

**CECIL COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
LAND USE SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

*Date: Monday 19 May 2008
4:00 PM Cecil College Building A*

Attendance

Present

Member

Ann Jackson, Chair	X
Kennard Wiggins, Vice Chair	X
John Bennett	X
Walter Buck	X
John Bunnell	X
Eileen Butler	X
Dan Derr	X
Patrick Doordan	X
Vaughn Ellerton	Absent
Paula Gilley	X
Mike Pugh	X
Donna Tapley	X
Carl Walbeck	X

Other Attendees

Affiliation

Tony DiGiacomo	Cecil County P&Z
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Call to Order (*time/date/location of meeting*) Date: Monday 19 May 2008

4:00 PM Cecil College Building A

Agenda: Monday, May 19, 2008

4:00 Opening Remarks

Review of Chair/Co-Chair Meeting

Review of ERM Meeting

. Review WRE material

4:30 Open discussion of District Goals

Existing CP outline - retain/amend

designated districts

Reference comments on goals from

"homework"

5:30 Call for vote - goals for first draft

5:45 Recap

Discuss the value of June's meeting being a

joint meeting with WRE

6:00 Adjourn

Old Business

The meeting was opened by Ann Jackson, with a brief discussion on scheduling issues and the difficulty of meeting everyone's preferences. She then offered a recap of the Chair/CoChair meeting agenda.

Visitors - Dr. Lane reaffirmed her edict that the public is welcome to attend subcommittee meetings, but cannot comment, or be placed on the record unless invited to do so.

Ann then discussed her meeting with Michael Bayer of ERM and their attempt to "get on the same page" ERM would like us to focus upon specific policy issues and goals. Their task is to provide the technical details and to facilitate our process in a productive way.

The final item was the lack of data from the Water Resources Element. It is hampering WREs effort and as we rely upon WRE for critical information we'll have to progress somehow despite this handicap.

New Business

Ann turned to today's agenda and urged the subcommittee to begin work on a first draft. She suggested that our talks had been productive, but that we would need to move beyond discussion to a forming something more concrete and focused.

Tony DiGiacomo seconded that notion and characterized the other sub-committees as doing the same thing.

Mike Bayer of ERM briefed us on the forward progress and said we could look forward soon to the outcome of the WILMAPCO projections, analysis of those numbers by MDP, including housing units permitted and forecast. The Water Resources data should soon be available as well. It was suggested that we should have a joint meeting with the WRE in June.

Mike then offered some agenda items form our upcoming COC meeting this Wednesday May 21 at 6:30 at Cecil college. There will be presentations by the towns but probably limited to less than ten minutes each.

ERM is assembling a large volume of data and information for attendees (about 150 pages, or 10 MGB) for distribution at that meeting. This news was received with some concern. The information would be discussed at the very meeting, with zero time to review in advance. Mike Pugh suggested that ERM provide an executive summary. Others suggested that more lead time is required. Mike discussed the thorny logistical issue of distributing information, the limits of e-mail, and the information management problems associated with how to fit this into an iterative process.

Ann redirected our focus to the published agenda and began a discussion of the Land Use Districts.

Agriculture District

Donna Tapley began by suggesting we consider an Agricultural District. Dan Derr followed with a proposal that would include protected farms, Natural Resource Districts, Elk Neck, Fair Hill and the like. (His complete written draft is attached at the end of these minutes).

John Bennett offered that there is no specific district of protected woodlands at this time for harvestable forest. Eileen Butler added that it should also include wildlife habitat protection as well. Dan argued that this designation would help to form a basis for PDR/TDR programs and a more uniform viewpoint.

Mike Pugh suggested that this could be done through overlays. Eileen argued the benefits of contiguous farms, suggesting that 200 acre farms for example within the district could be joined by others within a three mile radius. In Delaware in the Agricultural Preservation Program, a farm, 200 acres or larger, can create an Ag District that extends out 3 miles from the center of the farm and any farm within that 3 miles, no matter what its acreage, can opt to join the district and enroll in the agland preservation program. The district “grows” as a new 3 mile radius extends out from that second farm, to include farms within that new 3 mile radius, and so on. It is all voluntary, not mandatory, and a farmer can still develop his/her land if they do not want to preserve it.

Carl Walbeck discussed the need for agricultural district in the NAR and the SAR. John Bennett said the Agriculture Committee was already working this issue and that perhaps we should see what they have to say before we weigh in.

Paula added that an Ag District would be an impossibility. She added " I don't understand how a 'district' can work if it singularly limits the agricultural lands to strictly agricultural without the ability should the need arise for the landowner to be able to sell some land, build home sites for children, or have a new home site for themselves amongst other possibilities." She was in agreement that an overlay is not only more practical but would be a good thing. Then there are some choices as opposed to a lock in for those who do not, for whatever reason, or are unable to continue to farm (or in most of Cecil's farms, continue to rent their land).

Mike Pugh suggested a compromise position as we tried to bring this to a vote, that we vote on the sense that the goal of this subcommittee would be to establish a mechanism to protect donate and publicly owned lands. There followed discussion on whether this was too broad, too narrow or not the right focus. In the end we voted to table the issue until after we had heard from the Ag Committee. There may have been disappointment that we had failed our first test, on an up or down vote, in an inconclusive way, but we were reassured by Mike Bayer that we had nevertheless made material progress.

