



**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, September 23, 2021, at 9:01 a.m., and adjourned at 1:48 p.m.

Present were Chair Casey Anderson and Commissioners Gerald R. Cichy and Partap Verma.

Commissioner Tina Patterson joined the meeting at 10:17 a.m. during discussion of Item 4.

The Board recessed at 9:02 a.m. and convened in Closed Session at 9:06 a.m. to take up Item 8, a Closed Session Item.

In compliance with State Government Article §3-305(b), Annotated Code of Maryland, the following is a report of the Board's Closed Session:

The Board convened in Closed Session at 9:06 a.m. via video conference on motion of Commissioner Cichy, seconded by Commissioner Verma, with Chair Anderson and Commissioners Cichy and Verma voting in favor of the motion, and Commissioner Patterson absent. The meeting was closed under authority of Annotated Code of Maryland §3-305(b)(3), to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related to the acquisition.

Also present for the meeting were Director Mike Riley, Hyojung Garland, Darren Flusche, Cristina Sasaki, David Tobin, Trish Swann, Patricia McManus, Brenda Sandberg, and Michelle Grace of the Parks Department; Director Gwen Wright and Deputy Director Robert Kronenberg of the Planning Department; Principal Counsel Emily Vaias, Senior Counsels Matt Mills and Megan Chung, and Sr. Technical Writer/Editor James Parsons of the Legal Department.

In Closed Session, the Board received briefing regarding the proposed acquisition of land for the future South Silver Spring Urban Recreational Park.

The Closed Session meeting was adjourned at 9:27 a.m.

The Planning Board reconvened via video conference at 9:29 a.m.

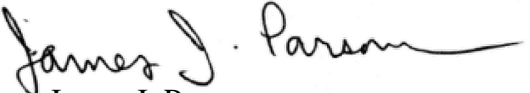
Item 1 and Items 3 through 7 are reported on the attached agenda.

Item 2 was removed from the Planning Board agenda.

Chair Anderson left the meeting for the day following discussion of Item 4, and Commissioner Cichy assumed the chairmanship in his absence.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:48 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Planning Board will be held on Thursday, September 30, 2021, via video conference.

*M. Clara Moise*  
M. Clara Moise  
Sr. Technical Writer/Editor

  
James J. Parsons  
Sr. Technical Writer/Editor

**Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting**  
**Thursday, September 23, 2021**  
2425 Reddie Drive  
Wheaton, MD 20902  
301-495-4605

**8. CLOSED SESSION**

According to MD ANN Code, General Provisions Article, §3-305(b)(3), to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related to the acquisition.

**The topic to be discussed is the proposed acquisition of land for the future South Silver Spring Urban Recreational Park**

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:**

**Vote:**

**Yea:**

**Nay:**

**Other:**

**Action: Discussed in Closed Session. See State citation and open session report in narrative minutes.**

**1. Consent Agenda**

**\*A. Adoption of Resolutions**

1. Creekside at Cabin Branch Site Plan 820200160- MCPB No. 21-097
2. Burnt Mills Elementary School Final FCP MR2021017- MCPB No. 21-053
3. Hillmead – 6421 Bradley Blvd. Administrative Subdivision No. 620200160-MCPB No. 21-088
4. White Oak Apartments FCP No. H-141 MCPB No. 21-098
5. One Bethesda Condominiums Site Plan No. 81984006C – MCPB No. 21-093
6. One Bethesda Condominiums Project Plan No. 91983005C – MCPB No. 21-094
7. Montgomery Auto Sales Park Site Plan 82006002C – MCPB No. 21-095

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:** CICHY/VERMA

**Vote:**

**Yea:** 3-0

**Nay:**

**Other:** PATTERSON ABSENT

**Action:** Adopted the Resolutions cited above, as submitted.

**\*B. Record Plats**

**Subdivision Plat No. 220210670, Bradmoor** -- R-60 zone; 2 lots; located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Rayburn Road and Bradley Boulevard (MD 191); Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan.

*Staff Recommendation: Approval*

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion: CICHY/VERMA**

**Vote:**

**Yea: 3-0**

**Nay:**

**Other: PATTERSON ABSENT**

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

**\*C. Other Consent Items**

**Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel, Appointment of Panel Member---**Re-appoint the Panel member representing the local Bethesda Community.

