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Gustav S. Kurtz, Jr.
Chair, Planning Advisory Board

Planning Advisory Board (PAB)
Hybrid Meeting
October 19, 2023
6:00 PM

PAB Present:

Gus Kurtz, Chair
Lawrence Blevins
Ed Evans
Van Mason
Elizabeth Rosborg
Dawn Stoltzfus

Staff Present:

Jessica Levy, Planner II, Long Range Planning Section, Office of Planning and Zoning (OPZ)
Michael Stringer, Senior Planner, Long Range Planning Section, OPZ
Christina Pompa, Deputy Planning and Zoning Officer, Planning Division, OPZ
Cindy Carrier, Planning Administrator, Long Range Planning Section, OPZ
Patrick Hughes, Senior Planner, Long Range Planning, OPZ
Desirae Williams, Planner III, Long Range Planning Section, OPZ
Andrew Lazara, Planner I, Long Range Planning, OPZ
Debbie Blackburn, Secretary II, Long Range Planning, OPZ
Felicia Hutchinson, Senior Planner, Long Range Planning, OPZ

Others Present, In-Person and Online: Melanie Arena, Sara Arthur, Cameron Arterton, Jeff Bach, M. Cameron Bach, Kimberly Baker, George Baldwin, Kai Baldwin, Amy Battaglia, Wess Bedsworth, Kaelynn Bedsworth, Joe Botzler, Martha Boudreau, Peter Boudreau, Earl Bradley, Cindy Breloff, Allison Bresnahan, Debby Calebaugh, Carlene Cassidy, Meredith Carroll, Margaret Cervin, Paul Christensen, Faye Clark, Ed Coleman, Gillian Conner, Greg Conner, David Corddry, Alec Cronin, Richard Dengler, Keith Donald, Alexis Dorsey, Michelle Ervin, Jade Flynn, Kathleen Flynn, Norman Farley, Jeanie Gardner, Jeff Gilbert, Steve Greene, Caren Grown, Dorothy M Guy, Mary Guy, Nancy Guy, Shirley Claire Guy, Peggy Hamilton, Robert Hannon, Richard Hardart, Barbara Hatchl, Bill Hatchl, Sue Hobbs, Irene Howie, Pat Huecker, Alan Hyatt, Jody Jeweler, Ruth Jobe, Julie Johnson, Kay Jones, Priscilla Kania, Kurt Karsten, Judy Kline, Ted Krauss, Helen Krone, Fran Kushner, Marianne Leonard, Janet Luhy, Nancy Lundgris, Kate Mahood, Jane Malone, Dorothy Martin, Regis Matlak Alex McCrary, Lynn McReynolds, Jane McWilliams, Cathy Miller,

Christopher Monzo, Holly Moring, Sara Moulton, Steve Moulton, Monica Mount, Mia Muench, James Muscatello, Linda Muscatello, Anne Myers, Sara Neild, Nancy Noel, Patsy Oertu, T. O'Connell, Lily Openshaw, Carol Patterson, Sydney Petty, Thomas Petty, David Phipps, Sherese Pirnat, Ellen Piwoz, Severn Putolo, Steve Raccitt, Erin Rice, Carly Robb, Stacia Roesler, Gordon Roesler, Laura Robinson, Kevin Roycroft, Marshall Rutland, Mark Schelly, Nancy Schubert, Owen Smith, Russ Stevenson, Doug Soucy, Deborah Spear, Michael Stalker, Matt Stegman, Cindy Sweet, Ivan Thaute, Nancy Thompson, Andrew Tullier, John Vandekamp, Bernard Wallace Jr., Mary Wallace, Scott Wallace, Jennifer Wazenski, Judy Weigel, Jill Whittall, Tom Whitely, Nancy Whitely, Tom Wilbur, Blake Wilson, B. Wood, Glenn Woodruff, Wayne Wormley, Joseph Zagami

Call to Order

Mr. Kurtz called the Planning Advisory Board (PAB) meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

Ms. Rosborg motioned to approve the agenda, and Ms. Mason seconded. The agenda was approved 6-0.

Draft Region 7 Plan and Comprehensive Zoning Map

Presentation

Patrick Hughes presented an overview of the draft Region 7 Plan. The latest update of the County General Development Plan, Plan2040 designated nine Region Plan Areas and set the schedule for development of the Region Plans. The Region Plan is a tool that will inform and advise the County decision-making processes that affect the Region Plan Area and the County as a whole. The Region Plan will be used as a reference for informing future rezoning requests, private development plans, and the capital budget and improvement program.

