



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

**APPROVED
MINUTES**

The Montgomery County Planning Board met in regular session via Microsoft Teams video conference on Thursday, November 12, 2020, at 9:01 a.m., and adjourned at 11:25 p.m.

Present were Chair Casey Anderson, Vice Chair Natali Fani-González, and Commissioners Gerald R. Cichy and Partap Verma.

Commissioner Tina Patterson was necessarily absent.

Items 1 through 6 are reported on the attached agenda.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:25 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Planning Board will be held on Thursday, November 19, 2020, via video conference.

M. Clara Moise

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Sr. Technical Writer/Editor

Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting
Thursday, November 12, 2020
2425 Reddie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902
301-495-4605

1. Consent Agenda

***A. Adoption of Resolutions**

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Yea:

Nay:

Other:

Action: There were no Resolutions submitted for adoption.

***B. Record Plats**

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Yea:

Nay:

Other:

Action: There were no Record Plats submitted for approval.

***C. Other Consent Items**

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Yea:

Nay:

Other:

Action: There were no other Consent Items submitted for approval.

***D. Approval of Minutes**

Planning Board Meeting Minutes of October 29, 2020

BOARD ACTION

Motion: CICHY/VERMA

Vote:

Yea: 4-0

Nay:

Other: PATTERSON ABSENT

Action: Approved the Planning Board Meeting Minutes of October 29, 2020, as submitted.

2. Roundtable Discussion

- Planning Department Director's Report

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Yea:

Nay:

Other:

Action: Received Briefing.

Planning Department Director’s Report – Planning Department Director Gwen Wright briefed the Planning Board on the following ongoing and upcoming events: 1) upcoming worksession on the updated 2020-2024 Growth and Infrastructure Policy with the County Council and another one scheduled for Monday, November 16 ; 2) the upcoming Public Hearing for Thrive Montgomery 2050 scheduled for Thursday, November 19, which has been widely publicized and should be well attended with 60 people already signed up to testify and which will be held via video conference; 3) the upcoming worksessions for the Ashton Master Plan, the Silver Spring Sector Plan and the other plans in the work; 4) offered a multi-media presentation on the numerous buildings in Montgomery County that have received the 2019 and 2020 Montgomery County Design Excellence awards and citations.

There followed a brief Board discussion with questions to Ms. Wright.

3. Approval of FY22 Operating Budget including Enterprise, SRF, ISF – CAS, Commissioners' Office, Planning and Parks Departments

Staff Recommendation: Approval

BOARD ACTION

Motion: CICHY/VERMA

Vote:

Yea: 4-0

Nay:

Other: PATTERSON ABSENT

Action: Approved the FY22 Operating Budgets for Central Administrative Services, the Commissioners' Office, and the Planning and Parks Departments, as discussed during the meeting.

At the onset of the FY22 budget discussion, the Commission's Corporate Budget Director John Kroll, offered brief comments.

Chair Anderson noted that in accordance with the November 5 memorandum, the Commissioners' Office FY22 Budget request has not changed since the last discussion.

Planning Department Director Gwen Wright and Management Services Division Chief Karen Warnick offered brief comments and requested approval of the FY22 Budget as discussed in the November 5 memorandum to the Planning Board. Parks Department Director Mike Riley and Budget Manager Nancy Steen also offered brief comments and requested approval of the FY22 Parks Department Budget, as discussed in detail in the November 5 memorandum to the Planning Board.

Central Administrative Services (CAS) Budget Manager Katie Knaupe and Mr. Kroll also discussed the proposed FY22 Budget for the CAS Divisions, discussed in detail in the November 5 staff memorandum to the Planning Board.

There followed a brief Board discussion with questions to staff and Mr. Kroll.

