

Montgomery County Planning Board

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED MINUTES AND SUMMARY

SUMMARY

Thursday, January 19, 2023

2425 Reedie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902
301-495-4605

The Montgomery County Planning Board met in regular session in the Wheaton Headquarters Building in Wheaton, Maryland, and via Microsoft Teams video conference on Thursday, January 19, 2023, beginning at 9:04 a.m. and adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Present were Chair Jeff Zyontz, Vice Chair Amy Presley, and Commissioners Cheri Branson, David Hill, and Roberto Piñero.

Commissioner Branson was necessarily absent for Item 1 and joined the meeting at 9:11 a.m. for Item 3.

Vice Chair Presley was necessarily absent for Items 1 through 4 and joined the meeting at 10:29 a.m. during Item 5.

Items 1 through 7 and 10 were discussed in that order and reported in the attached Minutes.

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

The Planning Board recessed for lunch and convened in Closed Session at 12:40 p.m. to discuss Item 11 on the motion of Commissioner Hill, seconded by Commissioner Branson with Chair Zyontz, Vice Chair Presley, and Commissioners Branson, Hill, and Piñero voting in favor of the motion. The meeting was closed under the authority of Annotated Code of Maryland, General Provisions Article §3-305(b)(7), to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice; and (8) consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation.

Also present for the meeting were General Counsel Debra Borden; Principal Counsel Ben Rupert; Principal Counsel Emily Vaias; Senior Counsel Matthew Mills; and Technical Writer Rachel Roehrich of the Office of General Counsel.

In Closed Session, the Board received a briefing regarding potential litigation.

The Closed Session meeting was adjourned at 1:16 p.m. and the Planning Board reconvened in the auditorium and via video conference at 1:46 p.m. on the motion of

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Commissioner Hill, seconded by Commissioner Piñero with Chair Zyontz, Vice Chair Presley, and Commissioners, Hill, and Piñero voting in favor of the motion to return to open session to discuss Items 8 and 9 as reported in the attached Minutes.

Commissioner Branson was necessarily absent for the vote to come back into open session and joined the meeting at 1:49 p.m. for item 8.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned 2:49 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Planning Board will be held on Thursday, January 26, 2023, in the Wheaton Headquarters Building in Wheaton, Maryland, and via video conference.

Rachel Roehrich
Rachel Roehrich
Technical Writer/Legal Assistant

MINUTES

Item 1. Preliminary Matters

A. Adoption of Resolutions

Remembrance Park Preliminary Plan No. 120210150 – MCPC No. 22-114

BOARD ACTION

Motion: Hill/Piñero

Vote: 3-0

Other: Vice Chair Presley absent. Commissioner Branson absent.

Action: Adopted the Resolution cited above, as submitted.

B. Approval of Minutes

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Other:

Action: There were no minutes submitted for approval.

C. Other Preliminary Matters

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Other:

Action: There were no Other Preliminary Items submitted for approval.

Item 2. Record Plats (Public Hearing)

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Other:

Action: There were no Record Plats submitted for approval.

Item 3. Regulatory Extension Requests (Public Hearing)

Battery Lane Site C, Site Plan No. 820220230 Extension Request No. 2 - Request to extend the regulatory review period from January 22, 2023 to March 30, 2023.

CR 3.5, C-0.5, R-3.5, H-120 & Bethesda Overlay Zone, 3.19 acres; request to construct a multifamily building with a maximum density of 367,500 square feet with 15% MPDUs, structured parking, and two partial Sector Planned through block connections; located on Battery Lane approximately 350 feet west of the Woodmont Avenue intersection; 2017 Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval of the Extension Request

G. Bogdan

All Souls Cemetery: Preliminary Plan Amendment No. 11999103A, Regulatory Review Extension Request No. 4 - Request to extend the regulatory review period until April 23, 2023.

Application to amend the Forest Conservation Plan and the Water Quality Plan to expand internal road network and create additional burial plots; 149.28 Acres; AR Zone; located at 11401 Brink Road; 1994 Clarksburg Master Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval of the Extension Request

D. Johnsen

BOARD ACTION

Motion: Piñero/Hill

Vote: 4-0

Other: Vice Chair Presley absent.

Action: Approved the Regulatory Extension Requests submitted for approval.

Commissioner Hill asked questions regarding the All Souls Cemetery extension, and Staff offered responses.

Item 4. Roundtable Discussion

Parks Director's Report

M. Riley

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Other:

Action: Received briefing.

