

**MINUTES OF THE ST. MARY'S COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
BAY DISTRICT VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT \* LEXINGTON PARK, MARYLAND  
Monday, June 22, 2009**

Members present were Steven Reeves, Chairman; Brandon Hayden, Shelby Guazzo, Susan McNeill, Merl Evans, Martin Siebert, and Lawrence Chase. Department of Land Use & Growth Management (LUGM) staff present were Derick Berlage, Director; Phil Shire, Deputy Director; Bob Bowles, Planner IV; Jeff Jackman, Senior Planner; Dave Chapman, Capitol Facilities Planner; Grace Brady, Historical Planner; Susie McCauley, Planner I; Sue Veith, Environmental Planner; and Jada Stuckert, Recording Secretary. Deputy County Attorney David Weiskopf was also present.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** – The minutes of June 8, 2009 were approved as presented.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**Comprehensive Plan**

Mr. Berlage stated the draft plan has been prepared in accordance with Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland. A media release was issued May 11, 2009 to generally describe the draft plan, to announce the hearing, and to invite public comment. The legal notice was published in the June 5, 2009 and June 12, 2009 issues of the Enterprise. Copies of the draft plan were placed in the three public libraries in the County, and it was posted on the County's Web site. Mr. Berlage stated a brief overview of the plan will be presented by Mr. Milton Herd.

Mr. Herd, President of Herd Planning & Design, Ltd., gave a brief overview of the Comprehensive Plan outlining what is a Comprehensive Plan, why we are updating it now, major differences, and what the next steps will be.

Chairman Reeves opened the hearing for public comment as follows.

**Christy Henderson, Representing South County Business Association**

Ms. Henderson asked that the 2009 Comprehensive Plan take into consideration the burden and limitations that special use, non-commercial, and RPD designations, et cetera, have placed on many business owners looking to grow their business and improve the community. Ms. Henderson suggested easing regulations and streamlining the process. Ms. Henderson submitted her full written testimony for the record, hereby labeled as Exhibit 1 by the Recording Secretary.

**Joan Gelrud, Representing Human Services Council**

Ms. Gelrud stated there is a significant need in St. Mary's County for community policy planning. Ms. Gelrud stated human service goals will support and strengthen economic development, land use, recreation, and various other goals. Ms. Gelrud asked that a Twelfth Chapter, entitled Human Services Element, be included in the plan. Ms. Gelrud stated this Chapter could be written by the St. Mary's County Human Services Council. Ms. Gelrud submitted her full written testimony for the record, hereby labeled as Exhibit 2 by the Recording Secretary.

**John Levay**

Mr. Levay stated he would like to see a few more businesses and support for those businesses south of Hermanville Road. Mr. Levay stated the County is in need of lodging whether it's hotels, houses, or camping there is a need for lodging. Mr. Levay asked that Park Hall be considered an area for expansion and perhaps relax some of the restrictions in this area.

**John Parlett**

Mr. Parlett stated we need this Comprehensive Plan to truly preserve the rural character of our County. Mr. Parlett stated we need to develop strategies to make farming profitable again. Mr. Parlett stated we need to limit the amount of development in the RPD to the 30 % maximum, currently described in the Adequate Public Facilities Annual Growth Policy. Mr. Parlett stated we need to work to preserve the view shed by implementing larger more dense buffers. Mr. Parlett stated we need to properly develop the Development District, make workforce and affordable housing a priority within the County, place

architectural controls within the Plan to help regulate how our County will look in the future. Mr. Parlett stated we should be cleaning or removing blighted areas and do a better job of enforcing our sign regulations.

**Keith Fairfax, Representing the Southern Maryland Navy Alliance**

Mr. Fairfax stated the Alliance is requesting the Planning Commission review the Encroachment Study Committee Key Findings & Recommendations dated February 2007 and consider the integration of the five recommendations into the update of the plan. Mr. Fairfax submitted his full written testimony and the 2007 Encroachment Study Committee Key Findings & Recommendations for the record, hereby labeled as Exhibit 3 by the Recording Secretary.

