

Montgomery County Planning Board

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED
MINUTES AND SUMMARY

SUMMARY

Thursday, March 30, 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, March 30, 2023, beginning at 9:04 a.m. and adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Present were Chair Jeff Zyontz, Vice Chair Roberto Piñero, and Commissioners Shawn Bartley, James Hedrick, and Mitra Pedoeem.

Items 1 through 4, Item 6, and Item 7 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 12:13 p.m. to discuss Item 8 on the motion of Commissioner Hedrick, seconded by Vice Chair Piñero with Chair Zyontz, Vice Chair Piñero, and Commissioners Bartley, Hedrick, and Pedoeem 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 Principal Counsel Emily Vaias; Senior Counsel Matthew Mills; Senior Counsel Megan Chung; Associate Counsel Allison Myers; Montgomery Parks Director Mike Riley; Montgomery Parks Deputy Director of Administration Miti Figueredo; Division Chief of Park Planning and Stewardship Darren Flusche; and Technical Writer Rachel Roehrich of the Office of General Counsel.

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

The Closed Session meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m. and the Planning Board reconvened in the auditorium and via video conference to return to open session at 1:03 p.m. to discuss Items 9 through 11 as reported in the attached Minutes.

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The Planning Board recessed for dinner at 4:46 p.m. and reconvened in the auditorium and via video conference at 5:41 p.m. to discuss Item 12 as reported in the attached Minutes.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned 8:41 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Planning Board will be held on Thursday, April 13, 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

1. Larsen Property Subdivision Plan No. 620230030 – MCPB No. 23-025

BOARD ACTION

Motion: Hedrick/Bartley
Vote: 3-0-2
Other: Chair Zyontz and Commissioner Pedoeem abstained.
Action: Adopted the Resolution cited above, as submitted.

2. Seneca Place Site Plan No. 81982008A – MCPB No. 23-026

BOARD ACTION

Motion: Bartley/Hedrick
Vote: 3-0-2
Other: Vice Chair Piñero and Commissioner Pedoeem abstained.
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)

Subdivision Plat No. 220210400, Bradley Farms

RE-2 zone; 4 lots; located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Persimmon Tree Road and Bradley Boulevard; 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

Subdivision Plat No. 220230450, Chevy Chase, Section 4-D

R-60 zone; 3 lots; located on the north side of East-West Highway (MD 410), 350 feet west of Edgevale Street; Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

Subdivision Plat No. 220230510, Fawcett Farms

R-200 zone; 2 lots; located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Rock Run Drive and Kingsgate Road; 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

Subdivision Plat No. 220230460, Brooke Farm

AR zone; 1 lot; located on the north side of Olney-Laytonsville Road (MD 108), approximately 2,500 feet west of Olney Mill Road; Olney Master Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

Subdivision Plat No. 220230720, Bai-Nola Woods

R-200 zone; 1 lot; located on the north side of Nolan Drive, 1,100 feet west of Travilah Road; 2002 Potomac Subregion Master Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

BOARD ACTION

Motion: Piñero/Hedrick

Vote: 5-0

Other:

Action: Approved staff recommendation for approval of Record Plats cited above.

Item 3. Regulatory Extension Requests (Public Hearing)

Century, Regulatory Review Extension Request No. 3 - Request to extend the regulatory review period from March 30, 2023 to June 30, 2023.

- A. Sketch Plan No. 32016002A
- B. Preliminary Plan No. 12002095C
- C. Site Plan No. 82003007F

Applications to replace two previously approved office buildings and one previously approved hotel with one new 13-story office building, two new eight-story hotel buildings (154 keys), and two new six-story multi-family/retail buildings (233 units). Located at 20301 Century Boulevard, northeast of Cloverleaf Center; 52 acres; CR-2.0, C-1.25, R-1.0, H-145T in the Germantown Transit Mixed Use Overlay Zone; 2009 Germantown Employment Area Sector Plan and 2010 Germantown Urban Design Guidelines.

Staff Recommendation: Approval of the Extension

J. Server

Bucklodge Tract, Preliminary Plan No. 11989032A, Regulatory Extension Request No. 3 - Request to extend the regulatory review period by three months until July 11, 2023.

