

**MINUTES OF THE ST. MARY'S COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
CHESAPEAKE BUILDING \* LEONARDTOWN, MARYLAND  
Monday, August 11, 2008**

Members present were Stephen Reeves, Howard Thompson, Shelby Guazzo, Brandon Hayden, Susan McNeill, Merl Evans and Lawrence Chase. Department of Land Use & Growth Management (LUGM) staff present were Denis Canavan, Director; Phil Shire, Deputy Director; Bob Bowles, Planner IV; Jeff Jackman, Senior Planner; Dave Berry, Planner II and Jada Stuckert, Recording Secretary. David Weiskopf, Deputy County Attorney was also present.

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

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** – The minutes of July 28, 2008 were approved as presented.

Chairman Reeves stated the Commission would correct the agenda to hear the family conveyance first to be followed by the presentation and finally the decision on the concept site plan.

**FAMILY CONVEYANCE**

**MSUB #07-110-055 – William and Connie Bean Subdivision** – Mr. Berry gave a brief overview stating there are no outstanding issues pertaining to the family conveyance. Mr. William Higgs stated the lining of the road has not been completed and there is an active road maintenance agreement.

*Mr. Thompson made a motion in the matter of MSUB #07-110-055, William and Connie Bean Subdivision, having accepted the staff report and having made findings pursuant to Section 30.11.4 of the Subdivision Ordinance (Criteria for Approval of a Family Conveyance), I move that the Family Conveyance subdivision plan be approved, with the condition that agreements ensuring access to, and use and maintenance of, the road shall be recorded prior to the recordation of the plat and Ms. McNeill seconded. The motion passed by a 7-0 vote.*

**PRESENTATION**

**Work Force Housing Task Force Update** – Mr. Chris Longmore gave an overview stating the dilemma is that a family earning the County's median household income cannot afford a median priced home within the County. Mr. Longmore stated "Workforce Housing" is defined as housing that is affordable to families earning 45% to 110% of the County's median household income.

Mr. Quincy Williams gave an overview of the statistical profile of the workforce housing dilemma. Mr. Williams gave the number of homes on the market between \$100,000 and \$500,000 as of February 16, 2007 stating this requires 110% of the County's median household income to afford a \$337,501 home, of which there were approximately only 200 homes available at less than \$325,001. Mr. Williams stated qualifying income is based on a 6.25% interest rate with a 41% debt to income ratio (DTI). Mr. Williams stated the DTI is derived from adding the cost of the housing payment to the individual's monthly bills as shown on a current credit report and then dividing that number by the individual's gross monthly income. Mr. Williams stated 61.10% of the median household income levels would not support purchasing a \$337,501 home. Mr. Williams stated a family must earn a minimum of \$85,699 with no more than \$500 in monthly bills to be able to afford a median priced home of \$337,501 in St. Mary's County. Mr. Williams stated at this point the County needs to preserve "Traditional" neighborhoods, create new supplies of workforce housing, increase community awareness of the issues and opportunities, and establish an ongoing funding source to sustain the County's workforce housing initiatives.

Ms. Robin Finnacom described "Traditional" neighborhoods as communities built before 1985 with 80 or more lots. Ms. Finnacom reiterated we need to increase the amount of funding dedicated to the County's Neighborhood Preservation Program and advance the placement of this program in the County's Capital Improvement Budget as well as coordinate the replacement/upgrade of public utilities and Infrastructure when needed and renovate/demolish government-owned, blighted properties in traditional neighborhoods.

Mr. Denis Canavan stated to create new supplies of workforce housing he examined the regulatory and zoning options the County may have. Mr. Canavan stated the County could provide density bonuses that actually work, reduce the percentage of required open space, waive the economic impact fee and waive the APF requirements for traffic and stormwater management.

Ms. Barbara Thompson stated the County needs to increase community awareness. Ms. Thompson recommended dedicating a staff member as a "Neighborhood Organizer" to coordinate services and programs designed to increase the County's supply of workforce housing. Mr. Thompson stated this staff member could also work to create or re-activate homeowner's and tenant associations, inform and assist residents of homeownership programs, and identify federal, state and private funding opportunities to pursue.

Mr. Longmore stated the County needs to establish an ongoing source of funding to sustain workforce housing initiatives by dedicating a portion of the County's transfer tax to workforce housing initiatives. Mr. Longmore also recommended developers who receive a bonus density may mitigate their obligation to build workforce housing by providing the cash equivalent of the vacant, finished lot to a dedicated fund. Mr. Longmore stated the County's should investigate the merit of establishing a foundation to support workforce housing initiatives.

Mr. Dennis Nicholson stated St. Mary's County has a healthy economy however it is expensive and gave a list of the County's largest employers. Mr. Nicholson stated the renter occupied 28% and owner occupied 72% have remained the same throughout 2007 and 2008.

Mr. Reeves thanked the Workforce Housing Task Force for their update.

## **DECISION**

**Concept Site Plan #04-132-010 – Oak Crest Center** – Mr. Bowles gave an overview of the project stating this is a continuation from June 23, 2008. Mr. Bowles stated there were two outstanding issues, the proposed traffic mitigation and approval of an updated phasing plan. Mr. Bowles stated Mr. Foster of the State Highway Administration (SHA) was unable to attend the meeting but did respond with a letter which is attached to the updated staff report.

Mr. Guazzo asked what stormwater management and environmental standards would have to be met at the time of approval. Mr. Bowles stated the applicant would have to abide by whatever stormwater management and environmental standards were in affect at the time of approval. Ms. Guazzo asked about the parking regulations. Mr. Bowles stated parking was set forth at the time the PUD was approved however the Commission could request the current parking standards be met.

Mr. Thompson voiced his concern that the SHA letter did not address all the issues. Mr. Longmore stated SHA has reviewed the current plans and is satisfied with the plan moving forward.

***Ms. Guazzo made a motion in the matter of CCSP #04-132-010, Oak Crest Center, having accepted the staff report and having made a finding that the objectives of the approved Planned Unit Development Plan, as amended, have been met, and noting that the***

**referenced project has met all requirements for concept approval with the following conditions:**

- 1. Each phase of the development shall adhere to the current Stormwater Management regulations set forth at that time; and**
- 2. The development shall meet the current parking regulations set forth in today's Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance; and**
- 3. The applicant shall return to the Planning Commission and give an update on the development, including traffic, after the completion of phase 2 or in June 2012 whichever comes first.**

***I move that the concept site plan be approved and Mr. Thompson seconded. The motion passed by a 7-0 vote.***

**ANNOUNCEMENTS - None**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

---

Jada Stuckert  
Recording Secretary

Approved in open session: August 25, 2008

---

Stephen T. Reeves  
Chairman