

Minutes

Walkersville Planning Commission Workshop

August 9, 2022

Commission Chairman David Ennis called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with members Mike Kuster, Dick Brady, Ray Santullo, Russ Winch and Gary Baker present. Also present were Town Planner Susan Hauver and Communications Specialist Ashley Bailey. Member Nathan Shatto was absent. The meeting was also live-streamed on the Town's website.

1. Lonza, 8830 Biggs Ford Rd—Introduction of plans for facility expansion

Mr. Philipp Kuenti of Lonza introduced his team: Mr. Charlie Scherr and Donna Liston from Lonza, and Blaine Linkous of WBCM. He presented a short video describing Lonza's history and the activity at their Walkersville facility. They plan two expansions: one within the existing building footprint and the other will involve the construction of a multi-story building. They are still in the process of determining their needs and the proposed size and height of the new building. Once they complete their feasibility studies they expect to move into the execution phase in 2023. They want to start the discussion with the Town early to get ahead of the curve.

Member Winch spoke positively of Lonza's contribution to the Town as a local employer and noted that they are good neighbors. He would want to ensure that traffic in and out is primarily by way of Biggs Ford Road and not Pennsylvania Avenue.

Member Ennis said that the Town has a history of working with Lonza and appreciated them coming to the meeting.

Member Brady shared his idea of the Town working with Lonza on a solar project on site to generate electricity to serve the Lonza campus as well as the Town government facilities.

Member Santullo asked if they would be addressing the issue of flooding on their property and at their entrance. WBCM will be looking at the issue and there are a variety of options to address the issue.

2. Comprehensive Plan update: Proposed bike trail & adjacent land uses

Planner Hauver presented maps showing the proposed rail-trail that will eventually pass through Town. Funding for the southern section, extending from Monocacy Boulevard in Frederick to Fountain Rock Park, was recently approved.

Member Winch expressed concern about the proximity of the proposed trail to existing residences. He wondered if the path would be lighted and fenced.

Mr. Paul Kolvalcic of the Walkersville Southern Railroad addressed the Commission. He has been involved in the trail planning. He felt the trail would complement their scenic railroad and generate tourism. He said that the County is moving more quickly than the City so the section from Monocacy Boulevard across the Monocacy River and extending to Fountain Rock Park will probably be completed before section in the City extending from the Frederick MARC station, up East Street and across MD 26. He said the trail will mostly be about 20' from the tracks, and in areas it is closer they would install fence between the trail and the tracks.

It was noted that the County bike path coordinator is Joe Kelley. Staff will have him attend a future meeting.

Mr. Kovalcic also said that the Walkersville Southern Railroad is improving the old Glade Valley Mill building and they plan to modernize it and install restroom facilities. They will be back when their plans are further along.

Chairman Ennis said that the consensus of the Commission was in favor of bringing the trail into Town.

Mr. Brady noted with regard to the previous discussion with Lonza, that the Town Code needs to be amended to address solar facilities.

There were no other public comments.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan J. Hauver