



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, February 11, 2021, at 9:04 a.m., and adjourned at 12:23 p.m.

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

Items 1, 2, 4, and 5 are reported on the attached agenda.

Item 3 was removed from the Planning Board agenda.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:23 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Planning Board will be held on Thursday, February 18, 2021, via video conference.

James J. Parsons

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Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting
Thursday, February 11, 2021
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**

Subdivision Plat No. 220210120, Edgemoor -- R-60 zone, 1 lot; located on the east side of Fairfax Road, 200 feet south of Edgemoor Lane; Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

BOARD ACTION

Motion: CICHY/VERMA

Vote:

Yea: 5-0

Nay:

Other:

Action: Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Record Plat cited above, as submitted.

***C. Other Consent Items**

1. Parkridge, Preliminary Plan No. 620200120, Regulatory Extension Request #2---Request to extend the regulatory review period from February 11, 2021 to July 29, 2021 for creation of one lot; located at 11730 Clopper Road, Gaithersburg; on approximately 1.4 acres of land zoned R-200; within the Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan area.

Staff Recommendation: Approval of the Extension Request

BOARD ACTION

Motion: CICHY/VERMA

Vote:

Yea: 5-0

Nay:

Other:

Action: Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Preliminary Plan Extension request cited above.

***D. Approval of Minutes**

Planning Board Meeting Minutes of January 28, 2021

BOARD ACTION

Motion: CICHY/VERMA

Vote:

Yea: 5-0

Nay:

Other:

Action: Approved Planning Board Meeting Minutes of January 28, 2021, 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 Board on the following ongoing and upcoming Planning Department events and activities: the recent promotion of Christina Sorrento to Chief of the Intake and Regulatory Coordination (IRC) Division; the celebration of Black History Month, which has thus far included two events and the display of the staff Black History Month quilt; the status of the mural proposed for the north exterior wall of the Wheaton Headquarters building, with four proposed themes currently under consideration; the status of the Shady Grove Minor Master Plan Amendment, with a County Council Public Hearing scheduled for February 23; the status of the Ashton Village Center Sector Plan, with a County Council Public Hearing scheduled for March 2; the status of the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan, with a virtual event, [*Silver Spring Today – Existing Conditions Analysis Presentation to the Community*](#), held on February 9 and a Planning Board briefing scheduled for February 18; the status of the Fairland and Briggs Chaney and the Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plans, with staff from the University of Maryland offering to host a practicum on the Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan in the fall; the status of two proposed Zoning Text Amendments (ZTAs) regarding rent gouging and the uses and standards for certain residential properties near Metrorail stations, with County Council Public Hearings for both scheduled for tonight; the status of the Corridor Forward – The I-270 Transit Plan, the Pedestrian Master Plan, the Predictive Safety Analysis, and the Retail in Diverse Communities Study, with Planning Board briefings forthcoming; and the status of the Speed to Market project, a collaboration between Planning Department staff, the development community, and the Executive Branch that proposes to streamline the development review process through the completion of review elements simultaneously rather than sequentially.

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

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2. Roundtable DiscussionCONTINUED

Christina Sorrento, Chief of the IRC Division, then offered a multi-media presentation and briefly discussed the Development Plan Approval process, Reforest Montgomery program, Forest Conservation and Subdivision Regulations legislation, Forest Conservation Law, and enforcement. Ms. Sorrento noted that her goals for the IRC Division include streamlining the Development Review Committee (DRC) process, enhancing public's access to information with a virtual information desk, and more collaboration with the development review team and site inspectors.

There followed a brief Board discussion, during which Vice Chair Fani-González requested that Ms. Sorrento coordinate with the Parks Department regarding tree planting in parks.