Each Region Plan is developed with input from a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) that is composed of a cross section of the Region's civic, business, environmental, and other stakeholders who reside in or own or manage a business in the planning area. The 15-member Region 7 SAC was nominated by the County Executive and approved by County Council Resolution No. 57-21 on October 18, 2021. The Region 7 SAC met 23 times over the course of approximately 2 years.

Mr. Hughes reviewed the multiple public outreach efforts that were conducted as part of the planning process. These included research interviews with stakeholders, online questionnaires, public forums, and participation in community events. Postcards were also mailed to all property owners in the Region and letters were sent to owners of property where changes in zoning are recommended.

Mr. Hughes briefed the PAB on the key themes of feedback from the public engagement including: development pressures, concerns about environmental quality, lack of diverse housing options, appreciation for park and recreation facilities, traffic congestion, and underutilized commercial areas / vacancies. He also discussed the public engagement efforts related to the Ridgely Avenue community and provided a detailed summary of comments received for the area.

Mr. Hughes reviewed the vision statement for the Region Plan and key strategies recommended in the draft Plan. Highlighted recommendations include: expanding the Green Infrastructure network and connections to City of Annapolis greenways, focusing growth in the Parole Town Center, prioritizing areas for expanded public water access, and aiding small, local business assistance and start-up resources.

Mr. Hughes provided an overview of the Comprehensive Zoning process. OPZ staff and the SAC reviewed the Development Policy Area and Planned Land Use Maps adopted in Plan2040. They recommended zoning changes to ensure consistency between the Planned Land Use Map and Zoning Map as required by State law. They also reviewed and made recommendations on zoning change applications submitted by property owners. Mr. Hughes reviewed the comprehensive zoning changes across different communities in Region 7.

Public Hearing - Oral Testimony

Alex McCrary provided testimony on behalf of the Bay Ridge Civic Association (BRCA) and discussed BRCA's support for OPZ's recommendation for R2 zoning on the three BRCA zoning applications. Mr. McCrary gave a summary of the history of the "Big Woods" property and the unique terms of the easement. He asked that the PAB recommend adoption of the OPZ and SAC recommendations on the Bay Ridge properties.

Julie Johnson lives on Ridgely Avenue and expressed her frustration with the State Highway Administration and the lack of sound barriers. Ms. Johnson expressed the need for bike lanes and sidewalks along Ridgely Avenue and said that this was promised with the Weems Creek bridge improvements. She did not receive a letter for the February 6, 2023 meeting on Ridgely Avenue because she is on the south side of US Route 50, which is not in the area proposed for the Village Center Overlay. Ms. Johnson expressed frustration about communication from the County and commented that she is not in favor of the Village Center Overlay.

Ruth Jobe provided testimony on behalf of the Jessica S. Guy Family Trust that has owned property at 605 and 607 North Bestgate Road for multiple generations. Ms. Jobe is opposed to the proposed Village Center Overlay and corresponding Village Sector Plan for the proposed overlay area. She also opposes all upzoning requests for the area. She stated that the requests for zoning changes are coming from a handful of developers, but do not reflect the wishes of the community. Ms. Jobe commented that at the time of development, the medical offices being used as justification for commercial upzoning were a permissible use in residential areas.

Dorothy Guy provided testimony on behalf of the Jessica S. Guy Family Trust that has property on 605 and 607 North Bestgate Road. She asks that the PAB respond in writing to comments on the draft Plan and Comprehensive Zoning Map. She also asked that proposed revisions to the draft Plan be publicized before the PAB provides their recommendation. Ms. Guy is opposed to commercial zoning along Ridgely Avenue and the proposed Village Center Overlay. She stated that this is the first time something of this nature has been proposed in Anne Arundel County, and there are no precedents, guidelines, or requirements for the development of a Village Sector Plan.

Ms. Dorothy Guy commented that the planning process has been difficult for the public to follow and comment on, and that there has been no feedback from OPZ on comments received. Ms. Guy expressed concern that the wants of developers would overshadow the wants of community members if there continues to be inadequate communication with the public. She expressed concern over the lack of public sewer and water to adequately serve new development in the Ridgely Avenue area. Ms. Guy stated that she is against upzoning to C2 in this area and she is against the proposed Village Center Overlay.