Application to subdivide two existing platted lots and three existing platted outlots into four buildable lots for up to four buildings with a total of 66,667 SF of light industrial uses; located on Buck Ridge Court, north of Bucklodge Road; 22 acres; IM zone and Rural zone; 1985 Approved and Adopted Boyds Master Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval of the Extension

J. Server

BOARD ACTION

Motion: Pedoeem/Hedrick

Vote: 5-0

Other:

Action: Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Regulatory Extension Requests cited above.

Item 4. FY24 Operating Budget Discussion on the County Executive Recommendation

J. Kroll/T. Stern/N. Steen

BOARD ACTION

Motion: Piñero/Pedoeem

Vote: 5-0

Other:

Action: Approved staff's recommendation for non-recommended budget cuts memo to be transmitted to the County Council in a transmittal letter to be drafted at a later time.

John Kroll, Corporate Budget Director, offered a brief overview and multi-media presentation regarding the County Executive's recommendation for the FY24 Operating Budget. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated March 24, 2023.

On March 15th, Montgomery County Executive Elrich released his recommended budget. That budget for the Montgomery County portion of the Commission included reductions from the proposed budget for both the Administration and Park Funds of \$6,901,070, or 4.52%. After subtracting savings identified in the reclassification marker, the remaining amount of \$6,250,997 was prorated to various departments. Detailed lists and descriptions of the proposed non-recommended reductions, by department, were also provided within the Staff Report.

The Board asked questions regarding potential loss in staff positions and limits to critical programs due to budget cuts, purchase of a SIEM tool, and plan for implementation of Thrive 2050 if budget funding is not available.

The Board also offered comments regarding the different tier recommendations to address the budget reductions as well as concerns for personnel hiring delays due to budget cuts.

Acting Planning Director Tanya Stern, Executive Director Asuntha Chiang-Smith, and Planning Board Chair Jeff Zyontz offered comments regarding the potential impacts of the budget cuts with regard to the Planning Department, Central Administrative Services, and the Commissioner's Office.

Item 5. Amherst Avenue Separated Bike Lanes Mandatory Referrals (Public Hearing)
Staff Recommendation: Approval and transmit comments to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation
E. Glazier

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Other:

Action: POSTPONED.

Item 6. Belward Campus, Parcel A & Belward Campus Drive Phase II: Site Plan No. 820220250 and Johns Hopkins Medical Office & Surgery Center at Belward: Final Forest Conservation Plan No. F20230020 (Public Hearing)

A. Site Plan No. 820220250 - Request for approval to construct multiple buildings for biotechnology offices and related uses with up to 757,000 square feet of gross floor area; associated structured parking garages; open space improvements; and related amenities. The Phase II Site Plan is limited to the northern portion of the 107-acre Overall Site and includes future Parcel A and future Belward Campus Drive. Located within the Life Sciences Center West and Belward District of the 2010 Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan; located at 9951 Key West Avenue, generally east of Muddy Branch Road, south of Great Seneca Highway (MD 119) and the Mission Hills Subdivision, and north of Darnestown Road (MD 28); 66.5-acres of land in the LSC-1.0, H-150T Zone.

B. Final Forest Conservation Plan No. F20230020 - Request for approval to make changes to the Final Forest Conservation Plan including modifying forest conservation areas and additional impacts to specimen trees. The existing approval for the 11.18-acre Medical Office Center is tied to the Final Forest Conservation Plan for the entire 107-acre Belward Site. Therefore, the amendment is intended to accommodate the development proposed in Site Plan No. 820220250 (Belward Campus – Parcel A and Belward Campus Drive Phase II) for the portion of the Property north of and including future Belward Campus Drive, as well as anticipated phased site plans north of future Belward Campus Drive. Located within the 2010 Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan for the Belward District within the Life Sciences Center; generally bounded by Darnestown Road/Key West Avenue (MD 28) to the south, Muddy Branch Road to the west, the Mission Hills subdivision to the north, and the Johns Hopkins Belward Research Campus to the east; approximately 11.18-acre portion of the approximately 107-acre Overall Site that is zoned LSC-1.0 H-150T.

Staff Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

T. Graham

A. BOARD ACTION

Motion: Hedrick/Piñero

Vote: 5-0

Other:

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

B. BOARD ACTION

Motion: Hedrick/Piñero

Vote: 5-0

Other:

Action: Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Final Forest Conservation 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.