3. ~~Grosvenor BiPPA Improvements Mandatory Referral MR 2021010 and Forest Conservation Plan~~ — **REMOVED*

~~**A. Mandatory Referral MR2021010, Grosvenor BiPPA Improvements**—Construction of sidewalk improvements between Pooks Hill Road and the MD355/I-95 interchange and sidepath improvements along the north side of MD 355 between Grosvenor Lane and Tuckerman Lane (south leg) Small sections lie within four Master Plan areas: the 2017 Grosvenor-Strathmore Minor Master Plan, the 1992 North Bethesda/Garrett Park MP, the 1990 Kensington Wheaton MP, and the 1990 Bethesda Chevy Chase MP.~~

~~*Staff Recommendation: Approval to Transmit Comments to MCDOT*~~

~~**B. Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan, No. SC2020015**—Request to clear 0.23 acres of forest and a variance request to impact specimen trees, including the Linden Oak, which is the County Champion white oak; located along Rockville Pike between Tuckerman Lane and Bellevue Drive, Rockville MD; Small sections lie within four Master Plan areas: the 2017 Grosvenor-Strathmore Minor Master Plan, the 1992 North Bethesda/Garrett Park MP, the 1990 Kensington Wheaton MP, and the 1990 Bethesda Chevy Chase MP.~~

~~*Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions*~~

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Yea:

Nay:

Other:

Action: **This Item was removed from the Planning Board agenda.**

4. Development of Equity Focus Areas in Montgomery County**BOARD ACTION****Motion:****Vote:****Yea:****Nay:****Other:****Action: Received briefing followed by discussion.**

Planning Department and Park Department staff offered a multi-media presentation and discussed the Equity Focus Areas (EFA) project and the resulting analytical tool to identify areas of marginalized populations for the analysis of racial equity and social justice issues in planning efforts. According to staff, the data-driven screening tool is based on simple analysis of core equity variables to define the highest concentrations of marginalized populations, identified as EFAs. The tool will be used to assist in the analysis of EFA access to opportunity and resources, such as employment, transportation, education, healthy communities, and government services, and to support ongoing and future planning projects, such as the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Update to the General Plan, the Planning Department Equity in Planning Initiative, Master and Sector plans, and Montgomery Parks' Capital Improvement Program prioritization, as well as other parks, trails, permitting or facility-specific strategic planning efforts. The tool will also allow staff to address, mitigate, and eliminate inequities from the past and develop planning solutions to create equitable communities in the future.

Staff discussed the project methodology, noting that the EFA project examined three specific variables, including household income, race and ethnicity, and English language proficiency, using the latest datasets available during development, sourced from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the American Communities Survey, all at the U.S. Census Tract level. Staff then reviewed numerous case studies and analysis methods from jurisdictions around the country to devise a methodology to perform analyses specific to Montgomery County and to create a single layer at the U.S. Census Tract scale identifying those areas in the county with high concentrations of lower-income people of color who also speak English less than well. This modified binary indexing approach first combines the datasets of income with race and ethnicity and then overlays the dataset of English language proficiency to identify Census tracts that either meet the EFAs criteria or do not and are not classified as an EFA. As a result of this approach, the EFA project identified 56 Census Tracts out of 215 in the County that meet the criteria of EFAs, primarily along the I-270 Corridor, the US29 Corridor, and the eastern portion of the Down County area. Staff noted that approximately 275,875 residents live in these tracts identified as EFAs, who tend to be younger with a lower educational attainment level, and more

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4. Development of Equity Focus Areas in Montgomery CountyCONTINUED

likely to be Hispanic. One-third of the households in the identified EFAs have an income under \$50,000 and experience a higher incidence of housing cost burdens. Overall, households in EFAs are less likely to be owner-occupied and have a median housing value of two-thirds of the countywide value.

The next steps for the project include the refinement of the EFA tools, such as an interactive Geographic Information System (GIS) story map describing the methodology of the analysis; a map gallery of topic maps with EFAs; interactive mapping application with features such as descriptive data pop outs, ability to overlay topic maps, and download data; coordination with the Equity in Master Planning efforts and numerous Parks Department projects; and coordination with equity analysis efforts at other County agencies and jurisdictions. Staff noted that the project can be applied to aid in the development of the Equity Opportunity Index (EOI), a more robust, multi-variable modeling approach to examine numerous additional datasets ranging from health, environmental quality, housing, transportation and available services, the initial results of which are expected by the end of this year.