Parks Director Mike Riley presented a multi-media presentation regarding the volunteer programs that took place on Martin Luther King Jr. Day highlighting the Weed Warriors program as well as other Park cleanup projects. As of January 18, 2023, the Weed Warriors and Park cleanup programs have facilitated or hosted 22 events, had approximately 1,029 volunteers, produced 2,058 hours of volunteer service, freed 191 trees of non-native vines, removed 16,275 pounds of trash, and contributed \$67,543.56 of in-kind service to the Parks Department.

Director Riley recognized Parks staff from the Volunteer Services and Partnerships and Weed Warrior divisions that have coordinated the Park volunteer events, which have been a great success for the Parks Department.

Director Riley then highlighted the Montgomery Parks Summer Camps. For 2023, there are more than 40 summer camps available for a variety of interests including sports, nature, adventure outings, and archeology at multiple locations throughout the County. Applications are also currently being accepted for the Marye Wells-Harley Dream Camp Scholarship, which provides young people, ages 3-18, with scholarships to attend Montgomery Parks summer camps. The scholarships are awarded based on financial need and given to as many applicants as funding permits.

Lastly, Director Riley briefly discussed Legislative Bond Initiatives as well as the County Executive's recommendation for Montgomery Parks Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Budget, which the County Executive has trimmed by roughly \$1.5 million. Director Riley noted the proposed budget cuts will be brought before the Board to discuss potential impacts in the near future.

The Board asked questions regarding the overall percentage the budget cuts affected and if the budget cuts only affected the Parks CIP Budget.

Director Riley offered comments and responses to the Board's questions.

The Board also offered comments regarding the great performance by Parks staff with regard to volunteer efforts, the quality of summer camps offered by Parks, and the importance of the scholarship program.

Commissioner Piñero further recommended recognition of the scholarship donors to be posted or highlighted in some way.

Item 5. Joint State Transportation Priority Letter – Planning Board Recommendations

The County Executive and County Council periodically submit a joint transportation priority letter to the Maryland Department of Transportation. Chapter 725 of state law requires Counties to submit a list of priorities to inform the upcoming Consolidated Transportation Plan (CTP) process at MDOT. The Planning Board participates in this process by providing comments to the County Executive and County Council.

Staff Recommendation: Planning Board Comments

S. Aldrich

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Other:

Action: Approved staff recommendation by consensus to transmit comments to the Maryland Department of Transportation regarding Joint State Transportation Priority Letter with modifications to the County Executive and County Council, as stated in a transmittal letter to be drafted at a later date.

Steve Aldrich, Transportation Planner IV, presented a multi-media presentation regarding the joint transportation priority letter to be submitted to the Maryland Department of Transportation by the County Executive and County Council. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated January 12, 2023.

The County Executive and County Council periodically submit a joint transportation priority letter to the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) identifying the county's priorities for state transportation funding. MDOT is required to consider local transportation priorities in the development of the state's Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). The letter is intended to focus only on realistic funding availability, and MDOT encourages multi-modal submissions, including transit, pedestrian, and bicycle needs. This process is a primary, but not only, method that counties have to inform MDOT of local transportation priorities.

The process of updating the transportation priority letter is typically initiated by MCDOT and County Council staff, with input from Planning Staff. The Planning Board participates in this process by providing comments on the draft letter to the County Executive and County Council. It is also intended that input from the public and the locality's state legislative delegation be considered in the development of this letter.

With the recent county and state elections, the County Executive and County Council have recommended submitting a new transportation priority letter to assist MDOT in the development of the next Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP).

Mr. Aldrich noted corrections to the Staff Report and gave an overview of the submission process for the Joint State Transportation Priority Letter which is due to MDOT by April 1, 2023.

There are eight emphasis areas for the Priority Letter, and they are as follows: Vision Zero, Bus Rapid Transit, Local operated transit system support, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Investment, commuter rail expansion, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, State Highways, and interstate program. The emphasis areas are listed in priority order, and for each emphasis area, projects are identified in priority order.

Mr. Aldrich spoke on each of the eight emphasis areas and the Board asked questions and offered comments listed below:

Vision Zero

Commissioner Piñero asked if any Vision Zero projects ready to be implemented could be listed in the letter, and Mr. Aldrich offered comments and responses.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Implementation

The Board asked questions regarding the priority level for US 29 Phase 2 BRT, the timeline for New Hampshire Avenue BRT, and if the priorities on the BRT list were in alignment and set by the County Council.

