

**Planning Commission  
MINUTES**

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

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Douglas S. Wright, Jr., chair, opened the meeting at 4:00 p.m., on Wednesday, March 13, 2019, in the Conference Room, Fourth Floor, City Hall. Also present were commission members S. McIntire, J. Stone, and R. Thomas. 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, Secretary.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Roll Call.**

Commission members C. Davis, C. Ploscaru, and J. Wheeler were absent.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**February 13, 2019.**

**MOTION:** (Thomas/Wright) I move that we accept the minutes from February 13 as submitted.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (ABSTAIN: McIntire, Stone)

**February 27, 2019.**

**MOTION:** (Stone/Thomas) I'll move we approve those minutes.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (ABSTAIN: McIntire)

**Development Review:**

**Salem Avenue Elementary School – 1323 Salem Avenue – Determination of Parking Adequacy.**

Staff Report: (Staff report is in meeting file) Staff has been approached by Washington County Public Schools (WCPS) about relocating three portable classrooms from Eastern Elementary and Sharpsburg Elementary to this site. The trailers are proposed to be moved to an area where there is existing parking. Regarding parking requirements for schools, the ordinance states “1 per

employee plus ample student and visitor parking as determined by the Planning Commission.” According to WCPS there is a total of 133 parking spaces on site. The portables would eliminate 13 spaces; there are 81 full-time staff members at this school leaving 39 spaces for visitors.

Staff did not believe this would be an issue and asked the Planning Commission to make a determination that parking will be sufficient after the portables are installed.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Rob Rollins, Director of Facilities Management for Washington County Public Schools, was present. Pre-K and special education programs are being established at Salem Avenue Elementary creating the need for extra classrooms to accommodate these new programs. This school was remodeled and reopened in 2005. The portable classrooms will be placed in the central parking area. The entire site is tight and there are not many places to locate these trailers that are safe for the students. There are several scattered parking lots at this school. The handicapped space that will be lost due to the addition of the portable classrooms will be relocated.

**MOTION:** (Stone/McIntire) I move that we modify the parking requirements to 120 spaces and that we deem those adequate under the ordinance.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

**Potomac Dental Center – 1301 Potomac Avenue – Site Improvements Per Local Conversion District Overlay, Minor Site Plan, Case No. SA-2018-08.**

Staff Report: (Staff report is in meeting file) The applicant obtained a Local Conversion District Overlay from the Mayor and Council to convert the subject building into medical and business offices. Since then, they have obtained a quitclaim for the alley to the west which will be excavated to create better drainage, reconstruct a retaining wall and install a walkway and steps. No uses directly associated with the overlay can occur in this area such as parking, outdoor storage, employee lunch area, seating or similar uses.

The Planning Commission reviewed this plan in concept during the rezoning process and was satisfied that the proposed retrofit of the site met the intent of the Ordinance for site design. The proposal involved numerous deviations from current design standards due to the existing location and reuse of the building and the remaining land available for parking.

Fifteen parking spaces will be provided. Landscaping has been retrofitted in the front parking area and along the south side of the building to the greatest extent possible. The existing Allegheny Electronics sign post will be removed. New signage consists of wall-mounted signs in the cornice and on the northeast side of the building. Elevations of the building were provided on

page 2 of the site plan. A new retaining wall will be constructed along the north side of the building in order to assist with correcting drainage issues along the side of the building.

The plan was routed for review and the City Engineer, the Light Department, Water Division, and Planning and Code Administration Department have provided conditional approvals; full approvals were received from the Wastewater Division and the Fire Marshal. Staff recommended approval subject to resolution of the conditional approvals.