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Carrie Sanders, Chief of Midcounty Planning, offered a brief overview of the background and context of the project.

Tamika Graham, Planner III, offered a multi-media presentation regarding Belward Campus, Parcel A and Belward Campus Drive Phase II. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated March 20, 2023.

The Applicant, Trammell Crow Company (TCC), is seeking approval of Site Plan No. 820220250, which is limited to the 66.5 acres of the northern portion of the 107-acre Overall Site. This Site Plan is the subject of a ground lease between the Trammell Crow Company and the Property Owner Johns Hopkins University, which includes future Parcel A, Block C of the Johns Hopkins University Belward Campus subdivision, and Belward Campus Drive.

Johns Hopkins University (JHU), also an Applicant, is seeking approval of Final Forest Conservation Plan (FFCP) No. F20230020, which encompasses the entire 107 acres referenced as the Belward Tract or Overall Site. The Final Forest Conservation Plan proposes 25.95 acres of forest clearing, 3.85 acres retained, a mitigation requirement of 36.70 acres, and 7.33 acres of forest plantings in the 200-foot-wide Mission Hills Preserve. The purpose of JHU's FFCP amendment is to modify the previously approved FFCP for the Overall Site to accommodate TCC's proposed development in their Site Plan application.

Ms. Graham stated the Application proposes the construction of three buildings for research and development, biotechnology offices, and related labs and a commercial pavilion that totals up to 757,000 square feet of gross floor area (GFA) that is above grade. The buildings will be supported by three structured parking garages and on-street parking for the commercial use.

A new internal network of private and public roads, including Belward Campus Drive, which bisects the Overall Site into northern and southern portions will also be constructed. To accompany the previously approved 200-foot-wide Mission Hills Preserve, between the Site and the Mission Hills community to the north, the Site Plan proposes to construct 6.86 acres in this phase towards the 14-acre master-planned Muddy Branch Park (to be a privately owned public space). The remainder of the Park will be constructed in future phases. The Site Plan will also provide a minimum of 0.54 acres (with security fence) or up to 1.06 acres (without security fence) for the Urban Green that is connected to Muddy Branch Park via an internal system of pathways and separated bicycle facilities. The Project will construct a portion of the master Planned Life Sciences Loop (LSC) Trail.

Natasha Fahim, Planner III, gave an overview of the architectural elements for the first three buildings as well as the parking garage screening.

Ms. Graham then discussed the FFCP and noted a revised variance request to remove eight trees for construction of roads, sidewalks, and park facilities, as well as four trees that will be impacted but retained.

Lastly, Ms. Graham noted revisions to Conditions 9 and 16.q.

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Jeremy Lee (Individual) offered testimony in support of the project.

Paula Ross (Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce) offered testimony in support of the project.

Roddy Moscoso (Individual) and resident of the Mission Hills neighborhood, offered testimony in support of the project as well as requests regarding the timing of installation for the buffer between the project and Mission Hills and limiting heavy equipment usage to daylight hours with no construction on weekends.

Eric Fisher of Trammell Crow Company (The Applicant) offered comments and a multi-media presentation regarding a brief overview of the company and project. Mr. Fisher further discussed conditions recommended by staff and requested modifications to Conditions 3.h.b regarding the size of the athletic fields, 9.d regarding phasing of improvements, and 16.h.c regarding screening for the parking garage facades.

Phillip Hummel of Miles and Stockbridge offered comments on behalf of Applicant, Johns Hopkins University, regarding the FFCP and stated that the staff's proposed conditions for approval are acceptable.

The Board asked questions regarding the architecture of the parking structures, shape of the commercial pavilion, publicly accessible restrooms, size of the athletic fields, community access to the parks, circulation and access point locations throughout the site, fencing surrounding the Urban Green, potential gating of the site, and requirements for the 18 acres of land for offsite forest planting.

Staff offered comments and responses to the Board's questions.

Bill Brewer of Trammel Crow Company offered comments and responses regarding the garage heights, plantings to enhance screening, park improvements and size of fields, and publicly accessible restrooms for park patrons.

