

CITY OF ROCKVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

MEETING NO. 16-2019

PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Tuesday June 4, 2019

1 PARTICIPANTS:

2 Planning Commission:

3 GAIL SHERMAN, Chair

4 ANNE GOODMAN, Commissioner

5 CHARLES LITTLEFIELD, Commissioner

6 DON HADLEY, Commissioner

7 SARAH MILLER, Commissioner

8 JOHN TYNER, II, Commissioner

9 REV. JANE E. WOOD, Commissioner

10 Staff:

11 JIM WASILAK, Staff Liaison

12 CYNTHIA WALTERS, Deputy City Attorney

13 ELIOT SCHAEFER, Assistant City  
14 Attorney

15 DAVID LEVY, Assistant Director, Planning  
and Development Services

16 MANISHA TEWARI, Department of Planning and  
17 Development Services

18 Speakers:

19 GEORGE S.H. CHANG

WILLIAM KOMINERS

20 SOO LEE-CHO

BOB HARRIS

ALEXANDRA DACE DENITO

21 KATHRYN DAVIS

22 \* \* \* \* \*

## 1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIR SHERMAN: Good evening and welcome  
3 to the 16th meeting of the Rockville City Planning  
4 Commission. It is Tuesday, June 4th, not a normal  
5 night for us but hopefully we will have several  
6 people who are going to testify on the Master  
7 Plan. This is our third and final hearing on the  
8 2040 Master Plan. I will go through the  
9 procedures for testimony after the staff report.  
10 So, I'm going to turn it over to staff to give us  
11 a quick overview of what we've been hearing.

12 MR. LEVY: Just very short. As I've  
13 mentioned, this is David Levy for the record with  
14 long range planning. We mentioned we've had the  
15 full long range planning team has worked on this  
16 as well as other staff in the city including Ms.  
17 Wasilak sitting here. But Ms. Tewari is going to  
18 be our representative this time around. And we've  
19 had Ms. Kebba and Mr. Gore do it and if there were  
20 a fourth, Ms. Gilles would but we're all here  
21 today because this is very important to our team.  
22 So, with that, I'll turn it over to Ms. Tewari.

1 MS. TEWARI: Good evening Commissioners.  
2 For the record, my name is Manisha Tewari, planner  
3 for the City of Rockville. As you noted, this is  
4 the third and final scheduled Planning Commission  
5 public hearing for the comprehensive plan. There  
6 were two other public hearings on May 15th and  
7 22nd. The link to the plan is as shown on the  
8 screen or you can always do a search for Rockville  
9 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

10 The draft comprehensive plan for the  
11 public hearing was released at the Planning  
12 Commission's March 13th meeting. The plan  
13 includes introduction, outlining (inaudible) and  
14 principles and the state requirements and all the  
15 required and optional elements. This is the first  
16 part of the plan and meets the state requirement.  
17 The second portion of the plan includes planning  
18 areas which will follow later after discussions  
19 with you on the schedule.

20 This slide provides a summary of the  
21 public outreach. The Planning Commission, as you  
22 know, released a draft on May 13th and opened the

1 public record for testimony. Staff sent a  
2 document and links to surrounding jurisdictions  
3 and other agencies and presented the plan to the  
4 community and neighborhood groups as requested.  
5 We also held two informational meetings on April  
6 30th and May 11th.

7           These are the many ways that the public  
8 were presented the opportunity to provide  
9 testimony. The packet sent out to you on May 28th  
10 included all the testimony received until that  
11 date and also the matrix that summarized the  
12 testimony. We have received a few more written  
13 testimonies since then and will be added to the  
14 project website and included in the Planning  
15 Commission's next packet for your first work  
16 session.

17           So, the Planning Commission can decide  
18 whether or not to close the record at the end of  
19 the testimony tonight and prepare for the work  
20 sessions. We will discuss that option after the  
21 testimony. This concludes my presentation. We  
22 have several people in the audience who are here

1 to provide testimony. I would recommend that the  
2 Planning Commission open up the floor for them.

3 CHAIR SHERMAN: Thank you. I do have a  
4 list of a few names. I do want to go through the  
5 procedures and I can start in the middle because  
6 all the hearings are in this chamber. In order  
7 for everyone to have a chance to speak, every  
8 person or organization is limited to one  
9 opportunity even if the public hearings extend to  
10 other evenings but may supplement testimony, oral  
11 testimony with written comments at any time while  
12 the public record is open.

