



Minutes of the Planning Commission Worksession
22 February 2021

Approved:

This meeting was held online using the Zoom App. Attendees could attend by video or telephone.

Attendees: Commissioners Georgette Cole, Charlie Challstrom, Robert Johnson (alternate), Deborah Mehlferber, and Peter Nagrod, HPC Chair Bob Booher, Town Council member Pat Klein, residents Joan Mahaffey, and Audrey Maskery.

Call to order 7:33 pm.

1) Deb moved approval of the agenda; Charlie seconded. Georgette said a new short submission from Bob Booher adding clarifying language to Section 2.1.2 (Capacity for Development) would be covered under New Business if time allowed. Approved, 5/0.

2) Charlie moved approval of the 1/25 minutes; Deb seconded. Approved as presented 5/0.

3) Final Review of the drafts of the Public Ways and Property Permit (PW&PP) and the PW&PP: Driveway and Walkway Aprons. Both versions had been conditionally approved at the 2/3 PC meeting pending HPC review. The main change to each was the addition of a new submission deadline which makes it possible for the HPC to review the permits before the PC meeting at which they will be presented. Georgette will send the approved versions to Kathy for formatting. Kathy and Georgette will put together a draft resolution to update the evaluation criteria for driveways, parking areas, and walkways using public ways and property. The PC will review this on March 2.

4) Comprehensive Plan

4a) We viewed the new map Charlie has created for Exhibit B (Town Buildings, Parks, Facilities). This can be used to accurately indicate the locations and names of our existing parks. The Zoning map could then use the green stripes to indicate the location of parks without having to put names on them. This should facilitate completion of the Zoning map by Kirk Eby. The PC members agreed this was a reasonable solution to our discussion last month.

Several other needed changes were noted to talk to Kirk by about including: change Pine Ave label to Grove Rd and color changes in Growth Areas 1 and 3.

Related to the maps, we also discussed researching the Town resolutions for creation of MacGregor Park, "shortening" Grove Avenue (on the map) so it doesn't connect to Washington Grove Lane [WGL] (or cleaning it up), and making Brown St a "walkway" between Hickory and Chestnut Ave. The last would take Council action. We also discussed the possibility of making Oak and Center into more of a "walkway" where each gets to Washington Grove Lane. And where exactly is the Town walkway which connects Chestnut Ave to WGL? The current white "walkway" looks as if

it's right where the driveway for #305 WGL is located. PC members agreed the path is a bit further north and is directly across WGL from Maple Lake Road. Charlie will check this and see about altering Exhibit B.

4b) Section 13 (Sustainability) 13.3.3 (Town Natural Resources)

The Woods Committee and the Forestry and Beautification Committee submitted a joint suggestion for introductory language at the beginning of this section. They emphasized the carbon sequestration potential of both the Town Forests and the Town Residential Forest and the management techniques used in each. Reference was made to additional background in Section 6.1 (Forest Conservation) and 6.2 (Residential Forest). This introduction was accepted with minor changes.

The Sustainability Committee submitted several additional suggestions for the material approved on 1/25.

Plant-Matter Energy Potential:

New recommendation language from the Sustainability Committee was accepted to replace the recommendation for education of residents regarding composting on their own property.

Several Planning Commission members said their reading did not support the statement that pyrolysis is carbon negative. This sentence was not accepted.

Finding an alternate way to process woody material generated in the residential part of the Town rather than sending it to the waste transfer station would be an excellent idea. However, biodigestion and pyrolysis still seemed to the Commission to be better suited to a large-scale operation within the County in which Washington Grove could participate. The edits to Sustainability text and recommendation reflects this.

Landscaping:

The new language and recommendation were not accepted.

The conflict with public safety was considered too high a risk if additional areas of the parks were allowed to "return to full forest". The loss of walkable areas where residents don't encounter tall grass containing ticks (and tick-borne diseases) was deemed unacceptable.

In addition, the Town, like Montgomery County and the United States as a whole, is still struggling with the prevalence of non-native invasive plants. As observed last month mowing is currently the best way to prevent the growth of these non-native invasive species, so chemical treatment can be avoided in these heavily-used areas adjacent to residences.

5) Since there was time to do so, we looked at new language proposed by Bob Booher for Section 2.1.2 (Capacity for Development). This clarifies the difference between the addition of houses through "infill" versus by "subdivision". This is an excellent clarification and was adopted as written. Bob will make the same changes in Section 9.7 (Infill and Redevelopment). We'll review them at the March 17 work session.

Peter said he would take another look at changes which might be needed in Section 2.3.1 (Town Boundary).

We adjourned at 9:28 pm.

Georgette will integrate the current changes into a 022321 draft for circulation to Commissioners and posting to the Town web site before the next work session.

Our next meeting will be March 17.

Submitted by Georgette Cole