Christopher Ruhlen of Lerch, Early and Brewer offered comments regarding the required forest conservation plantings within the Mission Hills buffer.

Eric Fisher of Trammell Crow Company offered comments regarding the invisible fence surrounding the Urban Green and potential gating of site.

The Board held further discussion regarding the revisions to the proposed conditions requested by the Applicant. Ultimately, the Board determined all conditions would remain as initially introduced by staff with an amendment to add a new Condition 3.j regarding the provision of publicly accessible restrooms.

Item 7. Free Rein Solar Farm, Final Forest Conservation Plan No. CU202305 and Conditional Use No. CU202305 (Public Hearing)

A. Final Forest Conservation Plan No. CU202305

B. Conditional Use No. CU202305: Request to transmit comments to the Hearing Examiner on a proposed Conditional Use for a Solar Collection System pursuant to the 2014 Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance Sections 59.3.7.2.B.2 (Specific Conditions) and 59.7.3.1 (General Conditions) at 5011 Riggs Road, Gaithersburg; AR Zone.

Staff Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

M. Beall

A. BOARD ACTION

Motion: Hedrick/Piñero

Vote: 5-0

Other:

Action: Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Final Forest Conservation 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. BOARD ACTION

Motion: Hedrick/Piñero

Vote: 5-0

Other:

Action: Approved staff recommendation for approval to transmit comments to the Hearing Examiner for Conditional Use No. CU202305, as stated in a transmittal letter to be prepared at a later date.

Mark Beall, Zoning Planner IV, offered a multi-media presentation regarding Free Rein Solar Farm. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated March 20, 2023.

The Applicant proposes to construct a 2-megawatt Solar Collection System on a 4.92-acre portion of the 82.4-acre Property. The project will consist of solar arrays, fencing around the compound, associated landscaping and access drive from the barns to the solar array compound. Once constructed, there will be no on-site personnel and no traffic other than for the occasional maintenance of the facility.

The proposed solar collection system is located on Riggs Road, approximately 1,000 feet westbound from the intersection of Zion Road and Riggs Road, and the Applicant has obtained PEPCO approval to tie into their grid system with the proposed Solar Collection System. The Applicant has also submitted a Fire Department Access Plan with the Department of Permitting Services and is waiting for approval of the plan.

The Board asked questions regarding potential sound impacts from the solar panels, construction timeline, and impact to the surrounding community.

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Soo Lee-Cho of Bregman, Berbert, and Schwartz offered comments on behalf of the Applicant regarding the project.

Mike Chapman of Free Rein Solar, LLC and Co-Owner of Free Rein Equestrian Farm offered comments and responses regarding noise impacts and construction timeline.

Item 8. 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: Status of litigation.

E.Vaias/M.Mills/B.Rupert

BOARD ACTION

Motion: **Hedrick/Piñero**

Vote: **5-0**

Other:

Action: **See the open session disclosure statement in Summary Section.**

Item 9. 9801 Georgia Avenue, Sketch Plan No. 320230020 (Public Hearing)

Request for a mixed-use building up to 78 feet in height; comprised of up to 460,000 square feet, with 455,000 square feet of residential development (including 15% MPDUs) and 5,000 square feet of commercial development, using the Optional Method of development; On approximately 3.97 acres zoned CRT-2.5 C-2.5 R-2.5 H-120; Within the 2020 Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Master Plan area.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions

A. Lindsey

BOARD ACTION

Motion: Pedoeem/Piñero

Vote: 4-0-1

Other: Commissioner Bartley Abstained.

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

Amy Lindsey, Planner III, offered a multi-media presentation regarding 9801 Georgia Avenue. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated March 20, 2023.

The Applicant proposes to redevelop 9801 Georgia Avenue (Forest Glen Medical Center) into a mixed-use building. The Subject Property, which is currently developed with a medical office building and associated surface parking lot, is located at the intersection of Forest Glen Road and Georgia Avenue in the Forest Glen area. The Property is located approximately 800 feet north of the Georgia Avenue interchange of I-495, Capital Beltway, approximately 500 feet east of the Forest Glen Metro Station, and approximately 1500 feet to the west of Holy Cross Hospital.

