

Submitted August 8, 2018
Approved August 8, 2018
Date

**MINUTES OF THE ROCKVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING NO. 1-2018
Wednesday, January 24, 2018**

The City of Rockville Planning Commission convened in regular session in the Mayor and Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, January 24, 2018

PRESENT

Gail Sherman - Chair

Anne Goodman Sarah Miller
Don Hadley John Tyner, II
Charles Littlefield

Absent: Rev. Jane Wood

Present: Robert DiSpirito, City Manager
Andrew Gunning, Acting Director of Community Planning and Development Services
Eliot Schaefer, Assistant City Attorney
Jim Wasilak, Chief of Zoning
Bobby Ray, Planning Supervisor
Brian Wilson, Principal Planner
Tim Chesnutt, Director of Recreation and Parks
Steve Mader, Superintendent of Parks & Facilities
Wayne Noll, City Forester
Andrea Murtha, Forestry Inspector

I. BRIEFING

- A. Project Plan PJT2018-00010, For an applicant briefing session to describe their proposal to amend an existing Project Plan to allow up to 6,084 square feet of retail space and up to 900 square feet of office space on approximately 0.67 acres of land located at 900 Rockville Pike. The property is zoned PD-CB (Planned Development – Champion Billiards).

Brian Wilson introduced the purpose of the briefing and outlined the schedule for project review.

Soo Lee-Cho of Miller, Miller & Canby, representing the applicant Joel Danches, explained the site conditions and the application, which proposes to amend the existing Planned Development approval with up to 7,000 square feet of retail and office use in lieu of 12,000 square feet of furniture retail. She explained the waivers from development standards that are requested.

Steve Karr, of Steven J. Karr, Inc., and architect for the project answered questions from the commission.

II. DISCUSSION

A. Parkland Acquisition Options and Potential Amendments to the Forest and Tree Preservation Ordinance (FTPO)

Andrew Gunning introduced the topics for discussion. City Manager Rob DiSpirito presented the rationale for exploring parkland acquisition for the City.

Mr. Gunning presented the "Report on Parkland Acquisition Approaches for the City of Rockville," which outlined options for parkland dedication, and fee-in-lieu of dedication, for new developments in Rockville. He also presented the option for a park impact fee that would be charged to new development. He stated that impact fees are based on the replacement cost of park facilities and employees, broken down on a per capita basis. This had previously been studied for the City, and the new costs include the cost of land.

He presented various typical development scenarios from Rockville and what the dedication, lee-in-lieu and impact fees would be if enacted, and noted a series of pros and cons for each option as they would apply to Rockville. Staff then responded to questions from the Commission.

City Manager Rob DiSpirito noted the impetus for the changes to the FTPO that are proposed for consideration. Tim Chesnutt emphasized that tonight's discussion represents the beginning of the conversation on the proposed changes.

Wayne Noll, City Forester, presented the changes. He explained that one of the purposes of the study was to align the City's ordinance closer to the State Forest Conservation Act and surrounding jurisdictions. These include exemptions for stormwater management and stream restoration projects, aligning the mitigation required for clearing existing forest below the forest conservation threshold to the State requirement, revising the tree replacement requirement when existing forest is retained, reducing the fee-in-lieu planting rate, reducing the time period for forest conservation maintenance agreements, simplifying the process on previously developed sites, and exempting sites from the Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) requirement when there is little or no land disturbance proposed, establish a forest conservation planting goal in Town Center and Rockville Pike corridor, allowing fee-in-lieu when priority forest stands are cleared, aligning significant tree replacement on vacant single family lots with Zoning Ordinance, and exempting parking lot resurfacing from afforestation requirements.

Commissioner Goodman stated that she felt that the changes were not necessary, and that the technical support of the changes has not been shown. She supports streamlining the process without compromising the program. She asked that her written comments be included in the public record, and Eliot Schaefer noted that the public record would not be created until the Mayor and Council authorizes the text changes to proceed. Commissioner Littlefield also stated that he was opposed to the changes, as they seem to favor development interests, and that each should be carefully considered.

Commissioner Miller noted that for business expansions, forestry issues are but one aspect of the decision to expand. She felt that a balance should be struck between fostering business and the desired environment in the City. Commissioner Hadley stated that he felt that the emphasis should be on the overall quality of trees in the City.

Andrew Gunning noted that many of these issues will be discussed in the context of the Master Plan, along with the inherent tension among the competing interests. Commissioner Tyner cautioned against incrementalism, and that citizens appreciate the tree canopy that exists. Commissioner Sherman stated she felt that the changes represent a step backwards. Commissioner Miller said that there were some changes that made sense, and that others required more analysis.

John Becker of 148 Monroe Street in Americana Centre Condominium and the chair of the Environment Commission, requested additional information in advance of their next meeting.

Tim Chesnutt and Rob DiSpirito expressed their thanks for the comments.

III. COMMISSION ITEMS

- A. Staff Liaison Report – Andy Gunning noted that the Mayor and Council adopted the Rockville Pike Map and Text Amendments that will help implement the Rockville Pike Neighborhood Plan. Also, the alcoholic beverage production text amendment will be adopted in early February. He noted that the Rockville 2040 open houses took place recently, and that good input was received. The final Stonestreet Corridor Study meeting would be held on February 22 at Glenview Mansion, with the presentation of draft recommendations. The next Commission meeting is February 14, and will include a summary of the Rockville 2040 Open Houses and potentially a site plan application for self-storage warehouse on Redland Boulevard. He expressed his appreciation to the Commission for the opportunity to work with them over the last seven years.
- B. Old Business – Commissioner Tyner noted that he will not be able to attend the February 14 meeting.
- C. New Business – Commissioner Tyner stated that he was impressed with how comprehensive the notes were on the citizen input at the Rockville 2040 session. Commissioner Hadley expressed his appreciation to Mr. Gunning for all that he has done for the Commission.
- D. Minutes:
 1. May 10, 2017 – Commissioner Tyner moved, seconded by Commissioner Hadley to approve the May 10, 2017 minutes, with an edit. The motion passed 5-0-1, with Commissioner Miller abstaining and Commissioner Wood absent.
 2. May 24, 2017 – Commissioner Tyner moved, seconded by Commissioner Littlefield to approve the May 24, 2017 minutes. The motion passed 5-0-1, with Commissioner Miller abstaining and Commissioner Wood absent.
 3. June 14, 2017 – Commissioner Littlefield moved, seconded by Commissioner Hadley, to approve the June 24, 2017 minutes, as amended. The motion passed 5-0-1, with Commissioner Miller abstaining and Commissioner Wood absent.

4. July 12, 2017 – Commissioner Goodman moved, seconded by Commissioner Littlefield, to approve the minutes for the July 12, 2017 meeting. The motion passed 5-0-1, with Commissioner Miller abstaining and Commissioner Wood absent.
 5. July 26, 2017 – Commissioner Goodman moved, seconded by Commissioner Hadley, to approve the July 26, 2017 meeting minutes. The motion passed 5-0-1, with Commissioner Miller abstaining and Commissioner Wood absent.
 6. August 9, 2017 – Commissioner Hadley moved, seconded by Commissioner Tyner to approve the August 9, 2017 meeting minutes. The motion passed 4-0-2, with Commissioners Miller and Littlefield abstaining and Commissioner Wood absent.
- E. FYI Correspondence – none. The Commissioners gave further appreciation to Andy Gunning.

IV. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, the Commissioner Goodman moved, seconded by Commissioner Littlefield, to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Commission Liaison