

Douglas S. Wright, Jr., chair, called the special meeting to order at 2:30 p.m., on Wednesday, September 9, 2021, in the Council Chamber of City Hall.

I. Roll Call

Also present were commission members:

- **J. Stone, vice-chair – via Zoom**
- **C. Davis – via Zoom**
- **R. Thomas**
- **S. McIntire, ex-officio – via Zoom**

Absent commission member:

- **J. Wheeler**

The following staff members were present:

- **K. Maher, PCAD Director**
- **S. Bockmiller, Development Planner/Zoning Administrator**
- **M. Flick, Planner**
- **Amy Haught, Administrative Coordinator**

II. REGULAR MEETING

A. Development Review

- 1. Site plan and subdivision plat approval – Dan Michaels – parking lot expansion – 1150 Professional Blvd. (ZS-2021-09 and S-2021-07)**

Staff presentation: This is for acquisition of land from an adjacent property and construction of a parking lot extension that will create a loop lane behind the building, connecting two parking lots on either side of the building which are not currently connected. Fifty-seven one-hundredths (0.57) acres of land would be incorporated into this lot. In response to comments at the sketch plan review, Leyland Cypress trees will be installed along the common new property line since the adjacent use is residential/institutional. Unconditional approvals for both the site plan and the plat are in hand and staff recommended approval. Staff report and drawings are in the meeting file.

Commission discussion: Mr. Wright suggested the issues be addressed separately. There was no objection from the membership.

MOTION: Mr. Stone moved that the Commission approve the subdivision plat. Mr. Thomas seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Thomas moved that the Commission approve the site plan. Ms. McIntire seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

B. Planning Commission Business

1. Amendment to Transportation Element of Comprehensive Plan

Staff presentation: Ms. Maher presented the staff report which is in the meeting file.

Commission discussion: A discussion followed on the proposed amendments to the Transportation Element to remove the north leg of R. Paul Smith Boulevard as directed by the Mayor and City Council, add new road alignments in the other Harrison tracts, update the transportation planning of the Hagerstown-Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Organization, and update three transportation improvement projects completed since 2018. The Commission indicated they did not support the two transportation improvement projects added to the MPO's 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan: widening of Wesel Boulevard to four lanes and extending Western Maryland Parkway over the railroad to Railway Lane. Staff will make that note in the text.

MOTION: Ms. Davis made a motion to move forward the proposal to the 60-day State clearinghouse review. Mr. Stone seconded, and the motion passed unanimously with Ms. McIntire abstaining.

2. Discussion of teleconference with Silver Spring Township's Planning Director regarding "Walden"

Staff presentation: This was a briefing, with no pre-meeting memo provided. A Zoom conference was conducted in which the Planning Director, Zoning Administrator, City Engineer, Fire Chief and Chairman Wright, and the outside parties included Chris Guarino, Planning Director for Silver Spring Township, and Tim Murphy, who was the project engineer for Walden for its entire 15 year development period, representing the developer.

Mr. Bockmiller explained that road standards was the biggest topic of conversation. Messrs. Murphy and Guarino explained that the developer had different ideas on road construction than what the township's road standards required, so both parties determined it was best if the development were completed using private and not public streets. As a result, some of the streets were too narrow to be accepted by Hagerstown. The zero lot line garage townhouses that resembled repurposed warehouses were condominium regimes and not fee-simple ownership.

Mr. Tissue summarized his views on the issues of street width and turning radii at intersections and he would work with Chief Lohr on creating standard details for streets that was acceptable to both departments. Mr. Wright suggested the maximum distance a house should be from a street is 300 feet – 100 less than the maximum distance fire crews could haul gear to a scene by hand.

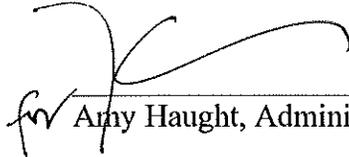
Mr. Bockmiller explained that the planning director was not very happy with the use of alleys because they generate complaints from first-time residents who are not happy with being delayed by trash trucks in the alleys, but these calls are usually from brand new residents and they adjust. The alleys are designed for two-way traffic for cars to pass. He mentioned that the large park in Walden is probably larger than the city would want or a developer would provide in Hagerstown, however the standards need to be written to be flexible to allow developers maximum ability to exercise creativity in developing quality proposals.

Commission discussion: Mr. Thomas mentioned that alleys and curves need to be wide enough for trash collection and ladder trucks to deploy with outriggers.

Mr. Bockmiller also provided that he visited another similar development called “Arcona” east of US 15 in Cumberland County, which is a development in a township that the fire chief contacted his counterpart in that jurisdiction for feedback. Mr. Bockmiller stated that Arcona was nice, but not as good as Walden, and observed the following criticisms (or observations of conditions that would not likely pass in Hagerstown): 1) there was a more liberal use of front-loaded garages and 2) many of these had driveways that were shorter than a car length (implying they were intended only for access to the garage) but were used for parking and hung over the sidewalks. He concluded that the text amendments that are necessary to adjust the zoning ordinance and the subdivision and land development ordinance are relatively minor to achieve the goals of making traditional subdivision design the priority design, and fix complications or problems that exist in the ordinance that complicate that goal.

C. Adjournment: -- 3:16 p.m.

1/12/2022
Date


Amy Haught, Administrative Coordinator