The Subject Property has a number of constraints and requirements which both shape and limit development. There is approximately 20 feet of slope across the Property, from west to east, as well as easements for a storm drain and a sewer line. The Property has three frontages (Georgia Avenue, Forest Glen Road, and Woodland Drive). Additionally, the proposed development must incorporate stormwater management for the State Highway Administration's Georgia Avenue project, as well as the new entrance to the Forest Glen Metro Station. The Sector Plan requirements for a half to one acre "civic green" open space, a drop-off location for Metro users, environmental features to off-set the loss of forest, and 35% green area are additional requirements that the development must accommodate.

Ms. Lindsey discussed the issues that will need to be resolved through subsequent reviews of the project including: the balance between the amount of parking needed for the proposed development and its proximity to the Metro station, further study of the proposed Woodland Drive entrance, further refinement of the building façades to minimize the impacts of the building mass and ensure compatibility with adjacent residential development, and further future coordination in the civic green urban park.

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Natasha Fahim, Planner III, further discussed the initial concept of the building massing and facades.

Ms. Lindsey noted staff received phone calls and correspondence from the community regarding the following concerns: traffic impacts on the neighborhood, requirement for traffic study, traffic safety, pedestrian and bicycle safety, scale and compatibility with community, amount of parking, Woodland Drive entrance, forest removal, open space, damage to existing utilities, process concerns, sector plan requirements, retail development, crime, and school impacts.

The following individuals offered testimony:

In Person:

Lawrence Baizer (Individual)

Geoffrey Irving (Adjacent Property Owner) – Offered exhibits including a PowerPoint presentation with testimony.

Dennis O'Brien (Individual) – Offered exhibits including a PowerPoint presentation with testimony.

Michael Sidorov (Individual)

Robert Gajarsa (Individual)

Nandini Arunkumar (Adjacent Property Owner) – Offered exhibits including a PowerPoint presentation with testimony.

Rajesh Rai (Adjacent Property Owner)

Robert Gregal (Individual)

Partap Verma (Individual)

John Hathway (Adjacent Property Owner)

Pablo Sztein (Adjacent Property Owner)

Abigail Sztein (Adjacent Property Owner)

Richard Simons (Individual)

Martha Jenkins (Individual) – Offered exhibits including pictures with testimony.

Deryl Davis (Individual)

Monica Bradford (Individual)

Whitney Warren (Forest Grove Citizens Association)

Phillip Jakobsberg (Individual)

Michele Rosenfeld (Forest Grove Citizens Association)

Joseph Sutton (Individual – Owner)

Virtual via Teams:

Lisa Moreau (Individual)

Andrew Mokey (Individual)

Erin Gajarsa (Individual)

Jessica Gajarsa (Individual)

Yvonne Carney (Individual)

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Erin Girard of Miles and Stockbridge, P.C. offered comments on behalf of the Applicant JLB Partners regarding the project, coordination with Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) regarding the future Metro tunnel, and upcoming projects with State Highway Administration (SHA) that may help to alleviate traffic issues.

Ms. Girard further acknowledged issues with the site regarding Metro drop offs and noted the emphasis placed on pedestrian safety, which will be reviewed further during the next stage of the process.

The Board asked questions regarding potential noticing/signage violation, clarification regarding zoning compliance with requirements for access on a residential road, potential for additional access point on Georgia Avenue, possible reduction in number of parking spaces, increased traffic impacts, removal of current forest, potential for increased building height along Georgia Avenue, and protection of cherry trees located on the site.

Staff offered comments and responses to the Board's questions.

Graham Brock of JLB Partners offered comments regarding balancing traffic issues, developing housing on top of Metro, and parking needs.

Nick Driban of Lenhart Traffic Consulting, from Applicant's team, offered further comments regarding potential access points to the site specifically on Georgia Avenue.

Staff offered the following additions and amendments to conditions, which were accepted by the Board:

- Amend Condition 7 by striking "along Woodland Drive";
- Add a new Condition 14 stating that vehicular access on Georgia Avenue is preferred, but that vehicular access may be permitted on Woodland Avenue at time of Preliminary Plan review based on operational study of the access to the site;
- Add a condition to require the Applicant to make efforts to save or relocate the existing cherry trees on Forest Glen Road.

