

Submitted July 28, 2021

Approved July 28, 2021

**MINUTES OF THE ROCKVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING NO. 11-2021
Wednesday, June 23, 2021**

The City of Rockville Planning Commission convened in regular session
via WebEx at 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, June 23, 2021

PRESENT

Suzan Pitman - Chair

Anne Goodman

Sam Pearson

John Tyner II

Absent: Charles Littlefield
Sarah Miller
Andrea Nunez

Present: Nicholas Dumais, Assistant City Attorney
Jim Wasilak, Chief of Zoning
Andrea Gilles, Comprehensive Planning Manager
Sachin Kalbag, 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 guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and state and local officials.

I. BRIEFING

A. Briefing on Project Plan PJT2021-00013 to Permit Up to a Maximum of 371 Total Dwelling Units at 16200 Frederick Road in the MXCD Zone; EYA Development, LLC, Applicant

Mr. Wasilak indicated that the briefing for the subject project plan was required by the City Code and its intent was to hear the initial proposal from the applicant that will be further presented and reviewed by the Commission at a later date.

Sachin Kalbag presented the briefing on the project plan. Mr. Kalbag detailed that the site, located within Montgomery County, is currently the subject of an annexation application ANX2020-00146, which proposes to incorporate the subject site into the City. Mr. Kalbag continued that the proposal seeks to redevelop the existing auto dealership, service center, and surface parking lots into a residential development with a variety of housing options. He added that access to the adjacent King Farm Farmstead site could be included within the conditions of an annexation approval. He concluded that the purpose of the briefing was for the applicant to inform officials, review the project schedule, answer questions and receive comments on the proposal.

Bob Youngentob, representing the applicant, further presented the project briefing to the Commission. Mr. Youngentob indicated the developer, EYA Development's familiarity with the area from its recent development projects in and around the City, including the Falls Grove and Tower Oaks residential developments. He continued that the proposed development for the subject site is proposed to be complementary to the existing uses and the neighborhood context of the surrounding area. He added that Montgomery County has indicated its support for the annexation of the property and the associated requested zoning of MXCD. Mr. Youngentob continued that the proposal complies with several of the City's planning goals including providing affordable, middle missing housing in close proximity to Metro station, provision of additional publicly-accessible open space with public art features, and improved stormwater management, among other goals. He added that the proposal had been modified slightly in response to staff's comments, most notably with the removal of one unit to make a safer alley connection within the development. Mr. Youngentob concluded that the applicant was working closely with the City to finalize parking arrangements on the Farmstead site, which proposes to retain the existing commercial entrance along Frederick Road and locate the parking areas behind the existing facilities in order to maintain the existing viewshed along Frederick Road.

Commissioner Tyner expressed his thanks to the applicant for their plans for the adjacent Farmstead and their work in combination with the City. Commissioner Goodman inquired about the proposed meadow along the western edge of the site. Mr. Youngentob responded that the meadow is proposed over an area covered by an existing WSSC easement. He added that in ongoing discussion with WSSC, the applicant is proposing a combination of walking trails, open grass areas and wildflowers exemplifying a meadow environment, although the specific plantings had not yet been determined.

Commissioner Goodman encouraged that native planting be implemented in order to help stimulate the local ecosystem. She also indicated that she would not be in support of the proposed reduction in tree plantings per residential lots, due to their benefit to human and environmental health and safety. Mr. Youngentob responded that the tree requirement was weighed against other City priorities, such as providing rear-loaded townhomes and providing increased stormwater management. He added that these priorities have presented challenges to practically meeting the tree requirement on each lot, but added that the development team did attempt to meet the tree requirements for the entire development, if not necessarily meeting the requirement for each lot. He added that the development team continues to work with City staff to address these issues.

Commissioner Pearson commented that he was pleased with the evolution of the proposed project and how it has progressed since the project's initial conception. Commissioner Tyner inquired about whether the proposed walkway connection to Stepanek Park would be pedestrian only and not vehicular. Mr. Youngentob explained that there are two, separate connections to the park, one of which would be a vehicular connection along Pleasant Drive with sidewalk, and the other being a separate pedestrian pathway from the central open space of the subject development to the park. Commissioner Tyner further inquired, and Mr. Youngentob further confirmed. That two vehicular access points to the development would be provided from Frederick Road and Pleasant Drive.

Chair Pitman expressed her appreciation for the proposed residential architecture and the materials proposed to be implemented within the building designs, particularly with those materials which recall the history of the agricultural land use on the subject property and the incorporation of the meadow on the site. In regards to the tree requirements, Chair Pitman inquired if it would be feasible to provide one to two mature, hardwood trees per lot instead of the three per lot or smaller ornamental trees. Mr. Jason Sereno of EYA responded that larger mature trees would be difficult to implement on smaller townhouse lots because of their expansive growth and its encroachment onto on-site structures. He added that because of this issue, mature trees are more common to be implemented on larger, single-family lots in which their additional acreage to appropriately site trees far enough away from impeding structures. He added that the applicant intended to provide the required amount of trees across the development site, in lieu of providing the required trees per each residential lot.

Mr. Youngentob further commented that provision of the trees is a balancing act with other City requirements and the economics of the project limit the amount of units which can be reduced in order for the project to remain viable. Thus, provision of the trees in the aggregate across the site allows for this balancing act to be established. He added that reallocation of trees to the perimeter of the site, within open space areas, and along the streets has been the strategy for tree planting within the site. Mr. Wasilak noted that the Mayor and Council briefing for the subject project was tentatively scheduled for July 19 and the Planning Commission's further consideration of the project, tentatively for September 22.