Nancy Guy provided testimony on behalf of the Jessica S. Guy Family Trust that has property on 605 and 607 North Bestgate Road. She opposes OPZ's recommendation for a Village Center Overlay along Ridgely Avenue and supports the recommendation to deny C2 zoning applications in the area. She encouraged the PAB to consider the 1982 study *A Greenway Strategy for Weems*

Creek from the National Park Service in coordination with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Weems Creek Conservancy. Ms. Guy requested that the PAB reject commercialization, the Village Center Overlay along Ridgely Avenue, and upzoning or corresponding requests for land use changes.

Mary Guy provided testimony on behalf of the Jessica S. Guy Family Trust that has property on 605 and 607 North Bestgate Road. She noted the natural environment around Weems Creek provides a number of environmental, physical, and psychological benefits. She believes that the proposed Village Center Overlay along Ridgely Avenue will negatively impact the surrounding community in a number of ways. Ms. Guy expressed concern that the SAC did not represent her community and that her concerns have not received adequate attention from the SAC or OPZ. She is also concerned that the Ridgely Avenue / North Bestgate community may have unresearched historic resources that will be lost with further development. Ms. Guy is against the proposed Ridgely Avenue Village Center Overlay and Sector Plan, and asks that any upzoning requests or land use changes be denied.

Shirley Claire Guy spoke on behalf of the Jessica S. Guy Family Trust that has property on 605 and 607 North Bestgate Road. She opposes rezoning along Ridgely Avenue and the proposed Village Center Overlay as it may lead to upzoning recommendations later in the planning process. She believes that commercial upzoning would negatively impact the neighborhood and the surrounding environment. Ms. Guy stated that more commercial space is not needed because there is sufficient vacant commercial space in the area and trends show people are telecommuting and shopping online. Ms. Guy urged the PAB to support the OPZ recommendations for low density residential and to reject commercial upzoning and the Village Center Overlay along Ridgely Avenue.

Jane Malone spoke on behalf of the Jessica S. Guy Family Trust that has property on 605 and 607 North Bestgate Road. She opposes rezoning along Ridgely Avenue and the proposed Village Center Overlay. She stated that the Ridgely Avenue Corridor is really the Weems Creek neighborhood and that changing the zoning will negatively impact the neighborhood. She also expressed concerns that the development of a Transit Center on Bestgate Road will add buses to Ridgely Avenue, increasing traffic, noise, and crime. Ms. Malone stated that developers and OPZ do not care about the area or what the Weems Creek Community values. Ms. Malone expressed concern over the lack of responses from OPZ to the public comments.

Judy Wiegel lives on Willow Road across from the Medical Center in the Weems Creek Community. She has lived there for 44 years and provided context on the history of the area. She does not want to live through additional changes that will negatively impact her neighborhood. She commented that the medical offices were permitted under the adopted R15 zoning at that time, and that that the community was previously downzoned from R15 to R2. Ms. Weigel does not support the Village Center Overlay or any changes from residential to commercial zoning in the Ridgely Avenue area.

Robert Hannon lives at 641 Ridgely Avenue and echoed the frustration expressed by others before him. He commented that there is traffic, sediment issues in the creek, and a lack of public sewer and water. More commercial development will exacerbate these issues. He commented that there has been a lack of communication from the SAC and asked who the stakeholders are, and why there has been no representation from their community.

Kaelynn Bedsworth echoed that there have been communication issues and would like better communication from OPZ. She opposes rezoning and the Village Center Overlay because it will reduce quality of life. Ms. Bedsworth noted that the Knights of Columbus Hall is already negatively impacting the neighborhood and that more commercial development is unnecessary as there are vacant commercial spaces in the area. She noted that the most efficient type of development is to reuse existing buildings.

Kate Mahood has been part of the Weems Creek Community since 1986. Ms. Mahood also owns a business on Ridgely Avenue and served on the Region 7 SAC. She chose to be on the SAC because of her interest in preserving the neighborhood's character. Ms. Mahood tried to put the area on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties. She requested that the PAB support the Village Center Overlay to put protections in place because the adopted zoning and Code regulations could allow unwanted development. Ms. Mahood noted that positive parameters need to be set, and that a process is needed for a customized plan. The Village Center Overlay is a planning tool that the community deserves as a tailored solution.

