

GARRETT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND LAND MANAGEMENT

203 South Fourth Street –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, February 7, 2018, at 1:30 p.m., in the County Commissioners Meeting Room. Members and guests in attendance at the meeting included:

Tony Doerr
Bruce Swift
Tim Schwinabart
Shelly Argabrite

William Weissgerber
Jeff Conner
Jeff Messenger
Liz George

Chet Parsons
Deborah Carpenter -staff
William DeVore -staff
Jordan Smith

1. Call to Order - by Chairman Tony Doerr at 1:30 pm.
2. The January minutes were approved as submitted.
3. Report of Officers – None
4. Unfinished Business – None
5. New Business – None

A. Miscellaneous

1. Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Appeals Cases-

- a. **SE-462** - an application submitted by Luis and Lisa Laranjeira for a Special Exception for a six-bedroom Transient Vacation Rental Unit. The property is located at 298 Pinnacle Drive, tax map 58, parcel 694, lot 34 and is zoned Lake Residential 1 (LR1). The Planning Commission had no formal comments on the request.

b. **SE-463-** an application submitted by Deep Creek Marina, LLC, for a Special Exception to change the character and extent of Commercial Outdoor Recreation activities by enlarging the facility, adding a “slide feature” and changing the time limit on indoor activities at the existing aerial adventure park, approved by Special Exception 453, in April of 2017. The property is located at 1067 and 1077 Deep Creek Drive in McHenry, tax map 50, parcels 26 -27, and is zoned Town Center (TC). After considerable discussion, the Planning Commission offered no formal comments on the request.

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

3. Action on Major Subdivisions- None

4. Transportation Priorities Discussion - The Commission discussed the 2017 list of transportation priorities. The Table of Contents for the list is attached to these minutes. After reviewing the list, the group did not recommend any changes. The list recommends major and minor transportation projects, safety improvements, system preservation projects, pedestrian and trail priorities, as well as regional and transit priorities, and is compiled based on requests submitted by municipalities, Garrett Trails, the Planning Commission and the Garrett County Roads Department.

5. Comprehensive Plan Discussion-Introduction of Chet Parsons from AECOM-

Chet Parsons explained that a kickoff meeting was held with the county Planning staff and the update of the Comprehensive Plan is now underway. The goal is to have a community oriented, open process. The consultant distributed a visioning exercise that would be used to compile data to be used at a later date. The data will also be used as a starting point with the community to acquire feedback.

The first kickoff event with the community is tentatively scheduled for late May. Stakeholder interviews will be begin shortly. Advertising will be done by conventional means and various forms of social media. AECOM will be leading the project. Terry Cutright and Downstream Strategies will be assisting AECOM in the development of the Plan. Ms. Cutright is an Economic Development specialist and Downstream Strategies is largely an environmental firm. Mr. Parsons will aid in matters regarding infrastructure and transportation.

Mr. Parsons believes that the current Plan is a great foundation and just needs some refinement. He believes that it is important to engage the public and to make sure that everyone in the community is onboard and understands the process. Identification of funding sources and strategies will also be part of this Plan.

6. Comprehensive Plan Chapter Eight–Consultant Topic List- Director Carpenter distributed a list of topics that would be shared with the consultant. Plan topics for Chapter Eight include:

- 1) Consult with agency partners to update this Chapter, specifically Garrett County Board of Education, Garrett College, Ruth Enlow Library system, Garrett County Solid Waste and the Garrett County Health Department.
- 2) Add detail in the Fire/EMS, Public Safety, Law Enforcement and Health Care Sections the challenges of providing services to an aging population, the opioid crisis, and the declining number of volunteers for volunteer fire and EMS stations, as well as the increase in mandatory certifications for those volunteers.
- 3) Update the name of the hospital and note the planned Emergency Operations Center construction.
- 4) Work with the Health Department to enrich the Health Care Section to include issues of community health as outlined in their Community Health Assessment.
- 5) Be sensitive to the negative impacts of declining student enrollment and its impacts on the educational system and community at large.

7. Comprehensive Plan Chapter Nine–Housing

Director Carpenter reviewed Chapter 9 with the Commission. The director noted that the existing tables in the Chapter would have to be updated by Mr. Parsons. It was explained that the County works closely and partners with Garrett County Community Action. Director Carpenter stated that the county’s housing goals are closely aligned with growth projections.

The director noted that the county’s Pathway to Homeownership Program is doing very well and will need to be added to this Chapter. The program is available through the Maryland Mortgage Program and allows citizens an opportunity for either up to \$15,000 for a down payment on a new home or a 0.25% discount on the interest rate of a home loan.

Issues that have been identified in the current Plan are the cost of housing, the condition and age of housing and the available land. Discussion ensued regarding these issues. Some members believe that lack of financial stability, scarcity of long term rentals and lack of variety in housing units are major unfavorable factors in the County.

The Commission believes that there may not be enough inventory for middle income and elderly residents. Also, there may not be enough houses in the \$100,000 price range. Some believe that it is too expensive to build roads to county specifications and it is understood that the County does not want to be in charge of more road plowing, maintenance and repair. Home Owners Association (HOA) fees, sewer and water hookup costs, septic field costs and the expense of stormwater features may be cost prohibitive to some potential homeowners. Some members of the Commission feel that impact of sprinkler law and other regulations may have an adverse effect on new housing construction and some believe there should be more cooperation between local government and private enterprise.

A member raised the issue of the lack of cold weather shelters in the County and noted that it is difficult to judge the scope of the problem.

The director will compile and distribute a Summary list of the topics to be considered by the consultant concerning this Chapter.

- B. Next Scheduled meeting** –The next regular meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for **March 7, 2018**, in the County Commissioners Meeting Room, at **1:30 pm**.

- C. Adjournment-** 3:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William J. DeVore
Zoning Administrator

