

Minutes

Walkersville Planning Commission Meeting

July 27, 2021

Commission Chairman David Ennis called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with members Mike Kuster, Dick Brady, Ray Santullo, and Tom Gilbert present. Also present was Town Planner Susan Hauver. Members Russ Winch and Michelle Doster were absent. The meeting was also live-streamed on the Town's Facebook page.

1. Minutes

Member Kuster made a motion, seconded by Member Santullo, to approve the minutes of the June 22, 2021 meeting as corrected. The motion passed on a vote of 4-0-1 (Ennis abstained).

Member Gilbert made a motion, seconded by Member Kuster, to approve the minutes of the June 29, 2021 workshop. The motion passed on a vote of 5-0.

Member Brady made a motion, seconded by Member Gilbert, to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2021 meeting as corrected. The motion passed on a vote of 5-0.

Member Kuster informed the Commission members that Mr. Mike Staley had come to his home to discuss his Comprehensive Plan request for his property. Mr. Staley expressed his displeasure at the Commission's discussion about using Glade Creek to denote the edge of development on his property. Member Gilbert said Mr. Staley also came to his house. Mr. Gilbert encouraged Mr. Staley to speak to the Commission members at a meeting.

2. Comprehensive Plan discussion: DeCaro property

Planner Hauver said the owners would like to see the property designated for townhouse development. The development potential would be about 30 units. They are open to a different land use designation, depending on what the Town is looking for. Member Santullo felt that B-O Business Office would make more sense, since the only access to the property would be from 194.

Members discussed concerns about the property being developed with townhouses: traffic noise and congestion, overcrowded schools, access to/from the northbound lanes after MD 194 is widened.

The consensus was that a commercial use would be preferable to residential.

4. Comprehensive Plan discussion

Chairman Ennis suggested that the Commission consider two growth scenarios: no growth and slow growth.

Walker Farm: Member Gilbert suggested that the Walker Farm might be a good location for a senior center. He feels that a one-story, accessible building would be a welcomed addition to the community. It need not be located on that farm specifically.

Member Santullo felt the Town should be looking at mixed uses for the Walker Farm. He suggested a wedding or entertainment venue, a brewery. Springfield Manor is an example of the way the property could be used. Member Kuster noted agri-tourism and agreed about the senior center idea. The use needs to reflect the character of the community.

Crum Road/MD 194 intersection: Chairman Ennis said that the State Highway Administration has denied requests for a traffic light to be installed at Crum Road. It seems like a waste of time to go to SHA again.

Member Brady said that the Town should plan to put in a tunnel under MD 194 at Crum Road. If it's not planned, it will never be considered. It would provide a safe crossing of MD 194.

Commission members also suggested that Crum Road could be re-aligned through the Walker Farm to intersect with MD 194 opposite Nicodemus Road.

Bowers property: Member Gilbert said that he would be open to the property being annexed into Town as agriculture and then being considered for development when the Comp Plan is updated in ten years.

It was noted that the Crum property on the west side of U.S. 15, just south of Biggs Ford Road, is proposed for development, which will impact area roads and schools.

Future well site: It was suggested that the Town secure a well in the Israel Creek basin. The Walker Farm would be a possible site.

Franck property: Mr. Brady noted that access to this property is difficult. The best entrance would be opposite Commerce Drive off Nicodemus Road. This would require access through the FCPS Staff Development Center parking lot. A frontage road along MD 194 between Crum Road and Nicodemus Road would also be a possible means of access.

Realignment of Dublin Road: It was noted that the plan for Dublin Road to be re-aligned across the Whitmore farm should remain on the Comprehensive Plan.

Senior Housing: Mr. Brady noted the need for Senior housing, like developments in Thurmont and Middletown.

7. Announcements

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan J. Hauver