Mr. Bockmiller noted that the wording of the Local Conversion District requires that any enclosed historic storefronts must be reopened and windows must be installed. The applicant is opening up most of the storefronts; however, there is one storefront where the infill will remain and one of the wall-mounted signs will be placed in that location. Since opening up all the storefront windows was a condition of the Mayor and Council's approval of the Local Conversion District Overlay, Mr. Bockmiller polled the elected body and all members were agreeable to the minor deviation from the approved plan. The remaining storefront areas will be opened up; and the service bay areas will be enclosed with glass which is not required. The wall-mounted sign in the cornice and the wall-mounted sign on the northeast facade will eliminate the need for the existing freestanding sign.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Adam Hager of Frederick, Seibert & Associates, engineers for the project, was present. Mr. Wright noted that the City Engineer recommended eliminating one parking space (#11) and marking space #13 for staff use only because of the difficulty getting out. Mr. Hager said that would not be an issue. The owner was trying to provide as many spaces as possible. In response to a question by Mr. Wright, Mr. Hager indicated that all stormwater will be directed to the storm drain. Mr. Wright noted that the site plan does not show details on the retaining wall or the railing. Mr. Hager stated that the railing details and retaining wall are being addressed by the structural engineer and the architect for the project. In response to another question by Mr. Wright, Mr. Hager stated that the double striping pattern near the entrance door is to warn dental patients that they cannot park in this area. Dr. Everett Eklund, owner of the property, was also present and explained another reason is to deter cut-through traffic. He suggested that a different texture or concrete could be used to differentiate this area. Mr. Hager will add detail for the handicapped parking sign. Mr. Bockmiller noted that if space #11 is being removed, landscaping must be added in its place.

**MOTION:** (Stone/Thomas) I'll move approval subject to the outstanding comments of Engineering, Planning, Light, and Water; and that the applicant add the detail about the handrail on the drawings.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

Commission members commended Dr. Eklund on this project and his cooperation in working with the City at every stage. They foresee this will be a fantastic project.

**West End Baptist Chapel – 59 Winter Street – Parking Lot Improvements, Site Plan,  
Case No. ZS-2018-10.**

Staff Report: (Staff report is in meeting file) This site plan is for the adaptive reuse of the Winter Street School. The Board of Zoning Appeals granted approval of a special exception to use the property as a religious sanctuary. The sanctuary will accommodate up to 560 persons which would require at least 112 parking spaces (one space per five seats in the sanctuary) unless bus service is provided. The site plan shows 120 parking spaces and the applicant will be providing bus service for its members. Staff added that a considerable number of the parishioners will be able to walk to services.

The existing portable classrooms will be removed. Stormwater management will be provided in the northwest corner of the site (intersection of West Franklin and Alexander Streets) and along Alexander Street. The existing parking field will be expanded to provide the required parking. The existing chain link fence along Washington Avenue will be removed, as well as along Alexander Street between Washington Avenue and the pedestrian steps that are approximately two-thirds of the way across the frontage of Alexander Street. Due to the height of the retaining wall along West Franklin Street and on Alexander Street between West Franklin Street and the stairs, that fence will be retained per the building code. The remaining chain link fence will be painted black. A trash enclosure will be installed along the rear of the building near the northeast corner of the proposed parking lot.

With regard to landscaping retrofits on the property, several new trees will be installed in the front yard. Parking lot landscaping trees are provided, as well as plantings in the stormwater management area and the area just to the east of it. Shrubs and street trees will be provided along Washington Avenue, Alexander Street, and West Franklin Street. The plan shows a seven-foot wide landscaped island along Washington Avenue, and the applicant requested a waiver to reduce the required buffer from ten feet to seven feet in that location.

The plan was routed for review and all have provided approvals, with the exception of the City Engineer, the Fire Marshal, and the Water Division. Staff recommended approval subject to the outstanding comments cited. Staff noted that it worked with the applicant to “green up” the site with additional plantings and the developer was very accommodating in this regard.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Clarence Horst, representing West End Baptist Chapel, was present to answer questions. Commission members had no concerns with the proposed waiver and the site plan.

**MOTION:** (Thomas/McIntire) I move that we allow a seven-foot landscaping zone along Washington Avenue from Alexander to the entrance driveway to the parking lot at the building.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

**MOTION:** (Stone/McIntire) I move approval of the site plan, subject to the outstanding comments noted on the presentation.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

**595 Dual Highway – BAI Hagerstown LLC – Final Plat, Case No. S-2018-14.**

Staff Report: (Staff report is in meeting file) This plat is for the creation of one lot in the front of the Hagerstown Shopping Center to separate the Auto Zone store onto its own lot. All building setback requirements have been met. A waiver has been requested in order to draw property lines through areas that do not have the required ten-foot parking lot landscaping buffer. Shared access easements have been provided so this lot can be accessed through the shopping center parking lot. There will be no direct access from this site to the Dual Highway.