**Barbara Bershon, Councilor of the Maryland State Arts Council**

Ms. Bershon proposed an arts section be included in Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Plan to promote the integration of the arts as a vital element of all aspects of life in St. Mary's County for the benefit of the health, welfare, and economic development of its citizens and visitors. Ms. Bershon submitted her full written testimony for the record, hereby labeled as Exhibit 4 by the Recording Secretary.

**Timothy Twigg**

Mr. Twigg stated he purchased a four (4) unit building in St. Inigoes approximately three years ago with the understanding that I could build five (5) units per acre. Mr. Twigg stated with the proposed change in zoning he will lose this right and believes these changes will have a negative impact on the low-income St. Mary's County residents. Mr. Twigg requested that the current zoning in this area remain the same.

**Joseph Cullison**

Mr. Cullison stated recently the Planning Commission considered a development bringing in water and sewer service to the Mill Cove area. Mr. Cullison requested that the Mill Cove area be removed from the Lexington Park Development district citing environmental constraints and included in the Hollywood Town Center.

**Barbara Thompson, Representing Justice and Advocacy Council, Archdiocese of Washington**

Ms. Thompson stated it is in the best interest of the people of St. Mary's and the economy of the County to ensure that adequate affordable housing is available to County residents, particularly those residents employed locally. Ms. Thompson suggested the County address the affordable housing component of the Comprehensive Plan stating there is no quantification of need, the plan contains no definitions, no mention of existing housing resources, and there are no implementation strategies. Ms. Thompson stated more detailed planning needs to be done and an affordable and workforce housing coordinator should be considered. Ms. Thompson submitted her full written testimony, hereby labeled as Exhibit 5 and the "Housing Elements of The Comprehensive Plans of Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Garrett, Kent, Talbot, and Worcester Counties, Maryland", hereby labeled as Exhibit 6 by the Recording Secretary.

**Frank Taylor**

Mr. Taylor referenced Taylor Gas Company in Great Mills and currently zoned DMX. Mr. Taylor stated this business is currently considered a non-conforming use. Mr. Taylor stated as written the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance is overly restrictive on permitted uses for propane storage and sales, Mr. Taylor asked to be able to forward sample language to the Commission for a future text amendment within the 10 day open period.

**Sang Oh, Representing the Millison Property**

Mr. Oh stated the proposal to downgrade this property is being unfairly singled-out for disparate treatment. Mr. Oh submitted his full written comments for the record, hereby labeled as Exhibit 7 by the Recording Secretary.

**Patrick Woodburn**

Mr. Woodburn stated he has specific concerns for the St. Inigoes region. Mr. Woodburn stated in order to promote retention of farmland and the farm industry among family farm owners, the Commission must consider a recommendation to revert the primary residence of a family farm back into the farm

tax rate. Mr. Woodburn submitted his full written testimony for the record, hereby labeled as Exhibit 8 by the Recording Secretary.

**Lisa Rush**

Ms. Rush stated she enjoys the outdoor recreational opportunities in our County. Ms. Rush stated the way to retain this beauty is to grow in ways that are attractive and that she agrees with the comments of Mr. John Parlett.

**Richard Huff**

Mr. Huff stated he is concerned about the possible development of the Mill Cove area. Mr. Huff stated this area was placed in the Lexington Park Development District and should not have been. Mr. Huff stated this area is home to the Critical Area, has steep slopes, it doesn't perk, and this area should not be overly developed due to this. This is more of a rural residential area rather than being in the development district.

**Regina Denney**

Ms. Denney asked how and if this Comprehensive Plan will boost our economy? Ms. Denney asked will this Plan bring more employment opportunities. Ms. Denny asked if this Plan will bring home values back up. Ms. Denney asked how this Plan will affect the taxpayers.