13 Speakers who have signed up to speak  
14 before the evening of the hearing will speak  
15 first. Speakers who signed up on the sign in  
16 sheet on the night of the hearing will speak next  
17 and anyone else in the audience who has not yet  
18 signed up and wishes to speak may do so after.  
19 You get three minutes to speak if you're a private  
20 individual or representative of a private  
21 business. You get five minutes to speak if you're  
22 a representative speaking on behalf of an

1 organization, including but not limited to a civic  
2 association, homeowners association, chamber of  
3 commerce, board, commission, PTSA or governmental  
4 entity. During that time, more than one  
5 representative of your organization may speak but  
6 the total time is not to go past the five minutes.  
7 Extensions of speaker time will not be given.

8 We will be keeping time. Mr. Wasilak, I  
9 believe you will and there will be a timer up here  
10 for you to see. Comments or other audible sounds,  
11 cheering or booing from the audience during any  
12 other person's testimony either in agreement or  
13 disagreement will not be tolerated. Written  
14 testimony is always welcome and encouraged. And  
15 written testimony may be submitted of any length  
16 and you may submit written testimony as often as  
17 you feel necessary until the Planning Commission  
18 has decided to close the public record. With  
19 that, I will start the testimony. First on our  
20 list is George Chang. Mr. Chang, please come to  
21 the podium. Mr. Wasilak, will you start the  
22 clock please.

1           MR. CHANG: My name is, call me George,  
2 but the name is W-A last name is C-H-A-N-G and  
3 that's my (inaudible) Taiwan, that's where I was  
4 born so I haven't changed. In fact, George has  
5 been used for since 1940 about a (inaudible) and  
6 Minister Baptist pastor was there for the  
7 preaching and I was eager to learn the English  
8 after World War II. So, I was with him and one  
9 day he say well, I'm going to baptize you in the  
10 river but I don't know your name. So, the son, I  
11 was three years old, say well George. He jump up  
12 in the living room and the father say George.  
13 Well, I don't know any name, not even English, so  
14 I take that so that's for a long time I've been  
15 using. And as I mentioned, I went to Argentina,  
16 immigrant, and (inaudible) used the name Jorge.  
17 So, they call Jorge instead of George. But I  
18 continue using George.

19           Well, I just to mention very quickly  
20 that I'm just simply a technician and immigrant to  
21 Argentina for seven years and an immigrant again  
22 to the U.S. and I have been working for almost 50



1 years. So, I had that house so I can use for the  
2 office and the one time, the master plan say that  
3 you can do that. So, I was (inaudible) office but  
4 turned out to be it's not that easy as to be used  
5 as a office.

6 As mentioned, the Rockville having tried  
7 to help me many times and I have a couple times  
8 like this that I have submit to you with  
9 testimony. The last time was ten years ago or so  
10 this Planning Commission but I don't hear  
11 anything, anybody tell me what the result. So,  
12 never have any answer. That was three times I  
13 have come here. I'm very sure to talk on this  
14 situation.

15 So, I wish, I wish if that's the course  
16 is really good for me and good for the neighbor  
17 and good for the Rockville City and I really like  
18 to help something that I can work with your help.  
19 I hope that for 30 years. But last ten years, I  
20 almost empty. So, I don't (inaudible) very well  
21 but I love the house. That's my wish that I hope  
22 you consider. The (inaudible) is so small, the

1 one house, I know you have big things to think is  
2 for me it's very important in my life. Thank you  
3 very much.

4 CHAIR SHERMAN: Thank you. Next is  
5 Laura Talerico. Laura, not here. William  
6 Kominers.

7 MR. KOMINERS: Good evening, Madam  
8 Chair, and members of the Planning Commission, my  
9 name is Bill Kominers with Learch, Early & Brewer.  
10 Speaking tonight on behalf of the owner of the  
11 small R-60 property at 5946 Halpine Road just to  
12 the east of the Twinbrook Metro mixed use  
13 development. We request that the recommendation  
14 for the property be changed from RF Residential  
15 Flexible to the RRM, a Residential Retail, Mix  
16 land use category.

17 The R-60 zone and a single family zone  
18 is inappropriate for the property given the  
19 location close to the metro station and the uses  
20 in zoning of the near by developments. Given this  
21 location, the retail and residential land use  
22 designation such as RRM would be more appropriate,

1 allowing the property to better serve its  
2 transitional location. There's a long history of  
3 the owner working with the city to implement the  
4 most appropriate land use for the property.

