

Douglas S. Wright, Jr., chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., on Wednesday, November 10, 2021, in the Council Chamber of City Hall.

I. Roll Call

Also present were commission members:

- o C. Davis – via Zoom
- o J. Stone
- o R. Thomas
- o J. Wheeler
- o S. McIntire, ex-officio – via Zoom

The following staff members were present:

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

II. REGULAR MEETING

A. Approval of Minutes: No minutes.

B. Planning Commission Business

1. 2021 Annual Package of Amendments to the Land Management Code

Staff presentation: Mr. Bockmiller made the official presentation of the staff-proposed package of materials for the 2021 amendments. Most of the material the Commission has seen at prior meetings has been in workshop format. Materials are in the meeting folder. Changes since the last meeting are highlighted in yellow. Changes are grouped into six proposals, numbered 2021-03 to 2021-08. Additional material was added regarding crisis centers to 2021-03. In proposal 2021-06, minor adjustments are added to Change 5 of this proposal, and Change 12 is added addressing the resurrection of expired nonconforming townhomes. In proposal 2021-08, adjustments were made to the previously seen material regarding roof mounted signs and the number of projecting signs that can be on the front of a building that is articulated to appear to be a series of smaller attached buildings.

Commission Discussion: There was some discussion about the nature of crisis centers and whether they would be used in the event of natural disasters.

Motion: Mr. Thomas moved to direct staff to move to advertise a public review meeting for this package of amendment proposals to be held on December 8, 2021. Mr. Stone seconded the motion which passed.

2. Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Transportation Element

Staff presentation: Ms. Maher presented the staff report which is in the meeting file. On November 8, the City received comments on the proposed amendments from the Maryland Department of Planning and the Maryland Department of the Environment. Staff evaluated the comments and made recommendations on whether to address in the amendments or not. Proposed new language was presented for two places in the plan to respond to State input.

Commission discussion: Move forward with the following revisions:

- On Policy 5-6, add to Inclusion of Sidewalks and pedestrian paths as part of new development “as well as through City projects to fill gaps in the existing pedestrian network as funding allows.”
- Add a new Action 5-8 – “As development plans come forward for vacant land in the southeast area of the city, ensure traffic studies include assessment of Comprehensive Plan transportation improvement recommendations as a means of alleviating and/or improving traffic impacts from existing and proposed development in the region.”

Motion: Mr. Stone made a motion to move forward with a public review meeting on December 8 with the changes agreed upon today. Ms. Davis seconded, and the motion passed with Ms. McIntire abstaining.

C. Development Review:

1. Sketch Plan – Martin Heights – Formerly Noland Village

Applicant represented by: Fred Frederick of Frederick, Seibert and Associates, Glen Worgan of Delaware Valley Development Corporation and David Kump, Sean Griffith and Chris Howlett of the Hagerstown Housing Authority.

Staff presentation: Mr. Bockmiller presented his staff report which is in the meeting file. The Plan is to remove 22 of 32 existing “sticks” of townhouses, retaining and renovating the remaining ten, constructing two new three-story garden style apartment buildings and a community center. This development would create 4 single-family building lots facing Linwood Drive. Staff has approved the forest stand delineation and there is no qualifying forest on the property. If, in the future, new townhouse dwellings are constructed on the property, the Zoning Ordinance will require they each be on their own lot. There are no obvious needs for waivers nor are there any peculiar unique site conditions that would affect development design. Staff recommended approval. Data was provided by the Board of Education regarding school capacity and demands for this part of the City.

Applicant presentation: Mr. Frederick affirmed staff's summary of the proposal. He said density would be greatly reduced. Each apartment building would have 24 units.

Commission discussion: There was some discussion of impervious surface to remain and the Board of Education's analysis, essentially treating McCleary Hill and this development as a single project with a net increase in dwelling units, not taking into account that McCleary Hill could have been purchased by another developer and developed separately from this proposal.

Motion: Mr. Thomas made a motion to approve the sketch plan. Ms. Wheeler seconded, and the motion passed.

2. ESD Sketch Plan and Waiver Request – Currwood Development – 1527 Howell Road (Harrison Farm)

Applicant represented by: Fred Frederick of Frederick Seibert & Associates and Charles McMahon of MCB Real Estate.

Staff presentation: Mr. Bockmiller presented his staff report which is in the meeting file. This is for a two-building warehouse development, with truck access on Edgewood Road via R. Paul Smith Boulevard, with a second non-truck entrance (employee and visitor vehicles only) from Howell Road. Off site improvements to the remainder of the Harrison lands, including road improvements to Dual Highway would be constructed. The cemetery analysis has been provided. There are no known human burial sites on the property. The forest stand delineation is complete, and there is floodplain along Antietam Creek, which is a priority forest area. About 30 specimen trees would be removed as part of this development, and this requires a formal variance process (not part of this proceeding). Staff recommended approval, subject to any additional views the Commission may have regarding buffering Howell Road and discussion of public sidewalks along the extensive street frontage this property has on Howell Road and Edgewood Drive. Waiver requests were received regarding sidewalk construction.

Applicant presentation: Mr. Frederick affirmed the staff presentation, discussed the situation with the adjacent medical office building owner (Dr. Ali) and his concerns about connection to a road that will no longer be built. He discussed plans for potential additional building along Howell Road and the need to buffer this area with select trees and berms and not wholesale planting of the area in forest. There is a fiberoptic cable along Edgewood Drive that requires planning around. They also seek approval to sit sidewalks back from Edgewood Drive to avoid some severe topography along the street, and to construct it of asphalt rather than concrete. The County does not want sidewalks in the right of way of Howell Road

Commission discussion: Members of the Commission were okay with the waiver for sidewalk location and design along Edgewood Drive, however, there was great concern

about not providing sidewalks along the widened R. Paul Smith Boulevard and the connector road to Dual Highway.

Motion: Mr. Stone made a motion to approve the waiver request and not require public sidewalks along Howell Road, and to modify the sidewalk design on Edgewood to be of asphalt and set back from the road in the vicinity of a ravine and a steep area immediately adjacent to the street. Ms. Wheeler seconded, and the motion passed.

Commission discussion: The Commission discussed the buffering of the area long Howell Road, and permitted several members of the local community that expressed concern with the development, including but not limited to traffic and truck traffic, emergency services,

Motion: Mr. Stone made a motion to approve the sketch plan. Mr. Thomas seconded, and the motion passed.

III. ADJOURNMENT – 9:12 p.m.

1/12/2022
Date _____


for / _____
Amy Haught, Administrative
Coordinator