**Carolyn Huff**

Ms. Huff stated there are 50 plus homeowners within the Mill Cove area. Ms. Huff stated currently a developer wants to come in to build double the density. Ms. Huff stated she couldn't expand her shed by 3 feet but a developer has the ability to come in and create even more density. Ms. Huff asked how this is possible. Ms. Huff requested the Mill Cove area removed from the Lexington Park Development District stating further development in this area will damage the peninsula.

**Brooks Jackson**

Mr. Jackson stated the quality of life is very threatened by this Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Jackson stated the 54 homes to be one sixth acre lots in the Mill Cove area should not be allowed. Mr. Jackson stated this document is not being applied practically. Mr. Jackson stated no critical area should be located within a development district and the Commission should review all the watershed areas within the County and remove them from development districts.

**Kathleen Reif, Library Director, Representing Board of Library Trustees**

Ms. Reif recommended including a section on libraries in the Community Facilities, Libraries, and Public Facilities portion of the Plan. Ms. Reif stated these sections should be enhanced with more information about the library's comprehensive facilities plan. Ms. Reif submitted her full written testimony for the record, hereby labeled as Exhibit 9 by the Recording Secretary.

**Paul Downs**

Mr. Downs requested the peninsula of Myrtle Point be removed from the Lexington Park Development District. Mr. Downs described the animal habitat within this area and stated we need to protect these types of areas.

**Diana Dean**

Ms. Dean stated her property is proposed to be removed from the commercial portion of the VMX District. Ms. Dean stated she has recently submitted application for a small farm and flea market however if the down zoning occurs we will not be zoned properly to operate.

**Julie Randall**

Ms. Randall stated there is a need for a separate human services chapter within the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Randall stated Chapter 8, Housing does not adequately address our senior citizen housing and affordable housing for seniors as well as everyone else. Mr. Randall stated Chapter 9; Economic Development does not adequately address jobs within the County. Ms. Randall stated there is no natural job progression for our service workers to move up to the high-tech jobs available in the County.

**Gary Meekins**

Mr. Meekins stated he is concerned that as development continues our beautiful rural county will go downhill. Mr. Meekins stated he lives on Sotterly Road and the Hollywood area should not be part of a town center. Mr. Meekins stated he is not in favor of city water and sewer in this area.

**Charlie Pitts, representing the SMC Solid Waste Advisory Council**

Mr. Pitts stated he would like to see a list of the various plans that may need to be revised for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Pitts stated he knows for sure that the Solid Waste Management Plan will need to be revised.

**Daniel Brown**

Mr. Brown stated if his property is down zoned as proposed he will lose the opportunity to build four (4) units. Mr. Brown stated as a community we need to review and plan for gray water discharge and usage.

**Michael Guy**

Mr. Guy stated his property is proposed to be down zoned and this would be detrimental to his family. Mr. Guy asked that his property not be down zoned. Mr. Guy asked if any of the proposed down zoning areas were slated for water and sewer. Mr. Guy also asked what the effective date of this comprehensive plan would be.

**Jeff Jackman**

Mr. Jackman reviewed eight (8) additional changes to the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Jackman submitted the additional changes for the record, hereby labeled as Exhibit 10 by the Recording Secretary.

Mr. Reeves stated this public hearing will now be closed with the record remaining open until further notice. On July 13, 2009 a second public hearing on the same subject will be held at which time the record for this meeting and the July 13, 2009 record will become one record. The closing of the record will be announced at the July 13, 2009 hearing. This hearing will begin at 6:30 p.m. at Chopticon High School in Morganza. Comments may be submitted to P.O. Box 653, Leonardtown, MD 20650 to the attention of the Department of Land Use and Growth Management.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

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Jada Stuckert  
Recording Secretary

Approved in open session:            July 13, 2009

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Stephen T. Reeves  
Chairman