

Mr. Thomas asked if the forest conservation easement will be separate from the walking trail easement. Mr. Bockmiller stated these are separate issues but they will be occupying the same space. Mr. Thomas was concerned about how the trail will be maintained. Mr. Eshleman indicated that maintenance will likely be discussed when the parties involved meet again. Commission members were supportive of this approach and expressed appreciation to the County for its willingness to participate.

Mr. Bockmiller informed the commission that there is a second County forest conservation issue percolating at Hillside Manor along Eastern Boulevard. Washington County is planning to remove some trees and put a road through a City forest conservation easement. This will need to be discussed in more detail because the City does not want to cause problems for Washington County's plans to widen Eastern Boulevard.

Concerning the City Planning Commission’s role in these types of matters, Mr. Wright asked that all forest conservation easements be approved by the Planning Commission when they are located within the city limits. Mr. Bockmiller will be working with the City Attorney’s office to make sure there are no state prohibitions dealing with these proposals. Mr. Wright would like to develop a policy or procedure for similar future issues. Mr. Bockmiller stated these are two separate issues: an easement is being added on Professional Court and on Eastern Boulevard the County is proposing to remove a forest conservation easement area. Mr. Stone stated that state law could come into play and should be researched before coming up with a policy.

Planning Commission Business:

Proposed FY 2018 Capital Improvements Program.

Staff Report: (Copy in the meeting file) Each year, the Planning Commission reviews the proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and offers comments to the Mayor and City Council as warranted. Ms. Maher included with the staff memo summary sheets on the CIP for the different funds and an analysis that highlights projects likely to be of interest to the Planning Commission (grouped by project type) which identifies the relationship of the different projects to the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Maher highlighted projects the commission may find interesting from a planning perspective:

- Downtown Redevelopment Fund - \$1,440,000 – to assist with urban improvement projects (BISFA, University of Maryland, Board of Education).
- Installation of New Sidewalks on Haven Road, Carr Street & Snyder Avenue – \$670,000.
- Road resurfacing and addition of accessibility ramps on portions of Salem Avenue, Pangborn Blvd, Mulberry Avenue, Marshall Street, and others – \$1,300,000.
- Alley Reconstruction on portions of 2 Jonathan Street alleys, 1 North End alley, and 1 South End alley – \$291,000.
- Planning for Dredging of Pangborn Lake and various repairs – \$25,000.
- Provide free Wi-Fi in City Park, Fairgrounds Park, and Pangborn Park – \$40,000.
- Renovate restrooms at City Park, Hellane Park, and Pangborn Park – \$25,000.
- Green Streets retrofits – \$80,000.
- SWM Implementation – \$380,000.
- Stream Restoration at Longmeadow Park – \$507,500 (section west of the Terrace).
- Marsh Run Walls Rehabilitation – \$135,204.

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Mr. Thomas asked that something be included again to improve water pressure in the east end of Hagerstown behind the former Sheraton. Mr. Miller was concerned about \$1.4 million in Washington County’s CIP for the intersection at Antietam Drive and Eastern Boulevard. He asked why the County is planning improvements to this intersection if the County is not even planning to widen the road that far north. Commission members discussed the timing for the extension of Eastern Boulevard.

Mr. Wright added his concerns about the amount of money that the City is planning to borrow from the Maryland Department of the Environment in the form of loans and bonds for Water Division projects. He thought that the Water fund would be more self-sustaining and has concerns that this practice will create a deficit for the city. Ms. Maher indicated that this funding scenario is typical for the large projects undertaken by the utilities.

With a note about a pressure pump station in east end, staff requested a motion to generally recommend the CIP as consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

MOTION: (Stone/Wheeler) I will make that motion.
DISCUSSION: None.
ACTION: APPROVED (Unanimous)

Election of Officers.

It was moved and seconded that the current slate of officers remain in office for another year (Mr. Wright, chair; Mr. Stone, vice chair). The motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn. It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (7:55 p.m.)

5/31/2017

Approved



Debra C. Calhoun - Secretary