Item 10. Poplar Grove, Preliminary Plan Amendment No. 12019004B (Public Hearing)

Application to amend Conditions 2, 4, and 15 to extend the Preliminary Plan validity period by 3.5 years to match the existing APF validity period and to adjust the validity period phasing schedule; located on the east side of Century Boulevard, between Father Hurley Boulevard and the future Dorsey Mill Road; 27.15 acres; CR-2.0, C-1.75, R-1.0, H-145T zone and Germantown Transit Mixed-Use Overlay Zone; 2009 Germantown Employment Area Sector Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Request Continuance of Hearing

J. Server

BOARD ACTION

Motion: Piñero/Hedrick

Vote: 5-0

Other:

Action: Approved Staff recommendation to approve Continuance request.

Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated March 17, 2023.

Patrick Butler offered comments regarding the lack of maintenance with the onsite cemetery and requested the Board continue the hearing in order to give staff time to work with the Applicant regarding maintenance.

Heather Dlhopsky of Wire Gill, LLP offered comments on behalf of the Applicant regarding the project and cemetery.

Nicole Totah, the Applicant, asked questions regarding potential extension to address cemetery issues.

The Board voted to continue the hearing to a future date not yet determined and indicated that, once scheduled, notice would be provided in advance of the continued hearing date.

Item 11. Addition to Ray's Adventure, Preliminary/Final Forest Conservation No. 120200030 and Preliminary Plan No. 120200030 (Public Hearing)

Request to create two lots for two single-family detached dwelling units in the R-200 zone; 1.56 acres; located at 24320 Woodfield Road; 2006 Damascus Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions

P. Estes

BOARD ACTION

Motion: Pedoeem/Hedrick

Vote: 5-0

Other:

Action: Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Preliminary/Final Forest Conservation No. 120200030 and Preliminary Plan No. 120200030 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.

Phillip Estes, Planner III, offered a multi-media presentation regarding Addition to Ray's Adventure. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated March 18, 2023.

The Subject Property is located at 24320 Woodfield Road about 320 feet southwest of Log House Road in the Town Neighborhood Transition Area of the *2006 Damascus Master Plan*. The vicinity is developed predominantly with single-family detached dwelling units with a limited number of townhomes. Woodfield Elementary School is located about 0.2 miles to the southeast. Currently, the Property consists of 1.56 acres of land improved with one single-family detached dwelling unit. According to public records, the dwelling unit was built in 1964.

The Applicant proposes to create one 36,588 square foot lot and one 31,438 square foot lot to construct one single-family detached unit on each lot in the R-200 zone. The Application will also provide an 11-foot wide side path connection between Bush Hill Road and Woodfield Road.

Michele Rosenfeld of The Law Office of Michele Rosenfeld, LLC offered comments on behalf of the Applicant and agreement with staff's conditions.

Item 12. Briefing and Public Hearing: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project

Staff Recommendation: APPROVE the configuration of two opposing drive lanes along Little Falls Parkway between Arlington Road and Dorset Avenue, with future study of repurposing removed travel lanes.

A. Tsai

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Other:

Action: Received briefing followed by public testimony.

Darren Flusche, Division Chief of Park Planning and Stewardship, introduced the Montgomery Parks team and gave an overview of the presentation prepared for the Planning Board.

Andrew Tsai, P.E., Engineer, Park Development Division, offered a multi-media presentation regarding the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project. Further information can be found in the Staff Report dated March 24, 2023.

Little Falls Parkway (Parkway) is owned by Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, which includes Montgomery Parks. The Parkway was originally constructed in the 1960's to provide access to Little Falls Stream Valley Park and connectivity between MD 190 (River Road), MD 191 (Bradley Boulevard), MD 396 (Massachusetts Avenue), and residential communities in the area.

The Parkway was originally built with a two-lane cross section (opposing drive lanes) at its northern terminus at Fairfax Road and between MD 190 and MD 396, with a four-lane cross section (two drive lanes northbound, two drive lanes southbound, with a grass median separation) between Arlington Road and MD 190.