*Staff Recommendation: Approve Appointment*

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion: CICHY/VERMA**

**Vote:**

**Yea: 3-0**

**Nay:**

**Other: PATTERSON ABSENT**

**Action: Approved staff recommendation to re-appoint the recommended applicant to the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Design Advisory Panel.**

**\*D. Approval of Minutes**

Planning Board Meeting Minutes of September 9, 2021

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion: CICHY/VERMA**

**Vote:**

**Yea: 3-0**

**Nay:**

**Other: PATTERSON ABSENT**

**Action: Approved Planning Board Meeting Minutes of September 9, 2021, as submitted.**

~~2. Roundtable Discussion~~ **REMOVED**

- Planning Department Director's Report

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:**

**Vote:**

**Yea:**

**Nay:**

**Other:**

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



**3. Fall 2021 Semi-annual Presentation Outline**

*Staff Recommendation: Receive Briefing*

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:**

**Vote:**

**Yea:**

**Nay:**

**Other:**

**Action: Received briefing from Parks and Planning Departments staff on the proposed outlines for the upcoming Fall 2021 Semi-Annual Report, followed by a brief Board discussion, and provided guidance to staff.**

Parks and Planning Departments Directors Mike Riley and Gwen Wright offered an overview of the Fall 2021 Semi-Annual Report to be presented to the County Council and the County Executive. The Planning Department portion will focus on recent and ongoing regulatory projects; Thrive Montgomery 2050, the Update to the General Plan; the Equity Agenda for Planning; ongoing Master Plan work; an update on ongoing studies and other projects; and proposed FY22 work program updates. The Parks Department portion of the report will focus on upcoming and ongoing events at the Josiah Henson Museum and Park; recent park acquisitions; current and ongoing urban park mini-refresher projects; projects currently in the construction or design phases; the status of grants and special funding sources; recent natural and hard surface trail work; the status of the Equity Engagement Program; athletic fields; Park Safety Committee work; the White Tail Deer Management program; ongoing accessibility improvements; the status of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan update; parks data; the Enterprise Division 2021 revenue projections; and ongoing and upcoming programs and special events.

There followed extensive Board discussion with questions to Ms. Wright and Mr. Riley, during which the Planning Board recommended that the Directors emphasize the amount of community outreach and engagement work undertaken by their respective Departments.

**4. Montgomery Hills MD 97 Design Project Mandatory Referral**---Mandatory Referral MR2021033, Montgomery Hills MD 97 Design Project Construction of new roadway, traffic signal, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements on Georgia Avenue (MD97) between 16th Street and Forest Glen Road, SHA Contract No. MO2245171, Master Plan -Forest Glen-Montgomery Hills Sector Plan (2019)

*Staff Recommendation: Approval with Comments*

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:** VERMA/CICHY

**Vote:**

**Yea:** 4-0

**Nay:**

**Other:**

**Action:** Approved staff recommendation to transmit comments to the Maryland Department of Transportation/State Highway Administration, as discussed during the meeting, and as stated in the attached transmittal letter.

Planning Department staff offered a multi-media presentation and discussed a proposed Mandatory Referral request from the Maryland Department of Transportation/State Highway Administration (MDOT/SHA) for roadway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements along Georgia Avenue (MD97). The 0.7-mile project site runs along the portion of MD97 that extends from 16th Street (MD390) north to Forest Glen Road (MD192), within the Glenmont/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan area. Currently, this portion of MD97 is a closed section roadway with three through lanes in the northbound and southbound directions, with a peak hour reversible lane serving as a two-way left-turn lane during off-peak hours. Left turns are prohibited during peak travel hours. Sidewalks are located on both sides of the roadway, neither of which are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. Also, existing bicycle facilities lack connectivity between the Forest Glen Metro Station and the extensive Silver Spring bicycle network directly to the south. Currently, MD390 is a five to six-lane roadway that connects south to the future Woodside Purple Line station, downtown Silver Spring, and further south into Washington, DC. The road is divided with a median and typically has three travel lanes in each direction. Between MD97 and Columbia Boulevard/Grace Church Road, the southbound direction has only two travel lanes. Staff added that the project is currently in the 30 percent development phase.

Staff noted MDOT/SHA proposes removing the center, reversible travel lane and constructing a raised median, providing three to four through lanes on MD97 in the northbound and southbound directions. Other proposed improvements along MD97 include a new traffic signal on Flora Lane, relocation of the southbound MD390 movement, a floating

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#### 4. Montgomery Hills MD 97 Design Project Mandatory Referral

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bus stop on southbound MD97 between Seminary Road and Seminary Place, and elimination of the loop off-ramp in the southeast quadrant of the Interstate 495 (I-495) interchange. Two-way separated bike lanes are proposed along southbound MD97, extending from south of Locust Grove Road to just south of MD390 and tying into the existing bicycle/pedestrian bridge over the I-495 interchange ramps. Though utility pole design will not be completed until the 90 percent design stage, MDOT/SHA proposes the construction of minimum five-foot wide, ADA compliant sidewalks with a clear, accessible pathway around utility poles. If there are places where placing a utility pole within the sidewalk cannot be avoided, the design includes a 36-inch passable width or additional width around the pole.