Dave Corddry is a resident of Lindamoore. He supports OPZ's recommendations to deny commercial zoning requests on Ridgely Avenue and is optimistic about the Village Center Overlay. He feels the Village Center Overlay and corresponding Sector Plan will give the community another round of input and create an opportunity for creative solutions. He stated that there is a misunderstanding of what the Village Center Overlay would do - it does not seem to propose development but might enable the community to get things like bike lanes and sidewalks. Despite his optimism he is concerned about providing developers another opportunity to request upzoning. Mr. Corddry commented that he is willing to trust the process outlined in Plan2040 and the Region 7 Plan and encouraged the community to stay involved in the planning process.

Owen Smith lives in the Riverview Court area on the east side of US Route 50. Mr. Smith understands why the community is upset and skeptical about the development process and that there is a lot of well earned mistrust. He stated that no sound barrier was installed and that there is constant noise in the area since the construction of the US 50. Mr. Smith is optimistic about the Village Center Overlay. He recommended the name be changed from Village Center Overlay to "Community Input Opportunity Zone" or something of that nature to better align with the intent of the Sector Plan. Mr. Smith asked Ted Krauss to tell the public about his development plans for the area, and that transparency would be appreciated.

Ted Krauss spoke to the fact that he lives in Annapolis and owns several properties in the Ridgely Avenue area. His company, Landmark Properties, is a small, local company. He commended OPZ for a well written plan and noted that he hoped to see some of the properties along Ridgely Avenue and Willow Road change to C2 zoning. He believes that there are opportunities for revitalization and a certain amount of scale and assembly is needed for such redevelopment. He advocates the upzoning of the parcels along Willow Road and Ridgely Avenue for C2 zoning. He stated that redevelopment would help improve water and sewer in the area. He is supportive of the Village Center Overlay as a backup if his zoning requests are not granted.

Steven Moulton lives at 509 Ridgely Avenue. Mr. Moulton expressed concern that landowners south of U.S. Route 50 were not notified of the OPZ February meeting on the Ridgely Avenue area. He noted that the plan has since corrected the Village Center Overlay boundary to include residents in this area. He commented that he talked to a lot of people in the neighborhood and obtained signatures with a petition and plans to give the petition to OPZ. He thinks the Region 7 Plan is well written, but expressed that there is still mistrust of OPZ that should be addressed. He

stated that the community needs to know what a Village Center Overlay is and have a better understanding of the process. He works for Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works.

Nancy Schubert stated she has been unaware of what was going on in the Ridgely Avenue area and that there has been a lack of communication. She stated that she does not understand what a Village Center Overlay is. She also added that there is a need to address septic problems in the area. Ms. Schubert commented that sidewalks are needed to connect to West Annapolis.

Stacia Roesler is a Lindamoor resident near Ridgely Avenue. She commented that some of the dilapidated properties Mr. Krauss spoke about are owned by him. She stated that overall the community is a desirable neighborhood with high property values. Ms. Roesler advocated for preserving the neighborhood as it is now and does not support commercial upzoning. She added that even the people who support the Village Center Overlay do not support additional commercial zoning.

Richard Dengler lives in Annapolis and spoke about a plan that the City of Annapolis conducted approximately 15 or 20 years ago that proposed mixed-use development along Bay Ridge Road near where the old C&C Liquors is located. He spoke about his frustration with dilapidated vacant commercial properties along Bay Ridge Road which have been abandoned for years. Mr. Dengler suggested that the County and City need to have better coordination in this area because the commercial zoning is not working and redevelopment has not occurred. He added that they have wasted 20 years of stormwater management improvement because these paved areas have been sitting vacant. Mr. Dengler added that Council Member Rodvien responded to his concerns when he reached out via email.

Melanie Arena lives on Luce Creek Drive in the Weems Creek Community. The neighborhood is concerned about the environment, traffic, and increased sediment from additional development. She stated that the community is concerned about what will happen if a Village Center Overlay is adopted. She is not in favor of the Overlay.

Adjournment

Ms. Rosborg motioned to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Mason seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jessica Levy
Secretary, Planning Advisory Board



Gus Kurtz
Chair, Planning Advisory Board

These minutes should not be considered as verbatim, but do encapsulate comments made by the PAB, its staff, and persons who offered comments.