Mr. Aldrich and Multimodal Transportation Supervisor, Dave Anspacher, offered comments and responses to the Board's questions.

The Board also offered comments regarding concern for the I-270 Transit Corridor Connectors being the lowest priority on the list, and potentially separating the priorities for MD 355 North and South.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Investment

Commissioner Hill asked questions regarding the North Bethesda North Entrance, and Mr. Aldrich offered comments and responses.

Commuter Rail Expansion

The Board asked questions regarding what existing Marc station needs to be removed, and if expansion of service during midday and off-peak hours would be better suited as a higher priority.

Mr. Aldrich offered comments and responses to the Board's questions as well as encouraged the addition of a point of interest for expansion of service although it would require a third rail track which could prove to be difficult.

State Highways

The Board asked questions regarding the reasoning behind MD 190 (River Road) listed under State Highways instead of the Pedestrian and Bicycle category, an example of the MD 97 Diverging Diamond Interchange at the Capital Beltway, and how the Diamond Interchange would affect the pedestrian paths within the area.

The Board also offered comments regarding the traffic flow of the Diamond Interchange, and noted the traffic backup heading south on Georgia Ave.

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Mr. Aldrich and Division Chief of Countywide Planning and Policy, Jason Sartori, offered comments and responses to the Board's questions and comments.

The Board and staff agreed to the following modifications:

- Move US 29 Phase 2 BRT to priority number 3
- Splitting MD 355 into both North and South with North listed as priority number 4 and South listed as a lower priority
- Move North Bethesda Transitway to priority number 7
- Move New Hampshire Avenue BRT to priority number 5
- Keep I-270 Transit Corridor Connectors as listed, but add a comment to emphasize the importance of the I-270 Transit Corridor Connectors
- Add additional comment regarding the extension of the commuter rail

Item 6. Great Seneca Plan: Connecting Life and Science – Existing Conditions

Staff Recommendation: Review existing conditions and provide comments for the Great Seneca Plan

M. Hill

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Other:

Action: Reviewed existing conditions and provided comments to Staff for the Great Seneca Plan.

Maren Hill, Planner III, presented a multi-media presentation regarding existing conditions of the Great Seneca Plan. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated January 5, 2023.

The Great Seneca Plan was initiated to examine existing staging requirements for the area, incorporate recent countywide initiatives and policies, and address emerging trends and new planned infrastructure in the Plan area. Staff are currently in the visioning and analysis phase of the plan, which follows the approval of the Scope of Work and precedes the development of preliminary recommendations.

The Great Seneca Plan: Connecting Life and Science (Great Seneca Plan) is an update to the 2010 Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan (2010 Plan) and follows the 2021 Great Seneca Science Corridor Minor Master Plan Amendment (2021 Amendment). The 2021 Amendment recommended initiating a new comprehensive amendment to evaluate trends and conditions and develop recommendations to align the vision, recommendations, and overall staging requirements for the area with the county's adopted plans, policies, and priorities.

Ms. Hill gave an overview of the preliminary work on the Great Seneca Plan which began in February 2022, and the Scope of Work for the Great Seneca Plan was presented to the Planning Board in May 2022. The scope of work is expected to run until Spring 2023. Since approval of the Scope of Work, staff have advanced community outreach and engagement, evaluated existing conditions, and initiated the visioning and analysis phase of the Plan. A Working draft is expected in Summer 2023.

The Plan is in the heart of the I-270 corridor and borders the Intercounty Connector (ICC). The Eastern side of the Plan area, which includes the Life Science center, will be the main focus as it is the area where the most change has occurred.

Lisa Govoni, Planner IV, continued with the presentation and gave an overview on the housing types within the plan area. Over 60 percent of the housing structures are multifamily units in the plan area. Ms. Govoni noted the housing within the Plan area is one of the most affordable in the County, and the Plan has been very successful at building and providing.

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Commissioner Hill asked if the multifamily units have created a market based rental rate and Ms. Govoni offered responses.

Bilal Ali, Real Estate Market Researcher, gave an overview of the employment and real estate within the Plan area. Currently, the largest employers are federal institutions and labs. Private employment within the area saw a doubling of number employed between 2010 and 2021. While not all office buildings in the Plan Area are life sciences uses, it is life sciences development that is driving divergent trends in rents and vacancy between the Plan Area and the Submarket and County.