Following a fatal crash at the crossing in October 2016, Montgomery Parks implemented a Vision Zero-based interim road diet in January of 2017 along Little Falls Parkway to increase safety for trail users crossing the roadway. The interim road diet reduced the cross-section of Little Falls Parkway from four lanes to two lanes between Arlington Road and Hillandale Road, by closing the outside travel lane in each direction approaching the trail crossing. The travel lanes were closed off with chains and flexible bollards. The speed limit was also reduced to 25 mph. The grass median dividing the northbound and southbound travel lanes remained.

Parks presented a facility plan recommendation to the Planning Board in June 2019 to build upon the interim road diet with a permanent two-lane Parkway cross section from Arlington Road to Hillandale Road. The Planning Board voted to ask Parks to study re-alignment of the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) crossing to the intersection of the Parkway and Arlington Road, with a pedestrian signal.

In September 2019, the Planning Board voted to delay the study of re-alignment of the CCT crossing and maintain the existing interim trail crossing with road diet. The Board also asked Parks

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to install a raised crosswalk at the CCT crossing, which was subsequently installed in summer 2020.

The Phase II pilot project re-alignment was completed in November 2022 and shifted all vehicles to the previous two northbound travel lanes, providing a single lane of travel in each direction with no median separation between Arlington Road and Dorset Avenue. Additionally, speed limits were reduced from 35 mph to 25 mph. Associated modifications to intersection traffic signals and signage were also performed by MCDOT to support this effort.

Kyle Lukacs, Montgomery Parks Trail Planner, gave an overview and background of the Open Parkways Program, described the pilot program, and benefits of open parkways.

Mr. Tsai continued by discussing the traffic volume for Little Falls Parkway and presented nine different locations where traffic counts were taken. Mr. Tsai highlighted the benefits of Little Falls Parkway as well as enhancements that have been made.

Mr. Lukacs then discussed the next steps for repurposing the lanes on Little Falls Parkway and activating the Linear Pilot Park.

Andrew Frank, Chief of Park Development, discussed the common concerns which included: validity of the traffic counts and analysis, pilot project design is not optimal, the Capital Crescent Trail crossing is less safe in Phase II than Phase I, decision making authority and coordination with National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), two lane road being problematic for emergency response vehicles, and the lack of need for recreational open space within the area.

Staff recommended making the pilot project permanent, with a few modifications to further improve traffic efficiency and safety including: signal timing and intersection improvements, a new right-turn only lane from northbound Little Falls Parkway to Arlington Road, pavement removal, additional safety improvements at CCT crossing, and repurposing of drive lanes.

The following individuals offered testimony:

In Person:

Debbie Heller (Town of Somerset, Town Council)

David Johnson (Individual)

Patricia Johnson (Individual) – Offered exhibits including pictures with testimony.

Phyllis Edelman (Individual)

Bryce Geyer (Individual)

Jenny Sue Dunner (Individual)

Rebecca Hanson (Westmoreland Citizens Association)

Holly Goyert (Individual)

Carl Becker (Sumner Citizens Association) – Offered exhibits including an Adobe slide presentation with testimony.

David Kathan (Individual)

Richard Mathias (Westbard Mews Association)

Leanne Tobias (Springfield Civic Association)

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John Stewart (Individual)
Malcolm O'Hagan (Individual)
David Forman (Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights)
Charlotte Stewart (Individual)
Pete Rizik (Individual (Kenwood Citizens Association))
John Nicholson (Individual)
Alison Gillespie (Individual)
Philip Gunn (Individual)
Stephen Shapiro (Individual)
Neil Parrott (Kenwood Citizens Association) – Offered exhibits including a poster board with testimony.
Sofia Blake (Individual)
Frederick Ducca (Individual)
Lloyd Guerci (Individual)
Richard Hoye (Individual)
Anne Bowen (Individual)
Christopher Danley (Individual)
Marsha Barnes (Individual)
David Woodward (Individual)

Virtual via Teams:

Mayor Jeffrey Slavin (Town of Somerset)
Daniel Langenkamp (Sarah Langenkamp Bike Safety Memorial Fund)
Peter Gray (Washington Area Bicyclist Association)
Brian McGregor (Individual)
Andrew Hyde (Individual)
Oliver Harris (Individual)
Stacey Band (Bradley House Condo Association)
Tom Elridge (Individual)
Lynne Battle (Individual)
Sherry del Campo (Individual)

The Public Hearing adjourned at 8:41 p.m.