

Submitted March 9, 2021
Approved March 10, 2021

**MINUTES OF THE ROCKVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING NO. 4-2021
Wednesday, February 10, 2021**

The City of Rockville Planning Commission convened in regular session
via WebEx at 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, February 10, 2021

PRESENT

Suzan Pitman - Chair

Anne Goodman	Andrea Nunez
Charles Littlefield	Sam Pearson
Sarah Miller	John Tyner II

Present: Nicholas Dumais, Assistant City Attorney
Jim Wasilak, Zoning and Development Manager
David Levy, Assistant Director
Andrea Gilles, Comprehensive Planning Manager
Clark Larson, Principal Planner
Manisha Tewari, Principal Planner

Chair Pitman opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m., noting that the meeting is being conducted virtually by WebEx due to the coronavirus pandemic. Rockville City Hall is closed until further notice to reduce the spread of the virus, based on CDC, state and county directives.

I. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Public Hearing on Annexation Plan Associated with Annexation Petition ANX2020-00146, a Request to Annex 10.23 Acres of Land at 16200 Frederick Road and a 1.73-Acre Portion of MD 355 Right-Of-Way Adjacent to the Property; Victor, Inc., Petitioners

Chair Pitman asked that staff document comments that are appropriate for the related Project Plan application, and that those comments be brought back at the time that the Commission reviews the Project Plan.

Manisha Tewari presented the Annexation petition, which includes 12 acres of land and right-of-way for MD 355. The property is adjacent to a 10-acre property that is already within the City limits. EYA proposes to redevelop the car dealership property, once annexed, in combination with the property already in the City.

The subject of the public hearing is the Annexation plan for the property, which was released for public review on January 13 in accordance with state requirements. The Commission's role is to recommend whether the annexation

proposal is consistent with the City's Municipal Growth Element, if the proposed MXCD zoning is appropriate and if the City is capable of providing services to the site. Staff has found that the petition meets these requirements in developing the Annexation plan. Staff recommends that the Commission conduct the public hearing and close the public record on February 19, 2021. She outlined how the public could provide testimony.

Bob Youngentob of EYA presented an overview of the company as well as the annexation and the potential development of the property. They proposes a mix of townhomes and two-over-two condominium units. He presented a plan that had been revised from the version that was presented to the Commission on January 13 and outlined proposed community benefits of the new development.

Commissioner Littlefield asked if the units nearest the Farmstead could be moved to open up that area. Mr. Youngentob responded that the plan was modified to address staff comments and that it is still evolving but he doesn't think that many more units can be lost to maintain the viability of the project.

Commissioner Goodman asked about public amenities that will be provided, and Mr. Youngentob responded that the green spaces shown would be publicly accessible, although the clubhouse shown would be a private amenity.

The following persons addressed the Commission:

- Thomas Gibney, King Farm resident, expressed concerns about the future of the King Farm Farmstead. He noted that he had provided a proposal to the City for a farm-to-table training center, but this and other proposals are tied to access to Shady Grove Road. He has asked for a cost and feasibility analysis as this is a limiting factor. He also thought that the property in the City should be incorporated into the Farmstead property. Any development should consider the future use of the Farmstead. By connecting to the former Pleasant Drive right-of-way, cut-through traffic will be increased for the new residents wanting to go north from the development.
- Meera Toraskar, student reporter, had questions for commissioners, including how the future revenue will be spent, if the Commissioners have concerns about planning development during the pandemic, and if the Rockville market will respond to the new development.
- Gina Moses of Ridgemont Avenue does not support the annexation, as it will negatively impact the Farmstead due to too many units proposed. She stated that the traffic study was done during the pandemic so it will not be accurate. Establishing a cut-through through City parkland is not appropriate.
- Pam Hubert, King Farm resident, is in agreement with the earlier speakers regarding the compromising of the King Farm neighborhood. She asked if the new residents will pay King Farm fees and use the amenities.