Staff recommendations include shifting MD390 to the north and constructing eight-foot wide two-way separated bike lanes, a two-foot wide pedestrian/bicycle buffer, a six-foot-wide sidewalk, and a six-foot-wide street buffer on the south side of the street between MD97 and Grace Church Road; a six-foot wide sidewalk with a six-foot wide buffer on the west side of MD97 between MD390 and Grace Church Road; truncating and terminating the proposed separated bike lanes along the existing southbound MD390 carriageway at Luzerne Avenue; conveying the portion of land between MD390, MD97, and Luzerne Avenue in-fee to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC); decreasing the radii provided at the southbound dual right-turn lanes on MD97 at MD390; modifying the west side of MD97 between Flora Lane and Luzerne Avenue to provide a six-foot wide sidewalk, eight-foot wide, curb-level separated bike lanes, and a six-foot wide grass buffer; an eight-foot wide street buffer, eight-foot wide separated bike lanes, a three-foot wide pedestrian/bicycle buffer, and an eight-foot wide sidewalk along the Shell gas station and car wash parcels to be acquired by MDOT/SHA; removing the Columbia Boulevard access point from a parcel located on the southwest quadrant of the intersection of MD97 and Seminary Road; protected crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists at the two I-495 on-ramps from northbound MD97; removing the island and reducing the turn radius at the intersection of MD97 and Locust Grove Road; eliminating the median on MD192 east of MD97, and using the space for a buffer between the sidewalks and the street; bicycle signals for all separated bike lanes; providing protected intersections where separated bike lanes and side-paths intersect with Seminary Place, Seminary Lane, and MD390; coordination between MDOT/SHA and Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) regarding the proposed, floating bus stop on southbound MD97 at Seminary Road; and lowering the proposed speed limit to the target speed of 25 miles-per-hour throughout the project limit area.

Staff then briefly discussed environmental issues, noting that the project is exempt from the requirement to submit a Forest Conservation Plan. Staff added that MDOT/SHA has met all environmental guidelines, with final stormwater management design elements forthcoming.

Parks Department staff then discussed the Sector Plan parks recommendations, noting that no impacts to parkland or any other M-NCPPC owned land is proposed by the project. Staff added that following completion of the project, MDOT/SHA will dedicate the land between MD390 and MD97 to Montgomery County, which will potentially be used as parkland.

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**4. Montgomery Hills MD 97 Design Project Mandatory Referral**

Ms. Michelle Foster, representing the Friends of Forest Glen and Montgomery Hills and Ms. Mitsuko Herrera of Grace Church Road offered testimony and multi-media presentations.

Mr. Barry Smith and Ms. Marie-France Guiteau of MDOT/SHA offered comments and answered questions from the Planning Board.

There followed extensive Board discussion, during which the Planning Board instructed staff to explore the feasibility of a more direct bicycle route along MD97, as well as the feasibility of reducing the lane width on MD390.

**\*5. Sandy Spring Village A. Preliminary Plan No. 11987066A**---Application to convert two existing office buildings from commercial to age-restricted, affordable multi-family residential, with a total of 56 dwelling units including 12.5% MPDUs. Located at 17810 Meeting House Road & 900 Olney Sandy Spring Road (MD 108); in the southwest quadrant of the intersection of Olney Sandy Spring Road and Meeting House Road.; CRN-0.75, C-0.75, R-0.5 Zone, 2.67 acres, 2015 Sandy Spring Rural Village.  
*Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions*

**B. Site Plan No. 81988060A**---Application to convert two existing office buildings from commercial to age-restricted, affordable multi-family residential, with a total of 56 dwelling units including 12.5% MPDUs. Located at 17810 Meeting House Road & 900 Olney Sandy Spring Road (MD 108); in the southwest quadrant of the intersection of Olney Sandy Spring Road and Meeting House Road.; CRN-0.75, C-0.75, R-0.5 Zone, 2.67 acres, 2015 Sandy Spring Rural Village  
*Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions*

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion: A. & B. VERMA/PATTERSON**

**Vote:**

**Yea: A. & B. 3-0**

**Other: ANDERSON ABSENT**

**Action: A. Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Preliminary Plan cited above, subject to conditions, which will be reflected in an associated draft Resolution to be adopted by the Planning Board at a later date.**