5 Most recently during the preparation of  
6 the Rockville Pike Plan, the owner requested the  
7 property be included in the Pike Plan area. The  
8 city staff recommended against it at the time  
9 saying that the most appropriate mechanism is  
10 already underway, the Rockville 2040 process. In  
11 the June 2016 Mayor and Council work session,  
12 councilmembers stated that the proper method to  
13 deal with the property is through the  
14 comprehensive plan. During that work session, the  
15 planning staff agreed that the appropriate method  
16 should be decided during the comprehensive plan  
17 process. Now it's finally time.

18 The draft plan recognizes that single  
19 family uses are not appropriate by recommending  
20 the residential flex category. However, given  
21 proximity to the metro station and the Twinbrook  
22 plan development, there should be an opportunity

1 for a limited amount of ground floor retail in  
2 such a residential development. For this reason,  
3 the owner requests the RRM mixed use designation.

4 Policy 10 on page 34 of the plan says to  
5 plan for additional growth near the Twinbrook  
6 Metro station. To implement that policy, action  
7 10.2 says allow attached and small multi-unit  
8 residential types on blocks in the Twinbrook  
9 neighborhood adjacent to the east side of the  
10 Twinbrook metro station. A land use of RRM would  
11 be right in line with those directions.

12 For many years, through many planning  
13 processes, the city has recognized that the R-60  
14 zone and park use are not appropriate for this  
15 property. But each time, the city authorities  
16 have said that the then ongoing process was not  
17 the right one to correct the anomaly.

18 In 2016, the Mayor, the Council and the  
19 city staff all pointed to the upcoming  
20 comprehensive plan as the method by which to make  
21 this correction. Well, comprehensive plan is  
22 here. Time has come, the time is now. RF is a

1 good start but RRM is a better, more flexible path  
2 to the property that is just a short walk to the  
3 metro station. Give that property a chance to be  
4 all that it can be. Thank you.

5 CHAIR SHERMAN: Next speaker, Soo  
6 Lee-Cho. You're speaking on something different  
7 tonight?

8 MS. LEE-CHO: Yes, I am.

9 CHAIR SHERMAN: Okay. I just want to  
10 make sure by our rules.

11 MS. LEE-CHO: Good evening Madam Chair,  
12 members of the Planning Commission, Soo Lee-Cho  
13 with the law firm of Miller, Miller and Canby  
14 speaking tonight on behalf of the property owner  
15 of 216 Park Road, Mr. Joey Solomon. What I've  
16 distributed, you have before you is just a hand  
17 out. I'm not submitting formal written comments  
18 this evening but hope to do so and, in that  
19 regard, would request the Planning Commission as  
20 you discussed at the last public hearing allowing  
21 for additional time for the record to remain open  
22 so that written submissions can be provided.

1           But for this evening, the handout before  
2 you, I'm providing an excerpt of the proposed land  
3 use plan it focuses in on the property. I've  
4 augmented the map to help identify 216 Park Road.  
5 It was part of the Stonestreet corridor study  
6 plans that was looked at in regard to that recent  
7 planning process undertaken by the city. And the  
8 2040 plan incorporates recommendations, as you  
9 know, from the Stonestreet corridor plan. The  
10 second page of the handout is an excerpt from that  
11 plan, page 20 and I've highlighted with the red  
12 outline box the specific recommendation that  
13 pertains to this property.

14           In that box, you'll see that I  
15 highlighted a particular unit, dwelling unit type  
16 stacked flats. Basically, what I'm here to  
17 testify to is to note a bit of a discrepancy  
18 between the Stonestreet corridor plan  
19 recommendations and what we're seeing in the 2040  
20 plan land use recommendation of RA. RA is defined  
21 under page 19 of the draft as allowing a variety  
22 of housing types that share party walls. Types of

1 permitted construction include row house, core  
2 plex, quad, triplex and duplex. And those are the  
3 housing types that, for the most part, are also  
4 recommended in the Stonestreet corridor plan for  
5 this property and adjacent properties.

6 But with the Stonestreet corridor plan,  
7 is also it added and suggested that stacked flats  
8 might also be a unit type. And we're here  
9 generally in support of the recommendations for  
10 this area, the Park Road recommendations both  
11 under the corridor plan and what's contained in  
12 the 2040 plan. It's just that stack flats tend to  
13 be or multi-unit type of units, dwelling units.  
14 And under the RA, it would just not be allowed to  
15 be considered.

