

GARRETT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND LAND MANAGEMENT

203 S. 4th St –Room 208
Oakland Maryland 21550
(301) 334-1920 FAX (301) 334-5023
E-mail: planning@garrettcountry.org

MINUTES

The Garrett County Planning Commission held its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, March 4, 2015, at 1:30 p.m., in the County Commissioners Meeting Room. Members and guests in attendance at the meeting included:

Troy Ellington	William Weissgerber	Deborah Carpenter -staff
Rick Schiff	Tony Doerr	William DeVore -staff
Tim Schwinabart	Paul Durham	Chad Fike -staff
Jeff Messenger		

1. Call to Order - by Chairman Ellington at 1:30 pm.
2. The February minutes were unanimously approved, as corrected, by a vote of 6 to 0.
3. Report of Officers – None
4. Unfinished Business – Deborah Carpenter noted that the Director’s Report was circulated in the packets.
5. New Business –The Chairman noted that there was an article in the Cumberland-Times News suggesting that one of the County Commissioners had received large campaign contributions from pro-gas drilling advocates. The Director suggested the Chairman take any questions directly to the Commissioner’s office.

A. Miscellaneous

1. **Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Appeals Cases-None**
2. **Major Subdivisions- None**
3. **Action on Planned Residential Developments (PRD’s)- None**
4. **Waiver Requests – None**
5. **State Discharge Permits-Application 15-DP-0158.** Maryland Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Service has submitted an application for the renewal of a permit

to discharge an average of 1,500,000 gallons per day of raceway and pond overflow in to Bear Creek, from a fishing rearing facility, located at 956 Fish Hatchery Road, near Accident, MD. The Commission offered no comments on the application.

- B. Discussion of Marcellus Shale Gas Advisory Group Mission Statement-** The Mission Statement from the County Commissioners was distributed by the Director of Planning, Deborah Carpenter. The Director stated that the Shale Gas Advisory Group will be charged with providing informative updates and presentations to the Planning Commission along with other duties. Also, the Director noted that there are several Bills before the State Legislature regarding the regulation of vertical drilling and horizontal fracking that could directly impact any proposed hydraulic fracking in the county.

A spatial analysis regarding the area that could be drilled vertically for natural gas has also been completed by Allegany County, using methods similar to the ones used by the Director. Allegany County attained similar figures concerning drillable areas. The Director's analysis indicated that approximately 2.8% of the land area for Garrett County would be available for vertical drilling. Allegany County's analysis found 3.6% to be available. Paul Durham, a member of the new Shale Gas Advisory Group, believes that use of 911 addressing data made the Director's analysis of areas that could be drilled for natural gas more accurate than some of the other analyses. The Chairman notes that much more of the land area would be accessible for fracking by way of horizontal drilling from the vertical drill holes. The distances of the horizontal drilling range from 4,000 to 8,000 feet.

- C. Discussion –Planning Commission's 2014 Annual Report-**Deborah Carpenter, Director of the Office of Planning and Land Management presented a draft of the Garrett County Planning Commission 2014 Annual Report. The report is in a similar format as previous years.

The Director believes that the Commission must decide whether the two goals that were approved in 2010 regarding development within Priority Funding Areas (PFAs) should still be included in the report. The first goal, to encourage ten percent of development in PFA areas, seems reasonable. However, the goal of 133 units in PFA areas, by the year 2020, may be difficult to reach given the trend in the last five years. After researching the law, reviewing the MDP guidance letter, looking at past Planning Commission minutes and talking with former Planning Director John Nelson, Carpenter believes there is no evidence that the second goal must be included. The law states the county must have a percentage goal but doesn't mention a housing unit goal. Mr. Nelson believed it was calculated in 2010, based on 10% of the projected growth number in the County Comprehensive Plan.

After evaluation, the Planning Commission determined that the Local Goal of ten percent by 2020 would continue to be Garrett County's goal toward achieving the statewide goal. However, the goal of 133 additional housing units located within PFA's goal was dropped, by the consensus of the Commission.

Chairman Ellington notes typographical edits must be made to page 10, "maximum" instead of "minimum". Edits should also be made to page 31, to correspond with the change in the Local Goal that was previously decided by the Commission.

The Director notes that all changes will be made as suggested and the final draft of the report will be submitted to the Office of State Planning.

- D. Next Scheduled meeting** - The next regular meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for **April 1, 2015**, in the County Commissioners Meeting Room, at 1:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William J. DeVore
Zoning Administrator

