

**MINUTES OF THE ST. MARY'S COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
CHESAPEAKE BUILDING * LEONARDTOWN, MARYLAND
Monday, July 12, 2010**

Members present were Shelby Guazzo Vice-Chairman, Joe Meinert, Susan McNeill, Martin Seibert, Merl Evans and Lawrence Chase. Brandon Hayden was excused. Department of Land Use & Growth Management (LUGM) staff present were Derick Berlage, Director; Yvonne Chaillet, Zoning Administrator; 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 28, 2010 were approved as presented.

DECISION

Chapter 65 Section 65.3.4.i “Electronic Changeable Copy Sign” – Continued from 6/28/10

Ms. Chaillet gave a brief overview of the text amendment, 6/28/10 meeting and provided the Commission members with a listing of all St. Mary's County Fire and EMS by Zoning District. Ms. Chaillet stated in response to the concern over whether or not all public safety facilities will want an electronic changeable copy sign, the Commission could resolve this by recommending to the County Commissioners that they exempt a public safety facility from the requirements of Chapter 65 under Section 65.2.6 of the Ordinance. Ms. Chaillet stated specific limitations could be placed on size, height, and location without applying the other standards for an electronic changeable copy sign or Chapter 65.

Ms. McNeill stated she remembers previous discussions regarding digital signs where public safety signs are already exempt. Ms. Chaillet stated she does not know of this stipulation however she knows non-profit organizations are allowed signs. Ms. McNeill noted she is concerned that this is a very complex issue that needs to be further examined in much more detail.

Ms. Guazzo stated when the Commission originally crafted the text amendment to allow digital signs the purpose was to allow small businesses to advertise in this manner. Ms. Guazzo stated at this time the Commission firmly stated these signs should be allowed only in the Development Districts, Town Centers and Village Centers.

Ms. McNeill asked if the Hollywood Fire Department could have an off-premise digital sign. Ms. Chaillet stated non-profit organizations are currently allowed three temporary signs to advertise however, they cannot be digital. Mr. Berlage stated Section 65.4.3 would allow an electronic changeable copy sign off-premise as long as it's permanent.

Mr. Evans stated when he heard the County Commissioners discussing this; their concern was not the digital sign or the fact that it would be located in the RPD but rather the proliferation of signs throughout the RPD. Mr. Evans stated we've had issues with our sign ordinance for quite some time and asked when a comprehensive review of the sign regulations will take place. Ms. Chaillet stated she is hoping staff will take this project on however she believes we will continue to see individual citizens come forward with amendments to the sign regulations for their own parcels of land.

Ms. Guazzo stated she honestly feels this is spot zoning. Mr. Weiskopf stated if someone else comes in and asks for the same exception and is denied then yes we could suffer legal consequences.

Mr. Seibert made a motion to accept the resolution as presented and Mr. Chase seconded. Mr. Meinert stated it seems the bottom line is whether or not we want these signs in the RPD and

he does not feel he can support this text amendment as written. Mr. John Gatton stated he disagrees with the idea of an off-site sign and stated the Volunteer Fire Department needs some support as well. Mr. Gatton asked that the Commission consider recommending approval of this text amendment to allow them to have a digital sign. ***The motion failed by a 3-3 vote with Mr. Meinert, Ms. McNeill, and Ms. Guazzo opposed.***

DISCUSSION

Wildewood PUD Update

Mr. Day gave an over of the Wildewood PUD including the 6/10/10 progress report, activity update schedule, sectional approvals, land use programs, updated map as of 6/10/10, open space schedule, and open space detail.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Jada Stuckert
Recording Secretary

Approved in open session: July 26, 2010

Brandon Hayden
Chairman