

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

*Date: Tuesday June 10, 2008
4:00 PM Cecil College Room TC205*

Attendance

Present

Member

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

Other Attendees

Affiliation

| | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| Tony DiGiacomo | Cecil County P&Z |
| Michael Bayer | ERM |
| Randy Hutton | Oversight Committee |
| Tom McWilliams | Citizen |

Call to Order

Old Business

Chair Ann Jackson called for questions and/or comments concerning May 21 Oversight Committee meeting with the towns. Michael Bayer of ERM asked if there were additional requests for the municipalities. Mike Pugh expressed that he would like to have a response from the City of Newark. The committee agreed. Donna Tapley requested an analysis of the projected boundaries of municipalities. Michael Bayer agreed that both requests were valid and that answers would be shared at the July meeting.

Dan Derr questioned the viability of the Urban Growth Boundaries Agreement that was "signed by one administration and ignored by the next." Tony DiGiacomo responded that he could not respond as to what degree the agreement is ignored and that the agreement is definitely viable.

At this juncture, the Chair interrupted the agenda to catch up on the approval of minutes from the May meeting.

Donna Tapley suggested that the May minutes be amended on page 6, item 3, to read that ERM provide the assessment of other County's Comp Plans, pros and cons to the subcommittee rather than the subcommittee providing the assessment to ERM.

In response, Michael Bayer stated that this would be out of ERM's scope. If the subcommittee had specific policies that we would like to have critiqued with reference to the performance of such policies by other counties, ERM would be happy to research the issue as part of the preparation of the plan and provide findings to the committee.

The minutes were approved with the correction as suggested.

New Business

Tony DiGiacomo outlined the County's development process. Tony handed out a flow chart illustrating the process and explained each step (see attachment).

The process begins with the production of a *Concept Plat*. This plat is reviewed by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) made up of representatives of county and state departments. After the TAC's review, the Concept Plat is submitted to the Planning Commission, which reviews and acts, whether to approve it with conditions, disapprove or table it. The Concept Plat also can be withdrawn. Density and layout are among the elements that the Planning Commission reviews at this stage.

The next step is the preparation of a *Preliminary Plat*. This plat has the most detail of any plat. For this, the petitioner must meet all the conditions set by the Planning Commission for the Concept Plat. The TAC reviews the Preliminary Plat and forwards it

to the Planning Commission for another round of review and action, including approval with conditions. An approved Preliminary Plat remains in force for two years.

The third step is production of the *Final Plat*. For Planning Commission approval of the Final Plat, all conditions of the Preliminary Plat must be met.

The final step is *Recordation*, which can be done when all conditions of the Final Plat approval are met. The plats are submitted for signatures. When they are obtained, the plats are recorded in the Clerk of Court's office. Then the lots can be sold and building permits can be obtained.

Carl Walbeck asked: When lots are created, do they remain on the books in perpetuity and must a developer break ground? The answer was yes in perpetuity and no to breaking ground. Mike Pugh noted that, because of the owner of a recorded lot must pay property tax on it, there is an incentive to develop as soon as possible.

Chair called on the committee resume the discussion of goals for the land use districts. The first topic was the Development District.

Dan Derr said that, before the committee talked about goals, it should discuss the size, location and character of the growth corridor.

Carl Walbeck interjected that, at the Infrastructure Subcommittee meeting earlier in the day, it was suggested that one of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan may be the provision of transit, and that land use would ultimately drive the decision to create town centers and densities that would support transit.

Michael Bayer noted that one of the exercises in the process of developing scenarios will be to identify the forces driving change in the County. One of the forces might be encouraging densities that support transit. The committee recognized this as a valid influence; however, as Eileen Butler pointed out, the Water Resources Element also may come forward as the driving force.

Donna Tapley commented that Perryville and Port Deposit seem to be moving forward with their water and sewage plants while other municipalities in the growth corridor have remained at a stalemate.

Pat Doordan pointed out that there are 11 miles between Perryville and North East that are not within a municipality and that it might not be economically advantageous for the North East water authority to join the county's system. This break in the corridor is one of the major barriers to having "growth corridor" infrastructure.

Paula Gilley pointed out that Smart Growth recognized that a growth corridor should be established, requiring infrastructure, however, the funding has never been available in the municipality or county level.

Walter Buck referenced the county land use plan map and asked whether it was still necessary to have both a suburban district and a Development District in the growth corridor.

The committee was split on that question. Removing the Suburban District might increase the density in the growth corridor, but the question of who would provide water and sewer service would have to be answered.

Michael Bayer suggested that we concentrate more intensely on the overall goals for the districts and less on the specifics as these would be addressed at a later stage of the CP development process. He encouraged us to provide ERM with goals/directions that we would like to see the county achieve by using the new CP as its tool, expressing that implementation would come later.

For the next meeting, the Chair instructed the committee to continue reviewing the goals in the Land Use section of the Comprehensive Plan and to forward any comments to her and/or ERM. Committee members also were asked to consider the big picture in terms of future land use and to develop goals in this manner as well.

The committee's next meeting was set for July 8, from 3 to 5 p.m. at Cecil College, in a room to be determined.