

GARRETT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND LAND MANAGEMENT

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MINUTES

The Garrett County Planning Commission held its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, December 7, 2016, at 1:30 p.m., in the County Commissioners Meeting Room. Members and guests in attendance at the meeting included:

Tony Doerr	William Weissgerber	Deborah Carpenter-staff
Troy Ellington	Jeff Conner	William DeVore -staff
Tim Schwinabart	Elizabeth Georg	Chad Fike -staff
David Moe	Barbara Beelar	Kathy Meagher
Karen Myers	Paul Durham	Dick Bolt

1. Call to Order - by Chairman Tony Doerr at 1:30 pm.
2. The November minutes were unanimously approved, as submitted, by a vote of 6 to 0.
3. Report of Officers – None
4. Unfinished Business –
5. New Business – The Deep Creek Watershed Board of Appeals has invited the members of the Planning Commission to a Christmas Luncheon at UNO’s on December 21st at noon.

A. Miscellaneous

1. Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Appeals Cases-

- a. **SE-450-** an application submitted by Adrian A. Spiker II, for a Special Exception permit for the conversion of a home, from a five bedroom, to an eight-bedroom Transient Vacation Rental Unit. The property is located at 646 Mountaintop Road, tax map 50, parcel 789, lot 42 and is zoned Lake Residential 1 (LR1).

After discussion, the Planning Commission offered no formal comments on the request.

- b. SE-451** - an application submitted by Ray Rase, on behalf of Garrett College, for a Special Exception to allow the expansion of the college, to add a new school building, on Garrett College property. The facility is located at 687 Mosser Road, tax map 42, parcel 191 and is zoned LR1.

After discussion, the Planning Commission offered no comments on the Special Exception request.

- c. VR-750** - an application submitted by Stephen McHugh for a Variance to allow a second story addition, to a detached garage, to within 31.0 feet of a rear property line. The property is located at 1511 Marsh Hill Drive, tax map 50, parcel 493 and is zoned LR1.

After discussion, the Planning Commission suggests that the Board of Appeals give special consideration to any comments from the neighbors concerning this request.

2. Action on (PRDs) Planned Residential Developments- None

3. Action on Planned Major Subdivisions-

- a. Preliminary Plat-Back of Beyond-** The developer, Franklin Trust, PSE Family, submitted a revised Preliminary Plat for a seven-lot cluster development located off of North Shoreline Drive and Shoreline Drive. The property is located on tax map 67, parcels 419, 1 and 778 in a LR1 zoning district. The Planning Commission approved the original 15-lot Back of Beyond Preliminary Plat, on January 6, 2010, and approved a revised preliminary plat reducing the number of lots to eight on December 8, 2010. The Planning Commission granted approval of the latest revised Preliminary Plat by a unanimous vote of 6 to 0.

Mr. Fike briefly discussed a clarification of the Planning Office's policy pertaining to commercial resorts such as the Wisp Hotel. The Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Ordinance requires Planning Commission review of the proposed development of a site for commercial resort facilities, but the regulations do not differentiate between the requirements for the original review of the overall development and review of subsequent expansions. The Planning Office recently emailed Planning Commission members asking for their opinion about adopting a policy that small additions at a commercial resort could be approved by the zoning office rather than requiring formal submittal to the Planning Commission. Larger expansions that change the character and extent of

a commercial resort would continue to follow the formal Planning Commission review process. Mr. Fike informed the Commission that all of the members had reacted favorably to this policy and it would now be followed.

4. Waiver Requests –None

5. Comprehensive Plan Chapter One and County Growth Discussion

Note: audio of this discussion has been recorded in its entirety and can be found on the county website: www.garrettcounty.org

Director Carpenter has developed workbooks for each Planning Commission member including the text from the previous Comprehensive Plan, with a place for notes and edits, for drafting the new Plan. The workbooks will also be available to the consultants that will be assembling the new Plan. Actual comments from the website will also be available to the Commission, as they are received.

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) requires the Plan to consider the growth of the County to about the year 2040. The director noted that we can loosely say looking forward approximately 20-25 years.