***4. Avondale**

A. Sketch Plan No. 320200050---CR 1.5 C 0.25 R 1.5 H 70’ and Bethesda Overlay Zones, 0.33 acres. Request for up to 55,000 square feet of density for a multi-family residential development, including up to 33,121 square feet of BOZ density and associated PIP payment; located on Avondale Street approximately 200 feet east of Wisconsin Avenue; 2017 Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions and Adoption of Resolution

B. Preliminary Plan No. 120200220---CR 1.5 C 0.25 R 1.5 H 70’ and Bethesda Overlay Zones, 0.33 acres. Request to create one lot for multi-family residential development for a maximum of 60 units; located on Avondale Street approximately 200 feet east of Wisconsin Avenue; 2017 Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions and Adoption of Resolution

BOARD ACTION

Motion: **A. VERMA/CICHY**
 B. VERMA/CICHY

Vote:
 Yea: **A. & B. 4-0**

Nay:

Other: **PATTERSON ABSENT**

Action: **A. Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Sketch Plan cited above, subject to conditions discussed at the meeting, and adopted the attached Resolution.**
 B. Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Preliminary Plan cited above, subject to conditions discussed at the meeting, and adopted the attached Resolution.

In accordance with the October 30 technical staff report, Planning Department staff offered a multi-media presentation and discussed proposed Sketch and Preliminary Plan requests for the Avondale project. The 0.33-acre property is located on Avondale Street, approximately 200 feet east of Wisconsin Avenue in the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan area and Bethesda Overlay Zone (BOZ). The request is for up to 55,000 square feet of density for a multi-family residential development, for up to 60 units, including up to 33,121 square feet of BOZ density and associated Park Impact Payment (PIP) and 15 percent Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) and underground parking. Staff noted that the property is located on the block east of Wisconsin Avenue (MD355) and north of East-West Highway (MD410), which is developed with low-rise multi-family residential buildings on both sides of the street. Within close proximity of the site, this portion of Wisconsin Avenue Corridor district is developed with high-

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4. Avondale*A. Sketch Plan No. 320200050 & B. Preliminary Plan No. 120200220**CONTINUED

rise commercial buildings and the Bethesda Metro Station is located just one block south. To the east is our Lady of Lourdes Church and School, and the Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School and the east Bethesda neighborhood to the north and farther east. The total tract area is approximately 0.33 acres and is currently improved with two multi-family residential buildings, which will be demolished.

Staff also noted that the property is outside the Bethesda Parking Lot District (PLD). The site does not contain any forest, streams or environmental buffers and historic buildings. A Forest Conservation exemption was approved for the property on September 23, 2020, and the applicant is exempt from the requirement to submit a Forest Conservation Plan. Pedestrian access to the site will be from the established sidewalk network and will be enhanced with streetscape improvements along the Avondale Street property frontage, consistent with the Bethesda Streetscape Standards. Vehicular access to the site will be located on the west side of the building. Loading and garage access will be accommodated via a consolidated curb cut to reduce conflicts with pedestrians and motorists. The access configuration will be further refined at Site Plan review. The immediate area is well served by transit that includes the Red Line Bethesda Metrorail Station, located within a quarter mile of the site, Metrobus, Ride-On, the Bethesda Circulator and the future Purple Line.

Staff added that with a tract area of less than 0.50 acres, the applicant is not required to provide public open space, however, the applicant proposes to provide four percent of the site area as open space for the purpose of public benefit points. The design of this space will be reviewed at Site Plan review if the applicant elects to receive public benefit points for providing open space. Staff briefly discussed the conditions of approval.

Ms. Melissa Christensen of Avondale Street, adjacent property owner offered testimony.

Ms. Soo Lee-Cho, attorney representing the applicant, SJ Investment Corporation, offered brief comments and concurred with the staff recommendation.

Mr. Brett Swiatocha of Perkins Eastman DC, member of the applicant's team, offered a multi-media presentation and discussed the proposed project architectural design.

There followed a brief Board discussion with questions to staff and Ms. Lee-Cho.

***5. 7500 Old Georgetown Road**

A. Project Plan Amendment No. 91984004A---CR-8.0, C-8.0, R-7.5, H-290', 35,601 SF. Request to increase the total gross floor area from 301,588 square feet to a total of 320,813 square feet.; Located on Old Georgetown Road between Edgemoor Lane and Wisconsin Avenue; 2017 Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions and Adoption of Resolution

B. Preliminary Plan Amendment No.11979251A---CR-8.0, C-8.0, R-7.5, H-290, 35,601 SF. Request to increase the total gross floor area from 301,588 square feet to a total of 320,813 square feet.; Located on Old Georgetown Road between Edgemoor Lane and Wisconsin Avenue; 2017 Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions and Adoption of Resolution