**B. Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Site Plan cited above, subject to conditions, which will be reflected in an associated draft Resolution to be adopted by the Planning Board at a later date.**

In accordance with the September 13 technical staff report, Planning Department staff offered a multi-media presentation and discussed Preliminary and Site Plan requests for the proposed Sandy Spring Village project. Staff noted that the proposed request is to convert two existing office buildings from commercial to affordable age-restricted multi-family residential units, which will serve senior households earning up to 60 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI), with a total of 56 dwelling units including 12.5 percent Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs). The 2.67-acre property is located on Meeting House Road and Olney Sandy Spring Road (MD 108), in the southwest quadrant of the intersection of Olney Sandy Spring Road and Meeting House Road in the Sandy Spring Rural Village Master Plan. Staff noted that the property is improved with two commercial buildings totaling approximately 56,565 square feet, and associated parking. The first building, the Stabler Building, is located at the southwest corner of MD 108 and Meeting House Road. The 6,669 square foot Stabler Building is two and

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**\*5. Sandy Spring Village: A. Preliminary Plan No. 11987066A & B. Site Plan No. 81988060A**CONTINUED

a half story Colonial Revival building constructed in 1904, as commercial office space for the Montgomery Fire Insurance company. The second building, the Mutual Insurance building (Mutual Building), located at 17810 Meeting House Road was also built for the Mutual Fire Insurance company. The 49,866-square foot Mutual Building is centrally located on the southern portion of the property and consists of two separate wings connected by a “bridge”. The southern wing, known as the Bentley Building, or The Computer Center, was constructed in 1977 and the northern wing, Moore Building was constructed in 1991. The site is accessible from MD108 via Thomas Village Lane and a driveway off Meeting House Road that connects through to Thomas Village via an interior drive aisle, which is within an existing ingress-egress easement.

Staff also noted that there are 94 existing parking spaces on the property. There are nine head-in spaces off the driveway/fire access turn around in front of the Mutual Building. Thirty-five double-loaded spaces located along the drive-aisle between Meeting House Road and Thomas Village Lane; the remaining parking spaces are located behind the Mutual Building. The site is located within the Northwest Branch watershed, and there are no streams, steep slopes, highly erodible soils, or other environmental features located on the property. However, there is a perennial stream located on the adjacent property to the south of Parcel A. The stream begins at the adjoining property line between Parcel A and Parcel 553 and flows to the south. The resulting 125-foot stream buffer extends onto the site creating 0.6 acres of stream buffer on the site.

Staff added that Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) has reviewed the Preliminary Plan, and in a letter dated July 8, 2021, attached to the staff report, concurred with staff that no additional dedication is required on Meeting House Road along the frontage of the Stabler Building. However, Condition of Approval 3, as stated in their letter, strongly recommends installation of a 5-foot sidewalk on Meeting House Road. Installation of the afore-mentioned sidewalk would also require additional dedication. As discussed in detail in the staff report, staff disagrees with MCDOT’s position regarding frontage improvements on Meeting House Road in front of the Mutual Building. The existing right-of-way is 60 feet, 30 feet from the centerline, and dedicating an additional 10 feet of right-of-way would cause existing features along the property frontage, such as the brick wall and fountain/patio to be within the right-of-way. These features are integral to the character of the road, and to keep them at the current location, additional right-of-way dedication is not required. According to MCDOT’s letter, if dedication is required by the Planning Board, the encroaching features would need to be removed.

Staff also added that The Rustic Roads Advisory Committee (RRAC) has reviewed the application, and in a letter dated July 13, 2021, attached to the staff report, the RRAC strongly supported the request, as proposed. As previously stated, the RRAC does not support the recommendations to install sidewalks along Meeting House Road and to dedicate additional right-of-way, since the sidewalk would negatively impact the road and the dedication would create the potential to negatively affect the property and the road in the future. To satisfy

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**\*5. Sandy Spring Village: A. Preliminary Plan No. 11987066A & B. Site Plan No. 81988060A**

CONTINUED

Condition 3 of MCDOT's letter, the applicant is removing the existing U-shaped lead walk between the existing fountain and proposed patio, and Meeting House Road pavement. However, this solution is predicated on the Planning Board allowing a narrower right-of-way than recommended in the Master Plan. As conditioned, no additional right-of-way dedication or frontage improvements are requested on Meetinghouse Road due to the constraints and recommendations outlined in the staff report and discussed by staff.

Staff briefly discussed the conditions of approval and recommended approval of the project.