The Board asked Mr. Ali questions regarding clarification on the cap on the viability of office-to-lab conversions, and if there was a venture capital funding zone.

Mr. Ali offered comments and responses.

Aaron Savage, Planner II, gave an overview of the urban design for the plan area, and discussed the five districts within the Science Center which included: LSC North, LSC South, LSC Central, LSC West, and LSC Belward.

Chuck Kines, Planner Coordinator, gave an overview of the existing parks and the approach for park planning within the Plan area. Mr. Kines noted the few Commission Parks within the Plan area, and the Parks are either undeveloped or underdeveloped. Mr. Kines also discussed Parks is using energized public spaces analysis tool to determine supply, demand, and experience improvement areas for the Plan Area. The preliminary level of service findings have shown there is a need for rectangular athletic fields, dog parks, pickle ball courts, community gardens, skate parks, cricket fields, and volleyball quarts.

Alex Rixley, Planner IV, gave an overview of the existing transportation and pedestrian experiences within the Plan area, which is generally characterized by wide long roadways. Mr. Rixley noted that there is currently only one protected crossing within the 275-acre Plan area, and more than 20,000 people commute to the Life Sciences Center. Mr. Rixley also highlighted the transit and bicycle connectivity in or near the Plan area.

Steve Findley, Planner IV, gave an overview of the environmental issues within the area including water quality, air quality, climate change, human health, and environmental justice.

Ms. Hill continued with the presentation by speaking on the Education within the Plan area. Ms. Hill noted the school boundaries within the Plan area will change in the future due to the new addition of the Crown High School, and the free and reduced meal service is very different between the schools. Reserved sites for future schools will also be added as well.

Commissioner Hill offered comments regarding the amount of reserved school sites not yet utilized and Ms. Hill offered comments and responses.

Ms. Hill emphasized the strategy for community engagement has been to meet people where they are whether it be, physically, in the community, and informationally.

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Pamela Nkwantabisah, Intern, gave an overview regarding the virtual and in person visioning for the project thus far, and spoke about the public's suggestions and recommendations.

Commissioner Hill offered comments of concern regarding patience with development of the area and responding to the demand for housing may damage long term effects on the synergy between housing and office space.

Ms. Hill offered comments and responses to Commissioner Hill.

Item 7. Falkland North: Preliminary Plan Amendment No. 12007056B (Public Hearing)

CR 3.0: C 0.75, R 3.0, H 145 T; 9.7 acres; Request to extend the approved Preliminary Plan validity period by two (2) years per Section 50.4.2.H. of the Subdivision Ordinance; located on the northeast quadrant of the intersection of 16th Street and East-West Highway; 2022 Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions

K. Mencarini

BOARD ACTION

Motion: Branson/Hill

Vote: 5-0

Other:

Action: Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Preliminary Plan Amendment No. 12007056B 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.

Katherine Mencarini, Multimodal Transportation Planner III, presented a multi-media presentation regarding the Falkland North preliminary plan amendments. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated January 9, 2023.

The Subject Property is located in the northeast quadrant of the intersection of 16th Street and East-West Highway (MD 410) at the edge of the Silver Spring Central Business District. The adjacent uses consist primarily of multi-family residential dwellings, including low-rise, walk-up garden apartments and high-rise buildings, but also include an office building, single-story retail uses, and the CSX, Metro, and future Purple Line tracks to the northeast. The Site is within walking distance of the Silver Spring Metro and MARC commuter rail stations, as well as the future Transit Center and Capital Crescent Trail.

The Planning Board approved Preliminary Plan 12007056A to create one lot for up to 1,250 dwelling units and up to 120,000 square feet of non-residential uses (retail, restaurant or service) and one outlot for future dedication to the Purple Line. The preliminary plan validity period for this project expired October 28, 2022, however the Applicant requested and submitted an extension, accepted on September 22, 2022.

Preliminary Plan Amendment No. 12007056B requests extending the preliminary plan validity period an additional two years to October 28, 2024, to align with the Adequate Public Facilities (APF) validity period for the project.

The extension will allow Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) Maryland Transit Authority (MTA) to complete Purple Line construction on the site and subsequently release the associated temporary construction easement held by MDOT MTA. MDOT MTA indicated in a letter to the Property owner that the agency still needs a portion of the Subject Site for a Temporary Construction Area of the Purple Line light rail public transit project.