II. RECOMMENDATION TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL

A. Recommendation to the Mayor and Council on Zoning Text Amendment TXT2021-00258, for Changes to Setback and Open Space Requirements for the Residential Medium Density (RMD) Zones and the Creation of a New RMD-Infill Zone to Implement the Comprehensive Master Plan Amendments for the North Stonestreet Avenue and Park Road and the North/South Stonestreet Avenue Areas; Mayor and Council of Rockville, Applicant

Mr. Wasilak recalled from the Commission's previous comments to providing an alternative text amendment, that staff had prepared a detailed text amendment which sought to incorporate the Commission's views on various components within the amendment. He added that it was staff's opinion that providing a single version of the amendment would provide for less confusion when forwarded to the Mayor and Council for further review.

Andrea Gilles briefly presented the proposed memorandum to the Mayor and Council which collectively encapsulated the Commission's views on both the proposed text amendment and its associated sectional map amendment (item II.B of this agenda). Commissioners Goodman, Tyner, and Pearson, along with Chair Pitman, indicated their support for the text amendment language and memorandum prepared by staff. Ms. Gilles further indicated that the Mayor and Council would hold a public hearing on both the text and sectional map amendments at its

meeting tentatively scheduled for September 13 in order to allow its consideration of the City's Comprehensive Plan Update, Rockville 2040, to move forward in the interim.

Commissioner Tyner made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Goodman, to recommend to the Mayor and Council approval of Zoning Text Amendment TXT2021-00258, for Changes to Setback and Open Space Requirements for the Residential Medium Density Zone and creation of a new RMD-Infill Zone. The motion carried 4-0, with Commissioners Littlefield, Miller, and Nunez absent from the vote.

B. Recommendation to the Mayor and Council for Sectional Map Amendment MAP2021-00120, to Apply the Zoning Recommended by the Comprehensive Master Plan Amendments for the North Stonestreet Avenue and Park Road and North/South Stonestreet Avenue Areas; Mayor and Council of Rockville, Applicants

Ms. Gilles briefly reviewed this item to the Commission and noted that this sectional map amendment accompanies its zoning text amendment (item II.A of this agenda) and seeks to implement the recommendations of the Stonestreet Corridor study and plan amendments. She further added that the subject map amendment also seeks to adjust the boundaries of the Lincoln Park Neighborhood Conservation District boundary in order to further implement the recommendations of the area plan amendment.

Commissioner Tyner communicated his support for the sectional map amendment and staff's preparation of the amendment. Commissioners Goodman, Tyner, and Pearson, along with Chair Pitman indicated their support for the map amendment language and memorandum prepared by staff.

Commissioner Tyner made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Goodman, to recommend to the Mayor and Council approval of Sectional Map Amendment MAP2021-00120, to Apply the Zoning Recommended by the Comprehensive Master Plan Amendments for the North Stonestreet Avenue and Park Road and North/South Stonestreet Avenue Areas. The motion carried 4-0, with Commissioners Littlefield, Miller, and Nunez absent from the vote.

III. COMMISSION ITEMS

- A. Staff Liaison Report** – Jim Wasilak reported that the next Planning Commission meeting would be July 14. He indicated that a site plan application for a mixed-use project, Potomac Woods, located on Fortune Terrace Drive is anticipated to be presented at the meeting. He added that a zoning text amendment submitted by U-Haul, to amend the use tables regarding self-storage facilities in the MXE Zone, was also anticipated to be on the Commission's meeting agenda for July 14. Mr. Wasilak continued that the Commission's annual report would also be presented at the July 14 meeting. Mr. Wasilak indicated that there would be two additional Planning Commission meetings on July 28 and August 11 prior to the Commission's scheduled recess. He added that the first in-person meeting of the Planning Commission will be September 23.

Mr. Wasilak requested that the Commissioners provide an estimate of the hours which they put forth to serving on the Commission for the current fiscal years so that it could be forwarded to the City Clerk's office for tabulation as part of their ongoing review of participation in the City's Boards and Commissions.

B. Old Business – Commissioner Tyner commented on the Mayor and Council's consideration of the Comprehensive Master Plan Update, Rockville 2040 and commended the Commission and staff on its work with Rockville 2040.

C. New Business – Commissioners Goodman and Pearson, as well as Chair Pitman thanked Commissioner Tyner for his attendance of the Mayor and Council's work sessions on the Comprehensive Master Plan Update.

D. Minutes Approval

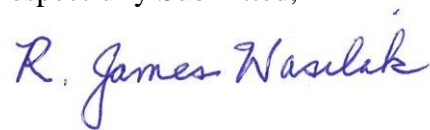
Chair Pitman asked if there were any changes needed to the minutes of the Commission's April 28, 2021 meeting. Commissioner Tyner made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Pearson, to approve the minutes as drafted. The motion carried 3-0, with Commissioner Goodman abstaining with Commissioners Littlefield, Miller, and Nunez absent for the vote.

E. FYI/Correspondence – None

IV. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, Commissioner Pearson moved, seconded by Commissioner Tyner, that the meeting be adjourned at 7:58 p.m. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Commission Liaison