The plan was routed for review and all have provided approvals. Staff recommended approval of the final plat and the waivers. Waivers are being requested in two locations: the first is where the property line will be drawn along the entrance road to the west of the proposed lot resulting in a six-foot buffer between the property line and the parking area (reduction in landscaped buffer from ten feet to six feet); and the second is near the driveway on the east side of the lot. There is a small corner containing a parking space that protrudes approximately four feet into the required ten-foot buffer from the property line. The building was built about six years ago and it was in compliance with all the requirements in effect at that time.

Applicant/Commission Discussion: Ed Schreiber of Frederick, Seibert & Associates, engineers for the project, was present. The commission had no questions or comments on the final plat.

**MOTION:** (Thomas/Stone) I make a motion that we grant the reduction in the landscaping on the west entrance driveway from ten feet to six feet and on the east entrance driveway for the north parking space corner a waiver from ten feet to six feet.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

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**MOTION:** (Thomas/McIntire) So moved (to approve the final plat).  
**DISCUSSION:** None.  
**ACTION:** APPROVED (Unanimous)

**Workshop: 1034 West Washington Street – Vehicle Sales Facility.**

Staff Report: (Staff report is in meeting file) Seyid Roughani, developer, was present. The commission conducted a workshop in November 2016 for someone who wished to renovate the auto repair business on the northeast corner of Washington Avenue and North Mont Valla Avenue to include an auto sales use. That plan involved developing the undeveloped lawn area to the rear and on the hill along North Mont Valla for a display lot that would accommodate approximately 12 vehicles. At the time the Planning Commission generally had no concerns with the concept and urged the developer to move forward. Ultimately that developer did not proceed with the project.

Another party currently has interest in this site for a car sales use. There are design standards in place for vehicle sales facilities. When staff mentioned the previous workshop history, the developer expressed interest in that model for his business. This developer would proceed with the project in two phases. The first phase would include a small amount of inventory in the front parking area along West Washington Street. The second phase would be the improvement of the expanded lot in the rear.

Because there are three new members on the commission since this was last discussed, staff suggested that the commission conduct another workshop to make sure that all members are still satisfied with the concept. Some type of accommodations by the commission would be necessary to develop this site for auto sales due to the existing conditions on the site.

Developer/Commission Discussion: Mr. Roughani has had asphalt companies to the property for estimating purposes. His plan is to clean up the existing property and add a 110 x 35-foot asphalt area with a ten-foot space between the sidewalk and the lot. This area would be used for retail display. Some cars will be displayed on the front lot. A curb cut might be needed for inventory movement. The upper lot would not be used for customer parking. Mr. Bockmiller pointed out a second storage area that is not visible from North Mont Valla due to the topography of the site. Waivers would be necessary for the required landscaping requirement of a ten-foot buffer from the right-of-way with street trees and shrubs.

Mr. Stone asked if there would be any specific variations from design requirements. Mr. Bockmiller said most of the waivers would be for the existing parking lot that fronts on West Washington Street and North Mont Valla Avenue. There are two existing driveway aprons and no landscaping across the West Washington Street frontage. The previous plan from 2016

showed a narrow landscape island with shrubs along West Washington Street and North Mont Valla Avenue. A proposed sidewalk would help transition car shoppers from the lower lot to the upper lot along North Mont Valla. If Mr. Roughani decides to proceed with his plans, a site plan will be required. Commission members had no concerns.

**Planning Commission Business:**

**2020 Census.**

A joint press conference is planned to explain the purpose of the Complete Count Committee. The focus of this committee is to promote the importance of being counted in the upcoming 2020 Census to everyone in the county, but especially those segments of the population that are traditionally difficult to reach and have been undercounted. The penalty of not being counted which resonates the most with citizens is the impact undercounting can have on federal dollars passed down for community programs and infrastructure projects critical for the County's citizens. If people are missed it could mean fewer dollars for these programs in our community.

Ms. Maher invited Planning Commission members to participate in the Complete Count Committee. If members are interested in serving, they should contact Ms. Maher. The decennial census is required by the U.S. Constitution and is confidential (for a period of 70 years). The U.S. Census is implementing an online counting procedure as the first wave of counting.

**Announcements.**

Mr. Wright reminded commission members about the training session on March 29.

**Adjourn.** It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn (5:03 p.m.)

3/27/2019

Approved



Debra C. Calhoun - Secretary