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Friends of Sligo Creek noted two trees that were approved to be transplanted were removed, the Applicant was notified, and as conditioned the Forest Conservation Plan (FCP) must be updated prior to recording the plat.

Item 10. Bill 33-22, Capital Improvements Program – Affordable Housing Feasibility Study – Required

Bill 33-22 would require the County Executive to submit an affordable housing feasibility study to the Council for certain capital projects, establish a review process for the Council to determine project feasibility for colocation of affordable housing and generally amend County law regarding the analysis of capital projects.

Staff Recommendation: Transmit comments to the County Council

L. Govoni/N. Holdzkom

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Other:

Action: Approved staff recommendation by consensus for approval to transmit comments to the County Council, as stated in a transmittal letter to be drafted at a later date.

Lisa Govoni, Planner IV and Nicholas Holdzkom, Planner III, presented a multi-media presentation regarding Bill 33-22, Capital Improvements Program – Affordable Housing Feasibility Study. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated.

Mr. Holdzkom explained that Bill 33-22 would require the County Executive to submit an affordable housing feasibility study to the Council for certain capital projects, establish a review process for the Council to determine project feasibility for co-location of affordable housing and generally amend County law regarding the analysis of capital projects.

Ms. Govoni gave an overview of the justification for introduction of Bill 33-22. Specifically, Bill 33-22 would require the County Executive to submit an affordable housing feasibility study prior to facility planning, development of the program of requirements, site selection, or land acquisition of any capital project.

This bill seeks to strengthen the evaluation of co-location of affordable housing and county facilities throughout the county, and to make the process of evaluating a project for co-location of affordable housing and County facilities more transparent between the Executive branch and the County Council. Bill 33-22 also adds two definitions regarding affordable housing feasibility study and applicable capital improvement, and also updates the requirements for the feasibility study.

If the Council approves feasibility analysis, the Department of General Services (DGS) moves forward with its normal capital project development process. If the Council disapproves feasibility analysis, Council can direct the Executive Branch to perform additional analysis and come back with a capital project plan that includes co-location. The Council can also approve the Executive's plan for co-location, waive any requirements, or agree with the Executive Branch that housing is not feasible for a certain project.

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Bill 33-22 also includes a waiver provision if the Council determines the project would result in a loss of a site, require emergency appropriation or experience further delay not in the best interest of the public.

Planning does support the intent of Bill 33-22, but would like clarification regarding the relationship between the feasibility study and housing assessment.

Commissioner Hill offered comments regarding the co-location site possibilities including police stations and fire stations not being optimal location sites, and recommended taking out language for any examples of locations. Vice Chair noted agreement with Commissioner Hill.

Commissioners Branson and Pinero offered comments regarding potentially limiting possible co-location sites for public facilities if language was eliminated.

Acting Director Stern recommended highlighting the issues with Council staff regarding specifying public facilities, threshold of capital projects, and clarifying relationship between the feasibility study and housing assessment during the Council work session.

The Board agreed by consensus to raise the three issues outlined by Acting Director Stern to Council staff during the upcoming Council work session.

Item 11. CLOSED SESSION

According to MD ANN Code, General Provisions Article, §3-305(b)(7), to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice; and (8) consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation. Topic: Potential litigation.

D. Borden/B. Rupert

BOARD ACTION

Motion: Hill/Branson

Vote: 5-0

Other:

Action: Discussion held. See the open session disclosure statement in Summary.

Item 8. Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan Draft Design Guidelines Briefing

Present draft Design Guidelines for the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan and receive comment.

A. Margolies

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Other:

Action: Received briefing followed by discussion.

Atara Margolies, Planner III, presented a multi-media presentation regarding the draft Design Guidelines of the Silver Spring and Adjacent Communities Plan. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated January 12, 2023.

In June 2022, the County Council approved and M-NCPPC adopted the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan. To accompany the Plan, staff is developing Design Guidelines for development of new buildings, parks, and public spaces in the Plan area.

Ms. Margolies gave a brief overview of the timeline for the draft Design Guidelines as well as who will ultimately use the Design Guidelines which included: property owners/applicants, the Design Advisory Panel (DAP), regulatory teams reviewing applications, community members, and the Planning Board.

The Design Guidelines will have three main sections consisting of the Introduction, Plan-Wide Guidelines, and District Guidelines, and each of the sections will have subsections as well.