Chapter One of the Plan was reviewed by the Commission, line by line. Topics include the opening paragraph, *Sections 1.1-Legal Requirements, 1.2-The Plans Relationship with the Towns, and 1.3-Plan Preparation*. Drafts of the additions and corrections were updated and modified, where necessary. Notes and highlights were added by the director in the workbooks.

The director explained that she has developed a paper titled “A Population Growth Scenario” for Garrett County that was distributed in the packets. A copy of this paper is attached to these minutes. The paper includes dimensions of growth, historic market trends, recessionary trends, post-recession leveling and accompanying graphs. Also discussed is second home owners and tourism, continued growth in the State and the region, aging population and retirement, rural setting, infrastructure issues, future development activity, the Sustainable Growth and Agriculture Preservation Act of 2012, development capacity and population growth scenarios.

During the review of the 2008 Plan, a consultant was hired to do a Growth Scenario for the County. Director Carpenter believes that those numbers could be used as a guide. The consultant for the current Plan could adjust the numbers for a different scenario. The director feels that more work is needed but this group needs to start with a basic agreement on how growth will occur in the next 25 years. The exercise will involve conducting forecasting with certain growth scenarios with the use of local knowledge. In the past 15 years, Garrett County has experienced growth in the form of new residential housing starts, with the annual growth rates ranging from a minus 79% to a plus 160%, demonstrating the complexity of the problem. Some of

the wild swings in recent housing start numbers are due to the sprinkler law, enacted in the County in 2015, along with other regulations.

The director believes that accuracy increases as the projection horizon decreases for this 25-year period and noted that population projections assess future growth levels and the County's population levels are currently falling, but still hover around 30,000 people.

The different methodologies reviewed for the Growth Scenario include trend line analysis, ratio techniques, cohort component methodology and an economic demographic model, with the understanding that no methodology is perfect. Typically, counties devise a methodology that fits, as this group did in 2008.

The Commission reviewed the Growth Scenario keeping in mind that the next step would be to allocate the growth broken down by geographic region. For example, the Deep Creek Lake influence area was assumed to represent 60% of the County's growth in 2008. The County's municipalities were thought to be approximately 10%.

After that exercise, the group could further divide the County by individual towns and watersheds. During the 2008 Plan, the Commission looked at a planned pipeline of lots and scattered subdivision development per watershed. One important factor today is that the number of subdivisions is declining or stagnant. Some subdivisions have been stagnant for a decade or more. Also in the 2008 Plan, growth projections factored in a development capacity analysis, from Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) that assumes a timetable for the complete buildout of the County's available land.

The Director believes that an analysis of owner occupied units, versus non-owner occupied units, by use of tax assessment information could be useful. Another consideration could be median household income trends and trends for town versus rural areas. Some members feel that building costs may be exceptionally high in the State, which may be affecting the County's growth. David Moe would like to compare housing starts within the municipalities and at the lake, compared with starts within the rest of the County. Some members would also like to know the number of retirees that are moving in, versus aging in place, noting that new retirees do not put a strain on infrastructure and have other benefits. Another consideration could be residents that leave for half of the year or more, to avoid harsh winters, may be impacting the local population. Residents that cross state or county lines for employment, also known as "cross-county migration" was discussed. Some members believe the design standards required for the County to take over maintenance of private roads may be too stringent, adding to the costs to homeowners.

Other members of the Commission believe that it may be important to measure the retiree market and the part time homeowner or second homeowner markets. Considerations include non-resident employment, total houses versus homesteading,

new housing units and tear down homes and rebuilds. The effect of water and sewer service at the lake, as it is tied to population growth, was also a topic of discussion.

The group discussed the prediction of housing starts by use of historical data from 1980, 1990 and 2000, disregarding 2000 through 2008, due to the “bubble” type of expansion during that time period.

The Commission is very satisfied with the data that was compiled and the conclusions that were reached in the Growth Scenario. The Commission recognizes the work and effort that was done in preparation of the report and believes that in the future the new housing starts per year should range between the moderate scenarios of 100 units per year, to the rapid growth scenario of 200 units per year.

The Director noted that the growth scenario discussion had to be held in order to begin the review of Chapter 2, which will begin at the next regular meeting, in January.

- B. Next Scheduled meeting** - The next regular meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for **January 4, 2017** in the County Commissioners Meeting Room, **at 1:30 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

William J. DeVore
Zoning Administrator