Ms. Elizabeth Rogers of Lerch, Early & Brewer, Chartered, attorney representing the applicant together with Mr. William Kominers, attorney, introduced Ms. Stacy Kaplowitz of KCG Companies, member of the applicant's team, offered brief comments and concurred with the staff recommendation.

Ms. Kaplowitz also offered brief comments.

Acting Chair Cichy noted that Ms. Rebecca Torma and Mr. Deepak Somarajan of MCDOT were also present at the meeting to answer any questions Board members may have.

There followed a brief Board discussion with questions to staff and Ms. Rogers.

**\*6. Briefing on Current Economic Trends---**Staff will brief the Board on local economic indicators and the county’s recovery from the pandemic recession.

*Staff Recommendation: Receive Briefing*

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:**

**Vote:**

**Yea:**

**Nay:**

**Other:**

**Action: Received Briefing followed by Board discussion.**

Planning Department staff offered a multi-media presentation and provided a short briefing on the state of Montgomery County’s economy and its progress in recovering from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff discussed the following key indicators: Employment levels and labor force participation economy-wide and for key sectors; Wages; Consumer spending; Commuting, auto traffic, and transit ridership; Real estate trends; and Inflation. These indicators will be contextualized within national and regional economies when possible.

There followed a brief Board discussion with questions to staff.



**\*7. Pedestrian Master Plan Update**

*Staff Recommendation: Receive Briefing and Share Comments*

**BOARD ACTION**

**Motion:**

**Vote:**

**Yea:**

**Nay:**

**Action: Received Briefing followed by Board discussion.**

Planning Department staff offered a multi-media presentation and discussed an update to the Pedestrian Master Plan. Staff noted that since the last Pedestrian Master Plan briefing to the Planning Board on March 18, 2021, the Pedestrian Master Plan team has advanced key plan elements. As the culmination of several years of work, the countywide Pedestrian Level of Comfort (PLOC) map is nearly complete. The pedestrian walkways and crossings along more than 3,500 miles of roads in the county have been assessed a comfort score from 1, Very Comfortable, to 4, Undesirable, using factors such as the posted speed limit, number of traffic lanes, presence of on-street parking, presence of a walkway and the width of the buffer between the street and the walkway. A major milestone in the development of the existing conditions report, the project team is now using the PLOC to evaluate pedestrian access to schools, parks, transit centers, grocery stores, and other local/regional destinations. The map is available at [mcatlas.org/pedplan](http://mcatlas.org/pedplan).

Staff also noted that, together with the help of Communications Division staff and the consultant team, it has recently completed an interactive Pedestrian Audit Toolkit, drawing on successful pedestrian audit materials from across the United States. The toolkit educates community members about how to plan, conduct, debrief and follow-up on a pedestrian audit in their community. The project team will be hosting a virtual training on this exciting tool on September 28 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Planning Department staff has conducted many successful pedestrian audits in the past, and the Pedestrian Audit Toolkit makes it easier for interested community members to do the same. The project team is in discussions with the Information & Technology Information (ITI) Division to develop an interactive prioritization tool, allowing members of the public to weigh different prioritization variables to share their preferred infrastructure prioritization approach. This tool will be used in both in-person and virtual public engagements, as the plan and its recommendations are developed. The consultants team working with staff, has developed a memorandum providing their perspective on potential plan recommendations in several important pedestrian subject areas, including signal timing, snow removal, sidewalk materials, lighting, and others. The project team looks forward to sharing those recommendations as part of a larger policy discussion in the coming months.

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**\*7. Pedestrian Master Plan Update**CONTINUED

Staff then added that the Pedestrian Master Plan timeline has lengthened because completing the PLOC map has taken longer than anticipated, and the project team has invested resources in parallel pedestrian efforts that advance the goals of the Pedestrian Master Plan, including incorporating pedestrian safety and comfort into the Growth and Infrastructure Policy, strengthening pedestrian construction detour legislation, creating the Purple Line Connectivity Report, and supporting pedestrian planning efforts in area master plans. With the completion of the PLOC map, the project team is confident that the plan schedule will move forward.

Staff also stated that Task 1, the Planning Board Scope of Work, and Task 2, Identifying Best Practices for Pedestrian Master Plans, have been completed. The other pending tasks, listed in the September 15 technical staff report, will be completed during 2022 and 2023. Staff will complete the Existing Conditions report and present it to the Planning Board in April 2022. The Planning Board review and transmittal of the Plan to the County Council is estimated to begin in January 2023 and continue through May 2023, with the Council review and approval of the Plan estimated to begin in May 2023, including the County Executive's Fiscal Impact Analysis, and continuing through November 2023.

There followed extensive Board discussion with questions to staff.