

**Planning Commission
MINUTES**

**February 13, 2019
City of Hagerstown, Maryland**

Douglas S. Wright, Jr., chair, opened the meeting at 4:00 p.m., on Wednesday, February 6, 2019, in the Conference Room, Fourth Floor, City Hall. Also present were commission members C. Davis, 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; M. Flick, Planner; and D. Calhoun, Planning Commission Secretary.

REGULAR MEETING

Roll Call.

D. Wright, C. Davis, R. Thomas, and J. Wheeler were present; Commission members S. McIntire, C. Ploscaru, and J. Stone were absent.

Approval of Minutes.

February 6, 2019 – Special Meeting.

The minutes were not available for approval.

Development Review.

None.

Planning Commission Business.

Planning Commission Bylaws Review, including Press Policy.

At the last meeting commission members voiced reservations about having to provide details when they recuse themselves due to a conflict of interest. Staff consulted with the City Attorney and the City Attorney agreed that detail does not have to be provided as to why a commission member is recusing themselves. He also reminded commission members that they are covered by the City’s Ethics Code.

Staff made changes to Article VI, “Meetings.” Commission members had no concerns about the more generalized language drafted by staff concerning meeting dates.

Article VII, “Quorum and Voting Requirements,” Section 5 has not been revised since the City Attorney provided an opinion on whether commission members are required to disclose details on why they must recuse themselves from a discussion. Staff will make some further revisions and run it by the City Attorney.

Mr. Bockmiller suggested adding a sentence about adjusting the meeting schedule to work around holidays. The bylaws specify the second and last Wednesday of each month. However, the commission typically holds one meeting a month in November and December and deliberately avoids Ash Wednesday and Jewish High Holidays. Staff will add clarifying language in the next draft.

Concerning the Press Policy, commission members agreed it would be beneficial to merge the Press Policy into the bylaws.

Staff was instructed to make all the revisions discussed and bring another draft back for the commission to review.

Land Management Code Amendments:

Group Homes. (See supporting documentation in meeting file.) Ms. Maher discussed the results of her research including definitions from other jurisdictions on group homes and how they are permitted. Based on input from Scott Rose from Turning Point, commission members were in favor of licensing and inspections. Recovery houses are not required to be licensed, however, the City’s proposed language would cover those situations.

Planning Commission members had no concerns with staff’s proposed definition for “group home.” Mr. Bockmiller noted that the City’s excessive use of services ordinance would apply to these uses and rental licenses may also be required. These uses will need to be certified by a state or federal licensing agency.

Housing in the CR (Commercial Regional) Zoning District. A request was received from a developer to allow housing in the CR district. Ms. Maher reviewed a chart she prepared based on her research from other jurisdictions. Commission members noted that a PUD allows the Mayor and Council to ask for things that a developer might not be required by the ordinance to provide. PUDs are a unique situation so there should be a unique hearing for it. Mr. Bockmiller noted that the minimum number of acres for a PUD is being changed in the new packet of amendments from five acres to 20 acres. The Planning Commission did not make any changes to the proposed language.

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Increase Housing Opportunities for Elderly and Homeless Populations. A comment was received about the benefits of increasing housing opportunities for the elderly and homeless. Commission members made no changes to the amendments noting that the current package includes a provision for rooming houses.

Signs. Mr. Bockmiller asked for clarification on the decision made by the commission at the last meeting concerning the sign ordinance section of the amendments and whether the commission decided to withhold only the amendments on temporary signs or on all signs. The amendments were written holistically so if they are pulled out entirely there will be no guidelines on temporary signage. Commission members clarified that the entire sign ordinance should be pulled out. Ms. Maher will inform the Mayor and Council that the commission recommends the sign ordinance amendments be delayed to a future date. Mr. Wright stated that if the Mayor and Council give the commission direction on the political signs issue, the Planning Commission could finish it.

The text amendments should be going back to the Mayor and City Council in March. Mr. Wright offered to attend that meeting to discuss the political signs issue with the Mayor and Council.

Announcement:

Mr. Wright reminded commission members of the Maryland Planning Commissioners Association conference on March 29 at the University Systems of Maryland-Hagerstown facility. There is no charge and a link will be set up soon to handle registrations. This conference would also be beneficial to Board of Zoning Appeals and Historic District Commission members.

Adjourn. It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (4:51 p.m.)

3/13/2019

Approved



Debra C. Calhoun - Secretary