

OFFICIAL MINUTES
Carroll County Planning and Zoning Commission
Finksburg Corridor Plan
Public Hearing

July 28, 2009

Location: Sandymount United Methodist Church

Members Present: David L. Brauning, Chairman
Dennis Wertz, Vice Chair
Melvin E. Baile, Jr.
Wayne Schuster
Charles M. Chadwick
Alec Yeo
Robert B. Slade, Alternate

Members Absent: Julia Walsh Gouge, Ex-Officio

The hearing opened at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Steve Horn, Director, Department of Planning, reviewed the purpose of the hearing. He asked the Commission members to introduce themselves.

Mr. Brauning welcomed everyone to the hearing and noted that the public information meeting was held last week. He stated the Commission is looking for ideas and suggestions with regard to the proposed draft Plan. Mr. Brauning asked citizens to limit their comments to three minutes and that cell phones be turned off or down.

Mr. Horn noted that written comments were also welcome.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Robert Kirby, Jr., 2838 Cedarhurst Road – suggested the extension of 795 needs to be put back on the plans to run all the way to the Pennsylvania line; widening of MD 140 is not meeting the traffic demands.

Allan Davidson, 1769 Old Westminster Pike – asked for the definition of “scenic beauty” because he sees that comment all the time; billboards have provided money for farming; who are we saving the farmland for? it is a big money game; not for a young guy because it is too expensive; suggested the need for a super highway from 795 through Carroll County; MD 140 is a waste of fuel and air pollution; traffic is too slow.

Gary Kerns, 2280 Kays Mill Road South – lived here for 15 years; lot of positive in the Plan; supports removal of CPA designation because of proximity to the reservoir and lack of water and sewerage; supports community goals; supports boulevard district concept limited to existing industrial and commercial zones; emphasize redevelopment of gateway; encourage adoption of the design guidelines; supports community wastewater systems to address existing problem areas, not future development; opposed to OPE at Todd Village and Hillendale Orchards; additional analysis should be completed before that rezoning is proposed.

Frank Lago, 2607 Sunset Lane – echoed Mr. Kerns’ comments; glad the County has put forth a Finksburg Corridor Plan; supports boulevard district for current business districts; supports design standards; supports roadway improvements; opposes expansion of boulevard district outside current business district; keep Hillendale Orchard and Gerstell area as neighborhoods; quality of life issues; emphasize redevelopment in current corridor; implement changes to encourage redevelopment.

Haven Shoemaker, 931 Gloucester Circle – made a few suggestions in a column he wrote the other day; attended FPAC meeting at the Finksburg Library last week; requested Commission consider their suggested changes; understand the need for expansion of Commercial/Industrial base in the County; don’t understand underutilization of existing commercial areas, i.e., gateway area; concentrate commercial/industrial development there rather than Gerstell Academy area; discussed workforce housing; review zoning recommendations for the mobile home parks in Finksburg and Mount Airy.

William Louis Peale, Pastor, Mt. Zion Methodist Church – suggested the County focus some energy on beautifying the intersection of MD 140/MD 91; concerned about the new road that comes out at Dede Road and crosses Old Westminster Pike; a lot of people use Old Westminster Pike/Old Gamber Road to bypass intersection of MD 140/MD 91; concerned that there are no improvements to Old Westminster Pike just the addition of sidewalks and curbs.

Richard Marrs, 1867 Carnoustle Court – lived here for 12 years; came to the River Downs area of Carroll County because of low density population and good schools; concerned about air and noise pollution, traffic, water and sewerage problems; questioned whether the things the County is proposing in the Plan will make people want to buy homes in River Downs and Beaver Creek; positive parts of the plan; reconsider any changes in the basic character and environment of our community.

John Lopez, Finksburg Planning Area Council, 2470 Twin Knolls Circle – many positive things in the plan; supports conservation zoning changes as a positive step to protect environment and water quality; supports ARP; supports Boulevard zoning from MD 91 to Baltimore County line; supports implementation of design guidelines to improve gateway to Carroll County; supports use of wastewater treatment plant to solve existing problems; opposed to OPE zone at Gerstell because property is surrounded by residential zoning; opposed to Boulevard District at Hillendale; no traffic analysis, water and sewer needs, or residential impact was completed; nothing proposed in the Plan to address the failing intersection of MD 140/MD 91; OPE will cause additional traffic congestion; concerned about increasing crime; opposed to using wastewater treatment plants for new development; opposed to using economic tax credits for new development.

