



Minutes of the Planning Commission
August 2, 2023
Approved September 6, 2023

Because of the coronavirus pandemic, this meeting took place via ZOOM videoconference. In attendance were Commissioners Georgette Cole (Chair), Jonathan Dail, Sylvie Favret, and Robert Johnson. Sung Chang (alternate) joined the meeting at 8pm. Mimi Styles was present for the Historic Preservation Commission. Several other residents also attended including four who had building permits under review.

Georgette Cole called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Approval of Agenda:

Robert Johnson moved to approve the agenda. Jonathan Dail seconded the motion. *Approved 4-0.*

Building Permit Applications:

- **120 Chestnut Avenue** – Jonathan explained the plan to the commission. He reported the plan involves interior remodeling but the footprint of the house, and thus the setbacks, are unchanged. The height will not change. The shed on the Hickory Road side will be removed. The HPC review had several suggestions for preserving the historic integrity of the home. Jonathan Dail moved to approve the building application; Georgette Cole seconded. *Approved: 4-0.*
- **120 Chestnut** – fence permit. Robert Johnson presented his review. The property corners were determined from the boundary surveys at 118 and 122 Chestnut Ave. The common corners with 120 were located. Robert has marked the application specifying the heights allowed at various points of the fence. Robert moved to approve the permit application; Jonathan Dail seconded the motion. *Approved: 4-0, as amended.*
- **5 Daylily** – fence permit. Robert said the boundary survey was available and the fence conditions meet the Town ordinances. Robert moved to approve the permit application; Jonathan Dail seconded the motion. *Approved: 4-0.*
- **125 Washington Grove Lane** – fence permit. Robert said the boundary survey was available and the fence conditions meet the Town ordinances. Robert moved to approve the permit application; Jonathan Dail seconded the motion. *Approved: 4-0.*

Public Ways & Property Permits: 103 Brown St Upgrade water supply line. Georgette reported that the water line upgrade was to support an additional bathroom and a laundry closet on the second floor. The upgrade is standard and the town land/vegetation which will be disturbed has already been approved for the WSSC sewer line replacement. She moved approval of the permit; Robert seconded. *Approved: 4-0.*

Public Appearances: Charlie Challstrom had three items to address:

- He wants to continue upgrading the survey markers inventory on the Town-wide map he has generated. He will work with Robert Johnson who is also interested in the project. He suggests they standardize the marker designations, especially by using the surveyor ID from the rebar caps. This will be particularly useful in the future.
- He offered his opinion on the ZTA regarding dumpster locations and the Commercial Corner and on the minor edits he has added to the draft ADU ZTA. The Chair encouraged Charlie to share his full comments when the two latter issues were addressed on the agenda.

Approval of the July 5, 2023 Minutes: The Commission reviewed the document. Robert Johnson moved to approve the Planning Commission minutes from July 5, 2023. Georgette Cole seconded the motion. *Approved: 5/0.*

ADU Process Planning:

Charlie Challstrom spoke to how the current draft zoning text amendment (ZTA) could be used by formally accepting it and then sending it to the Town Council. Georgette reviewed the Mayor's request for a process with multiple steps to allow ample time for resident input. The Commission discussed various options.

Robert Johnson moved as follows: The Planning Commission will put a review of the current draft ZTA (which would allow Accessory Dwelling Units in Washington Grove) on our September agenda. The Planning Commission will publicize this to the Town (Grove Alert and any other viable option) soliciting public input on what is in the draft. The Planning Commission will use the public input to modify and finalize the language before formally accepting it and then sending it to the Town Council. Georgette Cole seconded. *Vote 5/0.*

In further discussion the Planning Commissioners acknowledged that the goal was to allow for ample resident feedback then to address resident concerns and incorporate feedback into the final ZTA. And, of course, the Town Council will also have the opportunity to receive resident input at their public hearing for the ZTA and incorporate changes as needed.

Action Item: Georgette will write an invitation to the Town for the September meeting. She will update the Mayor on what the Planning Commission plans to do.

Discuss Amending Article VII, Section 6.231(d) to Enable More Location Flexibility for Loading and/or Transfer Activities at the Commercial Corner:

The Commission discussed the new material Georgette has written for Section 6.231 (d) and Section 8.242. The modified draft was deemed adequate for now.

The Planning Commission decided to wait on sending the ZTA application to the Town Council until we have a better idea of timing on the concrete dumpster removal.

Action Item: Peter will continue to work on getting a meeting set up with both Mayor Compton and the owner of the Commercial Corner.

Discuss other minor ordinance revisions to consider while we are altering Article VII Section 5.231(d):

Some changes are as simple as deleting the word “morals” in Articles I and VII as the term outdated and unnecessary. This change was suggested by RASEC and should be done as soon as we start modifying the ordinances. Other possible changes: the definition of leash law in Article I should be consistent with the Montgomery County Code we have adopted and we should specify that a patio doesn’t need a permit if built *at existing grade*. A more complicated process would be needed to add stormwater management criteria to building and driveway permit, but we need to base this on the upcoming Soltesz report.

Report From Town Council:

Peter Nagrod will have this next month.

Gateway Committee:

Jonathan Dail reported that the Committee discussed multiple ideas for the new fiscal year. They are working on a “Comprehensive Plan” for Railroad St and Washington Grove Lane. Peter is in discussion with MC DOT personnel about the decommissioning of Center and Oak Streets at Washington Grove Lane. We may have some momentum there. The first Gateway Committee trash pickup day went well. The plan is to have one pickup day per month on the third or fourth weekend.

Other business:

None.

Adjourned at 9:17 pm.

Submitted by G. Cole