There followed extensive Board discussion with questions to staff, during which Chair Anderson recommended that staff explore the use of market research data in their analysis.

5. Thrive Montgomery 2050 Worksession No. 7

1. Parks and Recreation for an Increasingly Urban and Diverse Community: Active and Social
2. Final drafts (redlined) of the Introduction, Housing, and Transportation chapters

Staff Recommendation: Discuss Issues and Provide Direction to Staff

BOARD ACTION**Motion:****Vote:****Yea:****Nay:****Other:****Action: Received briefing followed by discussion.**

Planning Department and Parks Department staff offered a multi-media presentation and discussed the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Update to the General Plan, specifically the major themes of the public hearing testimony about the Public Hearing Draft Plan's recommendations related to parks, recreation, open space, and health; a new chapter, identified as "Parks and Recreation for an Increasingly Urban and Diverse Community: Active and Social;" and the revised drafts of the "Introduction," "Housing," and "Transportation" chapters with redlined revisions to show how staff has incorporated the Planning Board's comments in each chapter. According to staff, the comments received from verbal and written testimony related to parks, recreation, and healthy living, mostly supported the Plan's proposed recommendations, but also emphasized the need for more parks and safe and convenient pedestrian trails, sidewalks, and bike paths to access transit, schools, jobs, and other destinations; enhancement of environmental health and biodiversity conservation throughout the county through resource conservation, clean water initiatives, and habitat preservation and restoration; improved access to parks and natural green spaces; better and more inclusive recreational facilities for communities experiencing changing demographic and cultural shifts; converting underutilized tennis courts into soccer courts that provide safe, recreational fun that keeps youth active and engaged in positive activities during the day and at night; equity in planning to eliminate structural barriers that prevent the residents of vulnerable communities from accessing nature; and clarification as to how the county will fund more and better parks and recreational amenities, while also providing reliable and efficient transit, schools, utilities, healthcare facilities, libraries, athletic fields, and community centers that would be necessary to support new Complete Communities featuring 15-minute living. Other comments questioned the Plan's approach that denser, compact, and walkable Complete Communities would lead to increased physical health, stating that the

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5. Thrive Montgomery 2050 Worksession No. 7CONTINUED

proposed increased density would lead to more traffic causing reduced air quality because the conversion to all electric vehicles will lag the increase in traffic-causing health impacts within the time span of Thrive Montgomery 2050.

Staff then discussed the new “Parks and Recreation for an Increasingly Urban and Diverse Community: Active and Social” chapter, which consolidates the recommendations related to parks, recreation, and health currently found in the “Healthy and Sustainable Environment,” “Design,” “Complete Communities,” and “Diverse and Adaptable Growth” chapters in the Public Hearing Draft Plan. According to staff, the new chapter identifies the issues and existing conditions related to parks and recreational amenities designed for a suburban land use pattern dependent on cars; promotes an active lifestyle and community building for a diverse population with different cultural backgrounds and lifestyle preferences by making parks and recreational amenities a central element of walkable and diverse communities; and includes a set of potential measures to monitor the progress towards these goals.

There followed extensive Board discussion with questions to staff, during which the Board provided guidance to staff.

Staff then offered a preview of the next worksession scheduled for Thursday, February 18, during which Planning Department staff will discuss the “Complete Communities: Mix of Uses and Forms” chapter of the Plan.

Staff then briefly discussed the revised drafts of the “Introduction,” “Housing,” and “Transportation” chapters, with redlined revisions to show how staff has incorporated the Planning Board’s comments in each chapter. Staff then summarized the proposed revisions, noting that most of the changes were minor editorial revisions.

There followed extensive Board discussion, during which the Planning Board, by consensus, agreed with the staff recommended revisions.