Peter Zitla, 2247 Deer Park Road – civil engineer working on several gateway improvement projects in Howard County; suggested the middle median between MD 91 and the Baltimore County line be made green space to improve the entrance to the County; provide water quality treatment.

Steve Kousouris, 3301 Dornoch Drive – representing River Down Homeowners Association – approximately 130 households; supports application of Boulevard District from MD 91 to Baltimore County line; opposed to OPE at Hillendale Orchard; increased traffic; several of our

houses border Gerstell property; worried about lights and water pollution; asked Commission to address the intersection of MD 91/MD 140.

Judd Shepard, 2950 Industrial Park Drive – speeds are very fast in the gateway corridor; one proposal is a median strip which is not a good idea for the businesses in the area; good idea would be installation of speed cameras; very hard to police that area; make it safer to use access roads in the area.

Ron Kruppa, 1957 Turnberry Court – agree with most of the comments that were made; area is covered by a State Trooper in the resident trooper program; with all the new development, what will protect us; only one trooper in the area; volunteer fire departments – there are no fire hydrants; what is going to happen if there is a fire; public safety; traffic congestion; bus safety; safety of Lawndale Road.

Brian Tiboni, 2996 Nairn Drive – acknowledge the work that went into the Plan; lots of positive points; lack of public input; notification very poorly handled; lack of community involvement in the development of the Plan; restart plan including citizens of Carroll County in the development; everyone is opposed to the Plan which says there is something seriously wrong; there has not be sufficient citizen input in the Plan.

Phillip Potts, 408 Old Crossing Drive – family owns property on the south side of MD 140 before MD 91 at the Exxon Station; speaking on behalf of my family; requested that road which gives ingress and egress to this property be preserved; very difficult to maintain tenants if there is not access to MD 140.

Susan Mitchell, 2706 Mohawk Court – opposed to OPE at Hillendale and Todd Village; some parts of the Plan are very good and will improve the Finksburg area; supports improving the look of the gateway; improve MD 140/MD 91 intersection; concerns regarding no left turn lane onto MD 91 from MD 140; difficult to get out of the shopping center to get into the turn lane or go straight across MD 91.

Bruce Seidman, 1980 Turnberry Court – moved to Finksburg 8 years ago; keep those green rolling hills green.

Pat Murphy, 138 Lassiter Circle – sent a letter to the Commission with lots of signatures from residents of Hillendale; fix area between MD 91 and Baltimore County line; fix the gateway.

Sue Fine, 1900 Emory Road – submitted a letter with concerns; people are terrified they will lose their homes; been in her home for four years; keep it green; building more businesses in not really conducive, there are businesses and business opportunities here already; taxes and tax incentives; supermarket has been empty for over a year; protect our homes; opposed to billboards.

Bob Warehime, 2500 Kays Mill Road – concerned about water table; wetlands area has dried up even after all the June rain; concern with adding businesses to the area.

Kathy Spangler, 2928 Hughes Road – live by Beaver Run stream; stream is eating into the banks of Hughes Road; additional development will cause more of the creek bank to erode; please keep in mind the affect of development on the streams.

Citizen – you can take lots of farmland and turn it into businesses and homes, but I have never seen businesses and homes turn back into farmland.

Bill Moores, 2551 Baltimore Boulevard – invited Commission to try to make a left hand turn onto MD 91 between 4:00 and 6:00 in the afternoon.

Clifford Yingling, 2750 Kays Mill Road – questioned whether there was any possibility of an underpass at MD 91/MD 140.

Mr. Brauning indicated that would be a State Highway Administration issue.

Roberta Watson, 1 W. Betty Place – rezoning Todd Village would displace many citizens who have no where else to go; you cannot move a trailer 15 years or older; costs a lot of money to have the trailer removed.