C. Site Plan Amendment No. 81980028A---CR-8.0, C-8.0, R-7.5, H-290', 35,601 SF. Request to renovate approximately 3,900 SF area of hardscape in the plaza, conversion of a portion of the 16th floor penthouse from ancillary health club to office use, conversion of the portion of the lobby space from office to ancillary health club & conference center, expansion of the entrance lobby by 1,8681 square feet, façade improvements, expansion of 794 square feet of retail office entry; Located on Old Georgetown Road between Edgemoor Lane and Wisconsin Avenue; 2017 Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions and Adoption of Resolution

BOARD ACTION

Motion: A. B. & C. FANI-GONZÁLEZ/CICHY

Vote:

Yea: A. B. & C. 4-0

Nay:

Other: PATTERSON ABSENT

Action: A. Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Project Plan Amendment cited above, subject to conditions discussed at the meeting, and adopted the attached Resolution.

B. Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Preliminary Plan Amendment cited above, subject to conditions discussed at the meeting, and adopted the attached Resolution.

C. Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Site Plan Amendment cited above, subject to conditions discussed at the meeting, and adopted the attached Resolution.

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***5. 7500 Old Georgetown Road --- A. Project Plan Amendment No. 91984004A, B. Preliminary Plan Amendment No.11979251A & C. Site Plan Amendment No. 81980028A**CONTINUED

In keeping with the October 30 technical staff report, Planning Department staff offered a multi-media presentation and discussed proposed Project, Preliminary and Site Plan Amendment requests for the 7500 Old Georgetown Road project. Staff noted that the proposed amendments are to increase the total gross floor area from 301,558 square feet to 320, 813 square feet, including 15,616 square feet of existing and 3,639 square feet of new office and retail space, and renovate a 3,900-square foot portion of the existing plaza, and make façade improvements. The project site is located on Old Georgetown Road between Edgemoor Lane and Wisconsin Avenue. Staff noted that the project was approved before October 29, 2014 and as allowed is being reviewed under the Central Business District (CBD)-3 Zone, using the standards and procedures of the Zoning Ordinance in effect on that date. The property is fully built and occupied with office, retail, health club, and conference center spaces.

Staff added that the proposed amendments will not alter the overall character or impact the status of the existing development with respect to the original findings and approvals. Furthermore, these amendments will not affect the compatibility of the development with respect to the surrounding neighborhood. Staff then discussed the conditions of approval and noted that no correspondence has been received regarding these proposed amendments.

Mr. Bob Dalrymple, attorney representing the applicant, Bethesda Office Owner LLC., and Ms. Jane Mahaffie, member of the applicant's team, offered brief comments and concurred with the staff recommendation.

There followed a brief Board discussion with questions to staff.

6. Council Bill 44-20: Human Rights and Civil Liberties – Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee – Members – Amendments---Briefing on Planning Department staff review of Bill 44-20’s provision to require racial equity and social justice impact statements for new Zoning Text Amendments and request for Board comments to submit to the County Council prior to November 18th worksession

Staff Recommendation: Approval and Transmittal of Comments to the County Council

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Yea:

Nay:

Other: PATTERSON ABSENT

Action: By consensus, approved staff recommendation for approval to transmit comments to the County Council, as discussed during the meeting.

Planning Department Deputy Director Tanya Stern and Planning Department staff discussed proposed Council Bill 44-20, Human Rights and Civil Liberties – Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee. Ms. Stern briefed the Planning Board on the Planning Department staff’s review of the Bill provision to require racial equity and social justice impact statements for new Zoning Text Amendments and requested Planning Board comments to be submitted to the County Council prior to the November 18 worksession.

Ms. Elaine Bonner-Tompkins of the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) offered comments and answered questions from the Planning Board.

Planning Department Director Gwen Wright also offered comments.

There followed extensive Board discussion during which staff informed the Board that staff member Gregory Russ, the Zoning expert, will be retiring at the end of the year and will not be replaced due to the Planning Department hiring freeze to satisfy the requested FY22 Budget reduction. The Planning Board instructed staff to stress the importance of getting the necessary funds to hire a replacement for Mr. Russ, in the letter to the County Council, who will work on this issue in collaboration with OLO.