16 So, I note also that the RM land use  
17 category specifically exclude detached and  
18 attached. So, it doesn't seem like you have a  
19 good land use category that allows for everything  
20 that the Stonestreet corridor plan actually  
21 thought might be okay for my client's property and  
22 adjacent properties. So, I don't know what --

1 maybe I'm requesting both RA and RM as being sort  
2 of land use options to be consistent with the  
3 Stonestreet corridor recommendations. Thank you.

4 CHAIR SHERMAN: Thank you. And you will  
5 be submitting written testimony?

6 MS. LEE-CHO: I will.

7 CHAIR SHERMAN: Okay, that will help.  
8 Our next speaker, Bob Harris.

9 MR. HARRIS: Good evening, Madam Chair,  
10 members of the Planning Commission, I'm pleased to  
11 be here tonight. I'm Bob Harris also with the  
12 firm of Lerch, Early, Brewer as is Bill Kominers.  
13 I'm privileged to be speaking here very briefly  
14 tonight about this plan. I don't have any  
15 specific comments or suggestions with respect to  
16 the language really to the contrary. I support  
17 the draft in terms of its visions and its goals.  
18 I think it does a good job of laying out a broad  
19 picture of the future of the city for a number of  
20 years to come.

21 We're all experiencing growth and  
22 changes in our demographics and this, I think,



1 does a good job of building a foundation for the  
2 neighborhood plans that will follow it. I expect  
3 to work closely with you and your staff in terms  
4 of some of those neighborhood plans and hope to be  
5 seeing the visions and goals that are here in this  
6 draft carry through in those plans.

7           The only substantive comment I have  
8 tonight is just sharing my experience that I hope  
9 the neighborhood plans will not be overly specific  
10 and rigid in whatever their recommendations are.  
11 I believe master plans are supposed to be  
12 guidelines and sort of educated guesses and to  
13 where things will evolve over the future. I know  
14 I had an experience a few years with Montgomery  
15 County, not the City of Rockville, where the  
16 Clarksburg master plan had a very specific  
17 provision that it called for three neighborhood  
18 shopping centers to be built and it called for the  
19 first one to be built in one particular area of  
20 Clarksburg.

21           Well, that portion of Clarksburg did not  
22 develop anywhere nearly as quickly as another area

1 did. And the other area was desperately  
2 interested in having a retail center there and the  
3 property owner was interested in providing it.  
4 But because the master plan was very specific that  
5 the retail center in the first area had to go  
6 first before any other retail could open, they had  
7 to amend the whole master plan that took nine  
8 months which was pretty quick for that. We know  
9 how long these plans can be, and it kept people  
10 from getting the retail that they wanted. Just  
11 one example of how I believe overly specific and  
12 rigid master plan recommendations can sometimes  
13 come back to haunt us.

14 So, I hope that the neighborhood plans  
15 will, as I said, carry through the vision and the  
16 goals that your staff has put out very eloquently  
17 here in this draft. That's all I have. I hope to  
18 be working with you as this plan goes forward.

19 Thank you.

20 CHAIR SHERMAN: Thank you. That  
21 exhausts the list of people who have signed up  
22 ahead of time. Is there anyone who would like to

1 speak? Please come up and identify yourself.

2 DR. DENITO: Good evening, Madam Sherman  
3 and councilmembers. I am Dr. Dace Denito and I  
4 live at 128 Moore Drive in the Legacy of Lincoln  
5 Park Development. I am also president of Lincoln  
6 Park Civic Association. So, I brought this here  
7 for people who didn't have the right to really  
8 have an opportunity to see it. I would like to  
9 say something about this draft.

10 I want to thank everybody. We usually  
11 take people for granted and every once in a while,  
12 it is good to acknowledge when things go greatly.  
13 This is a remarkable compilation of resident's  
14 remarks and wishes. We have a great staff in  
15 Rockville City government and I would like to  
16 thank them all. I would like to renew LPC  
17 community wishes to see the Stonestreet corridor  
18 development go forward as proposed.

19 I have just one comment for the housing  
20 section. Since accessory dwelling units are  
21 currently under consideration, I would like to  
22 emphasize that this is another great option to add

1 to the tiny houses et cetera to allow more  
2 affordable housing. This is a way for resident to  
3 have extra rent money and also to age in place. I  
4 am glad to see that this option is not  
5 contradictory to this master plan. Change will  
6 happen whether we like it or not so we think it is  
7 more important to focus our funds if we need to,  
8 on preservation of historic properties when  
9 possible. Thank you for your time.

