

OFFICIAL MINUTES
Carroll County Planning and Zoning Commission
Work Session
Carroll County Master Plan

September 8, 2011

Location: Carroll County Office Building

Members Present: Dennis Wertz, Chairman
Charles M. Chadwick, Vice Chair
Melvin E. Baile, Jr.
Alec Yeo
Richard J. Soisson
Cynthia L. Cheatwood, Alternate

Members Absent: R. Wayne Barnes
Richard S. Rothschild, Ex-Officio

Present with the Commission were the following persons: Commissioner Robin Frazier; Tom Devilbiss, Brenda Dinne, and Kelly Martin, Department of Land Use, Planning, and Development; Daphne Daly, Bureau of Planning; Clay Black, Bureau of Development Review; Tim Burke, Department of the County Attorney; Jay Voight, Zoning Administration; Jean Knill; Bruce Holstein; Brian Rhoten; Deb Wittle; and members of the press.

CITIZEN INPUT PROCESS

The Commission had received a list of four ideas for the Commission to discuss regarding citizen participation in the Master Plan update process. After a brief discussion, it was the consensus of the Commission to allow citizens the opportunity to make public comments at the beginning and/or end of each chapter/session. Comment cards will be provided for citizens to complete at each work session. These comment cards as well as any e-mail received will be forwarded to the Commission before the next work session and reviewed by the Commission at the next session or the applicable session.

IDENTIFICATION OF COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL LAND

Mr. Devilbiss indicated that the Commissioners would like the Planning Commission to identify areas of opportunity for commercial and industrial development. He noted that the Commission members received copies of the Economic Development Land and Employment Needs Study (EDLENS). Mr. Devilbiss suggested that the Commission review the criteria that was established in the first several chapters of the study and develop their own criteria to identify corridors for future commercial/industrial development.

Mr. Chadwick questioned Mr. Tim Burke, County Attorney, as to whether a rezoning would be valid if the Commission adopted a master plan that anticipates a review of the four quadrants of the County, and then reviews those quadrants comprehensively.

Mr. Burke indicated that was correct. He noted that the Commission must carefully study a wide swath of land and provide justification as to why it should be rezoned in order for the rezoning to

be upheld. Mr. Burke emphasized that the rezoning must be kept comprehensive rather than piecemeal.

Mr. Yeo cautioned that the Commission must be careful not to go back to those areas that were identified by the Pathways Plan process for future commercial/industrial development. The citizens in those areas were very vocal about not wanting rezonings. He noted that considering the rights of property owners becomes a balancing act between the actual property owner and the adjacent landowners. Mr. Yeo suggested that the County has the necessary economic development potential for the next five years at sites like Warfield and the Carroll County Regional Airport.

Mr. Wertz distributed a handout to the Commission which discussed focusing economic development at the existing corridors and business centers that are underutilized or areas with existing public water/sewer service or where it can be easily extended. He suggested that vacancies and underutilized areas be identified and offered incentives for development of employment uses rather than additional retail spaces or fast food restaurants. Mr. Wertz suggested that the underlying zoning regulations, including uses permitted, setbacks, building heights, etc., be modified, on a case-by-case basis, and projects required to have higher quality architecture. He proposed that the regulations should be modified to accommodate employment uses.

After considerable discussion, Mr. Devilbiss suggested that staff work to update basic information from EDLENS and the Economic Development Chapter and come back to the Commission with an inventory of commercial/industrial lands, occupancy information, employment rates, etc. At that point, the Commission can decide to work with the existing inventory or develop criteria for identifying additional lands.

Commissioner Frazier requested that the Commission consider a longer range plan for economic development in the County, rather than focusing just five years ahead.

Ms. Deb Wittle, Mt. Airy, suggested that staff utilize geographic information systems (GIS) to identify properties that meet different levels of criteria and overlay them to ascertain where it logically makes sense to grow the County.

Commissioner Frazier suggested that one of the criteria would be that the land is not already developed in residential use.

Mr. Yeo expressed concern about identifying areas in the plan without the property owner's consent that the Board is requesting. He also suggested that the area south of I-70 was likely to appear in any GIS analysis that was done, but he was unwilling to include that property because of the overwhelming citizen opposition to it. Mr. Yeo questioned how an area that meets the criteria can be excluded without jeopardizing the comprehensiveness of the review.

Mr. Bruce Holstein, Taylorsville, suggested that one of the criteria include that you already know what the citizen response will be to rezoning properties south of I-70.

REVIEW OF CHAPTER 1 – CONCEPTS & INTENTIONS

The Commission began reviewing Chapter 1 of the markup document from Commissioners Rothschild and Frazier, while staff updated language in the 2010 document, as necessary. The Commission discussed removing some of the more political statements from within the markup document with those comments being included in a preface prepared by the Board of County Commissioners. Staff was directed to change all references to the 2010 Plan to 2012. The Commission did not complete their review of Chapter 1, adjourning at approximately 9:15 p.m.

Secretary

Approved