

GARRETT COUNTY PLANNING AND LAND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

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MINUTES

The Garrett County Planning Commission held its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, June 1, 2011, at 1:30 p.m., in the County Commissioners Meeting Room. Members and guests in attendance at the meeting included:

Troy Ellington	Jeff Messenger	William DeVore-staff
Tony Doerr	Tim Schwinabart	Angie Brant
George Brady	John Nelson-staff	Paul Durham
William Weissgerber		

1. Call to Order and Introduction of Guests – By Chairman Ellington at 1:30 pm.
2. The May minutes were unanimously approved as corrected. Brue Swift’s name was removed from the list of attendees, for the May meeting. The corrected minutes were approved by a vote of 6 to 0.
3. Report of Officers – None
4. Unfinished Business – None
5. New Business –
 - A. **Plan Maryland Workshop** -Chairman Ellington noted that there will be a Plan Maryland, open house workshop on June 2, at Frostburg State University. The Chairman and Director of Planning and Land Development, John Nelson are planning to attend; other interested parties are invited.

Mr. Nelson notes that it is important for the Planning Commission to review the Plan Maryland information that is available on line. A link to the web has been forwarded to the Commission members. Mr. Nelson feels that with the Plan, there will be a concerted effort by the State, to advocate Smart Growth by further targeting and controlling funding dollars. PFA’s have been further focused with the development of certain “Growth Print Areas”. The State has identified Growth Print Areas by use of GIS database mapping. The mapping identifies layers of State program areas, such as PFA’s, Enterprise Zones, Sustainable Communities, or Community Legacy areas. Targeted areas must have three of

these overlapping programs to qualify for Growth Print. Of all of the PFA's in the County, only the towns have been identified as Growth Print Areas. McHenry, Thayerville and the industrial parks outside of the towns, would not qualify as a first level Growth Print area. This is significant because it will affect priorities used to award future funding opportunities. This system will be used to promote growth in targeted areas and also serve to further protect resource areas for programs such as, Agland preservation and Rural Legacy. The system could lead to the long-term loss of preservation funding for the county. Mr. Nelson notes that the written comment period for the plan runs through September 1, 2011. The Director feels that written comments to the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) may be the most effective way to influence the process. Paul Durham notes that future septic systems may also be affected by the new plan.

- B. Further discussion and action on the Annual Report-** John Nelson stated that pursuant to Section 3.09, of Article 66B, the Commission is required to compile and submit an Annual Report. The report is required to include the County's growth rate within Priority Funding Areas (PFA's) and also the growth rate outside of PFA's. The report is also to include a goal of a targeted increase in the growth inside of PFA's. This report reflects the 2010 calendar year pattern of development in Garrett County. Mr. Nelson notes that Garrett County's growth within PFA's may have been one of the lowest in the State, largely due to the small land area that qualifies in the county. New lots within PFA's have amounted to 8.5 percent of the total approved in 2010. New dwelling units equaled 7.4 percent of the total, within the same time period. The Commission decided at the previous meeting that the county will establish the target goal of 10 percent growth in PFA's, through the year 2020.

The Annual Report notes the changes to the Ordinances that were made last spring, bringing the ordinances in line with the Comprehensive Plan, also changed the development patterns within the County. Also, as part of 66B, a capacity analysis must be prepared every three years by the County. Based on the changes to the ordinance, the total capacity of housing units is 102,234 possible housing units, based on existing regulatory programs. The analysis shows 6,391 housing units available within a PFA, with 95,843 outside of a PFA. Changes to the Comprehensive Plan actually reduced the dwelling unit capacity in the County, due to changes to density requirements, brought about by the reduction of land in the Rural category, which allows one unit per acre. The increased amount of land in the Agriculture Resource and Rural Resource zones that allow one unit per three acres, largely accounts for the decreased capacity. The reduction was from 126,000 units in 2006, down to 102,000 units, according to the 2011 analysis. Discussion ensued regarding the potential impacts from the loss of funding due to the limited land area that will qualify for PFA and Growth Print status.

This Annual Report is required to be approved by the Planning Commission and then filed with the County Commissioners and the MDP. The MDP will then provide comments back to the Commission.

A Commission member asked if a change could be made to the wording of the Annual Report, such as wording to address the overabundance of bears in the County. The member believes that the Commission should review the regulation of the bear population in the County, before a tragedy occurs. Mr. Nelson believes that it would not be appropriate to add such a provision into the Annual Report at this time, but the issue could be addressed separately. The Commission approved the Annual Report by a vote of 5 to 1.

The Planning Commission also approved a motion by a vote of 6 to 0 to ask representatives of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to address the Planning Commission regarding the bear population in Garrett County and to present a status report to the Commission at the next meeting. The Commission would then recommend any action, if appropriate, to the County Commissioners. Paul Durham suggested some contacts, who work in the wildlife division of DNR.

C. Miscellaneous

1. Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Appeals Cases –

a. VR-684 - an application submitted by Mary Carol Ehringer for a Variance to allow the construction of an addition to a single family home to within 26.0 feet of the front property line. The property is located at 3406 Lake Shore Drive, tax map 50, parcel 186, lots 24 and 25 and is zoned LR1. The Commission recommended by unanimous vote, to note to the applicant that the construction of the new addition would eliminate the future building potential for Lot 24.

2. Minor Subdivisions – Approved minor subdivisions, if any, have been included in the packet that was mailed to the Commission members prior to the meeting.

3. Waiver Requests–None.

4. Mining Permit Applications –None.

D. Action on Planned Residential Developments (PRD) and/or Major Subdivision plats- None

E. Next Scheduled meeting - The next regular meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, **July 6, 2011**, in the County Commissioners Meeting Room, at 1:30 pm.

F. Adjournment- 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

William J. DeVore
Zoning Administrator

