

**MINUTES OF THE ST. MARY'S COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING
ROOM 14 * GOVERNMENTAL CENTER * LEONARDTOWN, MARYLAND
Monday, September 26, 2005**

Members present were Joseph St. Clair, Vice Chair; Lawrence Chase; Julia King; Steve Reeves; and Howard Thompson. Larry Greenwell and Bryan Barthelme were excused. Department of Land Use and Growth Management (LUGM) staff present was Denis Canavan, Director; Jeff Jackman, Senior Planner IV; Bob Bowles, Planner II; Dave Berry, Planner I; and Sharon Sharrer, Recording Secretary. Deputy County Attorney Heidi E. Dudderar was also present.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – The minutes of September 12, 2005 were approved as recorded.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

CCSP #05-132-021 – BOLINGS OLD VILLAGE CENTER, Phase 1

The applicant is requesting review and approval of a concept site plan for an 8,000 square foot commercial center. The property contains 1.178 acres; is zoned Rural Commercial Limited (RCL); and is located on Old MD Route 5, approximately 300 feet north of its intersection with Baptist Church Road in Mechanicsville, Maryland; Tax Map 9, Grid 21, Parcel 54.

Owner: Joseph Boling
Agent: Glenn Gass

Mr. Gass explained that, even though the adjoining property shares the same zoning, the applicant has agreed to a request to maintain a 30-foot green space bufferyard between the properties. He said that all parking will be below the hill and hidden behind the building because the sewer system will be in front of the building. Mr. Gass explained that the Ordinance does provide relief with the use of bio-retention facilities, and asked that the Planning Commission consider allowing a reduction of the landscape standards since the site is not visible from the road and the applicant will be using bio-retention methods. Mr. Bowles explained that staff will work with the applicant on the required landscaping during the final site plan stage.

Mr. Thompson moved that having accepted the staff report, dated September 16, 2005; and having made a finding that the objectives of Section 60.5.3 of the St. Mary's County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance have been met; and noting that the referenced project has met all requirements for concept approval; the Planning Commission grant the concept site plan approval, as requested. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reeves and passed by a 5-0 vote.

DISCUSSION

WATER POLICY TASK FORCE REPORT ON THE PATAPSCO AQUIFER STUDY

Present: Barne Wheeler, Water Policy Task Force
Steve King, Director, Metropolitan Commission
(MetCom)

Mr. Wheeler & Mr. King presented a brief overview of the Water Policy Task Force (WPTF) report on the Patapsco Aquifer Study, explaining that the WPTF mission is to inform the County Commissioners and County residents on the status of the County's water supplies. Mr. Wheeler explained that their thrust is to make certain that supplies of water are adequate, not just for now but for generations to come.

In their 2002 report, the Water Policy Task Force made three basic findings. First, the models need to be modified to find the sustainable supply from each aquifer. Next, hard data on private well usage is badly needed, but is currently non-existent. Finally, potential reservoir sites must be identified before they are lost to development.

The State Advisory Committee's 2004 report on the 2002 WPTF findings made several observations. First, there are significant and varied water problems throughout the State. Second, a better model is needed to guide sustainable development. Next, funding cuts for observation wells are not acceptable, and 100 more observation wells are needed. Finally, manpower cuts which have occurred at Maryland Geological Survey (MGS) and Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) have severely hampered mission performance.

Mr. Wheeler explained that the WPTF analysis of this report is that St. Mary's County must resist the temptation to simply file away this information just because we are not currently in a crisis situation. He explained that it is just a matter of time before the management levels are reached. Mr. Wheeler also noted that the private well consumption figures used in the reports are just an assumption which may not be correct, and that he feels it was a significant

oversight to assume that the use of “other major users” will remain constant for the next 25 years.

Mr. Wheeler provided Planning Commission members with a draft letter, addressed to the newly appointed State Water Resources Management Advisory Committee, which the WPTF plans to take to the Board of County Commissioners. He explained that, when they make their presentation to the Board of County Commissioners, they plan to ask the Commissions to sign this draft letter. Mr. Wheeler asked the Planning Commission to provide any of their comments or thoughts to him on both the briefing and draft letter.

BOARD OF EDUCATION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Present: Kimberly Howe, Capital Planning Coordinator

Ms. Howe presented a brief overview of St. Mary’s County Public Schools’ Capital Improvement Program, explaining that a presentation will be made for the Board of County Commissioners on October 4, 2005. She explained that, in order for the County to qualify for State funding for new schools, over 50% of the projected enrollment for that new school must already be in place in the existing schools and the rest of the students must be coming. Therefore, overcrowding is necessary to justify State funding for new schools.

Ms. Howe explained that a large part of the reason St. Mary’s County is in the current situation at the elementary school level has to do with State Department of Education mandates. One of the latest mandates was the implementation of full-day kindergarten. This doubled the necessary amount of seats required for kindergarten students, which totaled the enrollment of an entire elementary school county-wide. The class size at the State level for elementary schools was also lowered. Ms. Howe explained that almost two of the three new elementary schools that are currently in their program are as a direct result of changes in educational programs. State-wide changes of this nature create a need for schools in counties across the state, so counties across the State are looking for funding for new elementary schools.

Ms. Howe explained that the Board of County Commissioners had consolidated all of the site acquisition money, which had been spread out over multiple years, and moved it into a 2006 project. She said this consolidation was a true benefit to the school system, allowing them to buy the land now for those future schools instead of looking for the land just prior to the development of the projects. It also provides the opportunity to buy those sites now, at current dollars instead of what they may cost five or six years in the future. Ms. Howe explained that a Clearinghouse review and the State Superintendent’s authorization are both necessary prior to site acquisition. The 24-acre site on Indian Bridge Road has already been through that process, and is pending a land transfer with the County and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) at this

time. A 55-acre site adjacent to the Wildewood PUD, which would be home to one elementary and one middle school site, and a 45-acre site on St. Andrew's Church Road, which would be home to one elementary school, are both under contingent contract at this time. Ms. Howe explained that they are in negotiation for a 26-acre site on the Clark Farm in Leonardtown. Additional elementary sites and one high school site in the development district are actively being pursued.

ST. MARY'S COUNTY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Present: Elaine Kramer, Director of Finance

Ms. Kramer provided the Planning Commission members with a timeline for the preparation of the FY2007 budget, requesting that Commission members submit any suggestions for priorities or any items they would like to have considered for inclusion in that budget to Mr. Canavan by October 14, 2005.

ST. MARY'S HURRICANE RELIEF FUND

A brief presentation was made about St. Mary's Hurricane Relief Fund, which was established by a number of local businesses, churches, service organizations, and individuals in St. Mary's County to provide aid to some of the victims of Hurricane Katrina. More information can be found at <http://www.smc-hurricane-relief-fund.org>.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Sharon J. Sharrer
Recording Secretary

Approved in open session:
October 11, 2005

Larry Greenwell
Chairman