The Design Guidelines are intended to be more flexible than the Sector Plan and can be revised by the Planning Board without reopening the plan. The Guidelines are intended to accompany and clarify the Sector Plan, but also cannot address every single site condition with the plan area. Development projects will be evaluated based on context and site conditions, and the Guidelines will provide predictability for Applicants without precluding creativity.

Ms. Margolies briefed the Board on the different subsections of the Plan-Wide Guidelines which included: focus on the Active Zone of each street type, recommended implementation of the Green Loop, recommendations and examples to reduce the heat island effect, and basic building block components.

Christina Sasaki, Planner Coordinator, provided an overview of how the Parks and Public Spaces section within the Design Guidelines will be guided by the Energized Public Spaces Design Guidelines. The Energized Public Spaces Design Guidelines content will be organized into three major chapters including: Overall Design Principles (which will include access and connectivity, sense of community, and urban ecology), Areawide Guidelines, and Design Elements by Park.

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Ms. Sasaki also listed the five Design Elements including: function/service area, main program, key features, facility placement, and size. Each of the Design Elements will be incorporated into each proposed public space. Ms. Sasaki provided South Silver Spring Park and Downtown North as examples in which the Design Elements were incorporated.

Ms. Margolies continued with the presentation by discussing the Design Guidelines for Districts which include site-specific guidelines regarding access, orientation, frontages, key view corridors, pedestrian connections, and adjacencies. Two sites, the Bonifant-Dixon Garage and Cameron Garage, were highlighted as potential opportunity sites for redevelopment and potential illustrative visions were shown.

Lastly, Ms. Margolies gave an update regarding community engagement. To date, discussions have been had during the Sector Plan process about the Design Guidelines, had a presentation with National Association for Industrial and Office Parks (NAIOP), will be presenting to the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee, sent an E-letter to Silver Spring Community, and will be inviting public comment on January 26, 2022.

The Board asked questions regarding contact with the Silver Spring Advisory Board, the minimum size threshold for Parks/Open Space within the plan area, and where people are parking within the Downtown Silver Spring area.

The Board also offered comments regarding reintroducing on street parking in Downtown Silver Spring, and recommended having the Regional Services Center advertise for public comment as well.

Ms. Margolies and Division Chief of Downcounty Planning, Elza Hisel-McCoy offered comments and responses to the Board's questions and comments, specifically regarding the onstreet parking and ample opportunities for public engagement.

Item 9. Warrior Canine Connection Headquarters, Mandatory Referral No. MR2023001 (Public Hearing)

Renovation of the existing dairy barn to function as an operational headquarters complete with kennels and office space. Located at 14934 Schaeffer Road, Boyds, MD 20841; 17 acres of the 2,304-acre property; AR zone; 1980 Preservation of Agricultural & Rural Open Space Master Plan. *Staff Recommendations: Approval of Mandatory Referral with recommendations*
J. Penn

BOARD ACTION

Motion: Branson/Presley

Vote: 5-0

Other:

Action: Approved staff recommendation for approval to transmit comments including amendments to Maryland Department of Natural Resources and Warrior Canine Connection, as stated in a transmittal letter to be drafted at a later date.

Mark Beall, Zoning Planner IV, presented a multi-media presentation regarding the Warrior Canine Connection Headquarters. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated January 6, 2023.

The Warrior Canine Connection (WCC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that utilizes a Mission Based Trauma Recovery model to help recovering Warriors reconnect with life, their families, their communities, and each other through learning to train service dogs for their fellow Veterans.

In partnership with Montgomery County, the State of Maryland, and countless individual and corporate supporters, WCC is creating a premier center where Veterans and Military Family Members can come to heal from the visible and invisible wounds of war. The new WCC Healing Headquarters facility will provide space for the organization's unique recovery program, as well as critical facilities needed to breed, train and partner future service dogs.

The Application proposes to renovate and expand the existing dairy barn to function as an operational headquarters complete with kennels and office space. The project will also include an expansion and repaving of the existing parking lot as well as the repaving of the Property's nearly one-half mile long driveway.

Rick Yount, Warrior Canine Connection, offered comments to the Board regarding the project.

Commissioner Hill offered comments and asked questions regarding the tree cover/planting, and recommended the location of the tree cover/planting be prioritized to consist mainly around the barn area rather than the stream buffer.

Patrick Butler, Division Chief of Upcounty Planning, offered comments and responses regarding the tree cover/planting location.

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Both Planning staff and Mr. Yount agreed to recommended amendment regarding tree cover/planting around the barn area.