10 CHAIR SHERMAN: Thank you. Is there  
11 anyone else who wishes to speak? Please.

12 MS. DAVIS: Good evening. My name is  
13 Kathryn Davis and I am representing the Board of  
14 Directors of Rockville Economic Development, Inc.  
15 REDI. And I'm here to voice the opinion of the  
16 board. After receiving a draft copy of the  
17 comprehensive plan of the City of Rockville, a  
18 work group was formed to review the plan and to  
19 provide feedback to the economic development  
20 chapter. The feedback from this work was  
21 subsequently incorporated into the present version  
22 of the plan. The work group is satisfied that

1 their comments were appropriately considered and  
2 incorporated. Thank you.

3 The same work group then reviewed the  
4 current version of the plan in its entirety,  
5 shared the comments with the full REDI board and  
6 the board unanimously approved these comments that  
7 I'm sharing with you this evening. The four  
8 primary themes that the REDI board would like to  
9 share with you have to do with ensuring  
10 flexibility of the plan, attracting employment  
11 talent to the city, increasing connectivity within  
12 the city and reviewing the plan periodically to  
13 ensure its ongoing relevance.

14 With regard to flexibility, REDI board  
15 considers flexibility to be a top priority of the  
16 plan. Its suggested that the city assess shifts  
17 in demographics and its impact of the use of city  
18 amenities and employer needs throughout the life  
19 of the plan. As needs shift, it is recommended  
20 that the city be willing to flex the plan for  
21 ultimate quality of life and economic vitality of  
22 the city.

1           Attracting and retaining talent. With a  
2 livable city comes greater potential to attract  
3 talent that wants to live and work in the area  
4 which, in turn, facilitates the ability for the  
5 city to attract quality employers. When  
6 identifying employers, the city focuses primarily  
7 on government contractors, city employers, and  
8 federal agencies as key employers to attract and  
9 maintain in the city. The Board is supportive of  
10 these employers but also suggests that other  
11 employers also be considered as future  
12 opportunities for the city to pursue.

13           There are certain industries that yield  
14 employment opportunities enrich a city that are  
15 not retail oriented. REDI supports city interest  
16 in solidifying its presence as a center of  
17 innovative technologies, life sciences, advanced  
18 research and cyber security. Non-profits make an  
19 important contribution to our economy as a  
20 business sector as do arts and cultural  
21 opportunities that both enrich the economy and the  
22 livability of the city.

1           Investing in connectivity. Having  
2     separate, thriving areas is no longer sufficient.  
3     Connection includes blending different types of  
4     development in innovative ways which will be  
5     critical to the success of the plan. While there  
6     are many planned areas in the city, it's important  
7     to consider how to connect them vis a vis land  
8     use, transportation and aesthetics.

9           The REDI board suggests creating  
10    linkages between neighborhoods and economic  
11    centers to a greater extent than that which is  
12    currently in the plan. Further, it's important to  
13    plan for communication connectivity such as  
14    planning for a 5G infrastructure that will impact  
15    quality of life and help attract and retain  
16    employers.

17           In continuous review, the REDI board  
18    believes the stated commitment and the plan to  
19    review it on a two year schedule is an important  
20    improvement to this plan. We encourage you to  
21    engage employers in this process and continually  
22    update the plan to reflect the perspectives shared

1 in order to keep the plan relevant and ensure the  
2 city's ongoing competitiveness.

3 One of REDI's core strengths is helping  
4 the city identify target industries. In chapter  
5 7, the city indicated that it is supportive of a  
6 marketing plan. The marketing of Rockville is  
7 something that REDI does as does the chamber and  
8 both would welcome the opportunity to help the  
9 city achieve this goal. We would like to thank  
10 you for including a chapter on economic  
11 development in this long range plan. This new  
12 addition is a big step forward. We appreciate  
13 your inclusivity in the creation of the plan and  
14 for being available for consultation and input.  
15 Thank you.

16 CHAIR SHERMAN: Thank you. Is there  
17 anyone else who wishes to speak? Then I believe  
18 we will close the public hearing. If anybody  
19 wants to submit written comments, please do. We  
20 will decide tonight what our -- when we'll close  
21 the public record. Okay, thank you all for  
22 coming.



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(Whereupon, the PROCEEDINGS were  
adjourned.)

\* \* \* \* \*

1 CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

2 I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby  
3 certify that the forgoing electronic file when  
4 originally transmitted was reduced to text at my  
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11 or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor  
12 financially or otherwise interested in the outcome  
13 of this action.

14  
15 Carleton J. Anderson, III

16  
17 (Signature and Seal on File)

18  
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20 Virginia

21 Commission No. 351998

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