Mr. Horn explained that State law requires that jurisdictions like Carroll County and the municipalities go through a planning process to review their plans every six years. This planning process is dictated by State law, Article 66B, which sets forth the things a plan has to address at a minimum. The 60-day review process is required under State law so people get a chance to review the plan. During that time period, many e-mails and letters were received along with comments from public meetings and hearings. Under State law, the Planning Commission is tasked with developing a plan for the County. The staff actually prepares a draft Plan for public review. Once the staff draft has gone through the 60-day review, the Planning Commission makes changes based on your comments prior to sending it to the Board of County Commissioners for their adoption.

Mr. Baile questioned how long the public record would be open for comments.

Mr. Horn explained that the public comment period closed on July 24, but comments will be collected through today.

A citizen questioned when the County Commissioners would make a decision on the Plan.

Mr. Horn indicated that would depend on the Planning Commission and how fast the plan gets to the Commissioners. He noted that the Commissioners are required to hold a public hearing on the zoning changes.

A citizen questioned what the Commission is hearing in all of the public hearings.

Mr. Brauning indicated that 90 percent of the comments from the public meetings and hearing on the Pathways Plan were opposed to the proposed changes in zoning in the Mount Airy and Taylorsville areas. He noted that some good, constructive comments were received. There were also comments from the agricultural community regarding proposed changes to agricultural zoning and conservation zoning. Mr. Brauning explained that the Commission will digest those comments and make revisions to the Plan before sending it to the Commissioners.

Mary Kowalski, 1635 Indian Valley Trail – attended two public information meetings and the public hearing; has been studying the plan; told with the airport expansion that it may hurt people

in this area but need to look at what is best for the whole County; what is done in one community is paid for by all the taxpayers; spoke about regional fire training facility in Linwood; Finksburg Corridor Plan issue should have been taken care of before Pathways; these people have missed out on the public hearing process; divide and conquer politics is not okay; it is not democracy.

John Lopez questioned the procedure that the Commission will now follow. He noted that there are three more meetings scheduled on the Pathways Plan that directly affect what happens in Finksburg. Mr. Lopez indicated that the Finksburg and Pathways Plans are linked and questioned whether one would move forward without the other.

Mr. Horn explained that with this hearing, the Commission has completed their hearings and public meetings on the countywide Pathways Plan and the Finksburg Corridor Plan. He noted that many of the changes in the Pathways Plan will affect the Finksburg Plan. Mr. Horn indicated the Commission will move forward with the Pathways Plan and will pass along changes to the Finksburg Corridor Plan. He noted that the Commission will be moving forward at a deliberate pace. Mr. Horn suggested that both plans would ultimately move forward together.

A citizen indicated he was told at an informational meeting that the State Highway Administration is working on its plan for MD 140. He questioned whether the State's plan could override the County plan.

Mr. Horn noted that the State Highway Administration is constantly looking at State roads. He suggested SHA will take a similar approach to MD 140 as it did to MD 26 in Eldersburg. Mr. Horn explained that the County's plans will move forward much more quickly than the State's plan. Once a MD 140 corridor plan is completed, it will implement what the Finksburg Corridor Plan is calling for—redevelopment, safety concerns, etc.

A citizen questioned whether the State could decide to make MD 140 a six-lane road.

Mr. Horn indicated he did not see that as the future of MD 140 through Finksburg.

Steve Kousouris questioned whether the deliberations would be done in public meetings.

Mr. Horn responded that the Planning Commission will hold public meetings to review comments, etc. These meetings will be held in Room 003 of the County Office Building. The public will be able to observe but not comment. The meetings will be taped and broadcast on the County's cable channel. The Commission will meet on August 10 and 11 from 6:30 – 9:00 p.m. and following the regular meeting on August 18.

Robert Kirby expressed his concerns with traffic and transportation problems. He questioned why the County is relying on the State to control the highways. He asked what the County is doing to tell the SHA what it needs.

Marion Smyth, 1606 Green Mill Road – questioned how much dissent on an issue is needed to be heard by the people in charge in order to make a difference; attended a lot of airport meetings and it is a total waste of time; trying to understand the process better.

Mr. Brauning, speaking on behalf of the Commission, stated the Commission takes citizen comments very seriously. The Commission will deliberate along with staff based on the concerns and comments received.

Mr. Chadwick noted that the Commission members are also citizens of Carroll County and live in different areas of the County. He stated he has been on the Commission for five years and although the members are opinionated, independent, and don't always agree, eventually a consensus is reached.

Secretary

Approved