Village District

Carl Walbeck had submitted a series of questions that were appropriate to the discussion and Ann suggested that we take them to task. The first was the need for Village Districts. Is it necessary? Mike Pugh offered a view that the original purpose was the protection of the villages offering a higher density but in a way to preserve their character. Carl added that it was a way to recognize clusters of houses that had no other official designation

The Village Districts was viewed as a noble but failed effort due to the lack of rules in place to follow up on the designation in the plan by the County government. After a lengthy discussion of the pros and cons, in and out of the Growth corridor, Mike Bayer of ERM was asked by the subcommittee to evaluate the benefits and report back to us with a productive recommendation.

Urban District

Carl Walbeck then asked if we should consider an "Urban District"? This would be a designation for "new towns" of high density sited along transportation nodes as suggested by Vernon Duckett of the CoC. They would be "linear cities" and would take advantage of mass transit.

Mike Pugh added that there is a need for a "town center", mixed use residential, commercial, office, category that would simplify our planning process. Any builder ambitious enough to try would have to get okays from four or five various forms of zoning, provided he or she could find enough land to build upon at present. It almost

cannot be done now, according to Mike. The Planned unit Development tool is awkward and difficult. He suggested that the only way to go in the future will be vertical if we are to get the densities needed for mass transit to be practical.

Mike Bayer offered encouragement in that this is an instance where we are looking forward, rather than looking back to the previous plan. He offered that future growth is “nodal”, and not one flat density across the board.

John Bunnell said that we need regulations and a solid implementation plan if we are to succeed. Mike Bayer suggested that we would need alternatives that would modify the “master plan”, and would unveil a September workshop plan to do so at our Wednesday COC meeting..

Natural Resources Conservation District

John Bennett then offered the notion of a Natural Resources Conservation District that would include forestry, waters, stream bank management, and wildlife habitat, citing the Green Infrastructure Study commissioned by the County. He noted that in Allegheny County their comprehensive plan is based upon watersheds rather than a focus upon economic development.

Eileen Butler noted that the growth corridor has lots of wildlife habitat and a conflict had been established many years ago when the growth corridor was designated. Walter Buck said the Green Infrastructure Study would “gut’ the growth corridor.

Mike Pugh wanted more detail on the Green Infrastructure Study. The Subcommittee had asked for a copy of this study in our previous minutes from the contractor, but it remains an open task.

Next Tasks

The meeting concluded at 6:00PM with an admonishment to continue to focus on vision and policy. In preparation for this meeting, members were asked to annotate a version of the districts goals which Ann had provided in advance. According to Ann, “Unfortunately, we never touched on the goal aspects. If you have your comments in electronic form, you can send them to Michael. He will organize them for our next meeting.”

Recommendations/Action Items for Staff and Consultants *(the first four items are still “open” from our previous meeting.*

1. Tony is asked to present a representative request for major subdivision for a property and he will explain what is required to get it from raw land to a buildable lot. This was a suggestion of Mike Pugh to educate those on the sub committee who are unfamiliar with the subdivision process and its requirements with regard to items such as forestry, wetlands, steep slopes, open space, etc.

2. *Provide WILMAPCO/MDE population projections when they become available.*
3. *Provide ERM assessment of other County's Comp Plans, pros and cons*
4. *Provide County Green Infrastructure Plan, Forestry Plan, Wildlife Action Plan to subcommittee members.*
5. *Provide the Subcommittee an assessment and recommendations on the Village District and its productive applicability as a tool within and without the growth corridor.*

Recommendations/Action Items for Oversight Committee

Adjournment: 6:00 PM

Next meeting: (tentative) Tuesday, 10 June 2008, 3:00 PM Cecil College

Minutes Prepared by: Kennard R. Wiggins, Jr.

Date: 20 May 2008

Dan Derr's Rough draft of proposal for:

PRESERVED AG LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCE LAND DISTRICT

Purpose

The Preserved Ag Land and Natural Resource District identifies land where development rights have been purchased or extinguished, as well as state owned land including the Fair Hill Natural Resource Area and Elk Neck State Forest. The Districts purpose is to preserve agricultural and woodland which result in the following public benefits:

Production of food, timber and other agricultural products

Protection of scenic areas for visual enjoyment and clean air

Preservation and enhancement of wildlife habitat

Protection of watersheds from excess impervious surface, and will enhance aquifer recharge

Will provide tradeoff credits for increasing sewer plant capacity under the recently enabled "Nutrient Cap Management and Trading Policy"

Will serve as a base to which state, county and private land preservation programs can provide incentives to adjoining landowners to expand contiguous areas

Location

The preserved Ag Land and Natural Resource land Districts are dispersed throughout the rural Northern and Southern areas of the county.

Guidelines for infrastructure

Public water and wastewater are not planned for this District. Transportation systems and improvements will vary depending on location of each individual area. The area itself should not impact the capacity of the local transportation system.

Guidelines for Housing Types and Density

Housing type and density are specified in the various land preservation programs.

Guidelines for Non-Residential uses

Activities conducted on the property shall be limited to agricultural, timbering and related uses which include all forms of farming, such as