- Bill Roggenbrot, King Farm resident, is opposed to a new road connection to King Farm. He stated that the proposed development is too dense, and that cut-through traffic is already too much.
- Suzanne Hirsch, King Farm resident, supported the testimony of her neighbors. She is concerned about the traffic generated that would pass through Pleasant Drive. She thinks the dog park will not be large enough with the new development.

Chair Pitman asked that staff contact Ms. Toraskar tomorrow to address her questions, and that staff contact her after speaking with Ms. Toraskar. Commissioner Goodman thanked King Farm residents for addressing the Commission.

Commissioner Goodman moved, seconded by Commissioner Pearson, to close the public hearing record on February 19, 2021.

II. DISCUSSION

A. Review and Discuss Proposed Changes to the Planning Commission's Draft Comprehensive Plan, Including Both the Elements and Planning

Mr. Larson asked the Commission for any comments or edits before Commission approval on February 24.

Commissioner Tyner congratulated staff on successfully incorporating all of the items recommended by the Commission into the draft, including the Volume I document. Commissioner Miller thanked staff for their hard work in putting the document together. She thought that the document clarifies the overall direction that is flexible enough for the future. Commissioner Goodman echoed those concerns.

Commissioner Goodman suggested edits to the Volume I document, which the Commission agreed to modify. Commissioner Tyner supported policy 10.4 but had potential related edits in Volume 2 and noted how staff was able to put the text together from the Commission comments. Commissioner Littlefield offered a minor amendment to the section to indicate the Plan is not encouraging development on existing forested land and that the Plan encouraging maximum preservation of tree canopy in new development. The Commission agreed to these edits.

Commissioner Miller suggested that the text underneath Policy 16 should be significantly reduced, as the programs may or may not continue. The Commission agreed, and staff also agreed to go back through the document to look at making similar reductions for program descriptions.

Mr. Larson reviewed additional changes made to the Volume I document, and the Commission agreed with these.

In reviewing Volume II, Commissioner Tyner recommended several edits to Planning Area 8, including reference to maintaining a tree protection area in the southern part of the Twinbrook area and clarifications to the Planning Area 8 and 9 boundary that had been changed previously.

Commissioner Goodman suggested that text be added to emphasize the removal of exotic and invasive species in historic districts, to which the Commission agreed.

Mr. Levy explained that staff had reached out to nearby associations about the potential for a Metro station near Montgomery College and received generally positive feedback, although not every association had polled their membership.

Commissioner Goodman asked if staff had been able to identify the term “residential character” and Ms. Gilles stated that this is very challenging because of the nature of existing neighborhoods.

Commissioner Nunez suggested that a better, updated image should be shown for RedGate that does not show it as a golf course but as the park it has become.

Mr. Larson outlined next steps, which will involve bringing revised Volumes I and II, the draft resolution of approval and draft cover letter for review and action at the February 24 meeting. If approved and transmitted, the transmittal date will be March 10, the date the document is distributed to the Mayor and Council. Mr. Levy asked that commissioners attend the Mayor and Council meeting on March 15.

III. COMMISSION ITEMS

- A. Staff Liaison Report** – Jim Wasilak reported that the next meeting will be the Plan adoption, and that the following meeting on March 10 will include the Project Plan amendment for Falls Grove.
- B. Old Business** – Mr. Wasilak reported that no comments were received on the draft letter to the Mayor and Council regarding the Open Meetings Act, and the draft will be sent to the Chair for signature.
- C. New Business**
- D. Minutes** – Meeting No. 1-21, January 7, 2021: Commissioner Tyner moved, seconded by Commissioner Goodman, to approve the minutes for Meeting No. 1-21, as drafted. The motion passed 5-0, with Commissioners Littlefield and Nunez abstaining.

E. FYI/Correspondence – None.

IV. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, Commissioner Tyner moved, seconded by Commissioner Goodman, that the meeting be adjourned at 9:19 p.m. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. James Wasilak". The signature is written in a cursive style with a distinct loop at the end of the last name.

Commission Liaison