

## Minutes

### Walkersville Planning Commission Meeting

September 13, 2022

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

#### 1. Minutes

***Member Brady made a motion, seconded by Member Santullo, to approve the minutes of the August 23, 2022 meeting as corrected. The motion passed on a vote of 6-0.***

#### 2. New use in Old Town Mixed Use District: Bombshell Beauty Co. (salon), 25A Maple Avenue

Planner Hauver presented information about the proposed new use to occupy one side of the building, next to Brainstorm Comics. Brainstorm Comics formerly used the space, but now only occupy half the building. The use is permitted in the OTM zoning district.

Ms. Amy Wages, the business owner and applicant, noted that her business has been in Walkersville for a year and a half and she needs more space. A lot of her clients are from Walkersville, so she would like to stay in Town. The two businesses that would occupy the building have different hours that complement each other.

Mr. Santullo congratulated Ms. Wages on the success of her business. Mr. Baker said he rarely sees an overflow of cars parked at the property. Mr. Shatto suggested improving the lighting of the property. Mr. Ennis asked about the actual site plan for the building, and Ms. Hauver said that the approved site plan was not changing.

***Member Kuster made a motion, seconded by Member Shatto, to approve the change of use of 25A Maple Avenue, from Brainstorm Comics to Bombshell Beauty Company, a beauty salon, with the condition that the site plan be attached to the application on file. The motion passed on a vote of 6-0.***

#### 3. Comprehensive Plan Update discussion

##### A. Staley property, w/s Glade Road

Planner Hauver reviewed Mr. Staley's request to change the land use designation of his property from Limited Industrial and Agricultural to High Density Residential and Low Density Residential.

Member Brady spoke in favor of the request, noting the need for potential future growth, and the opportunity to continue the townhouse pattern of Longley Green. He thought the Town might not be ready for the rest of the property to be developed with single family homes. He also noted the ability to access Devilbiss Bridge Road from the property, which would potentially limit the traffic impact on MD 194.

Member Santullo expressed his concerns about the development of the property, noting that there was resistance to the development of Longley Green and the need for road improvements on Devilbiss Bridge Road, if it were to serve as an access point. He noted that new development should occur in areas with existing infrastructure.

Member Kuster said that he opposes changing property that is designated agricultural but this property makes the most sense. He would consider changing the portion of the property designated Industrial, to improve the visual effect of the Longley Green neighborhood.

Member Ennis expressed his support for changing the property's plan designation to residential. There are no properties currently available for residential development. Walkersville is unusual

to have agricultural land within Town limits. He felt the location of this property on the back side of Town would lessen the impact on MD 194. He also noted that the developer would be subject to the APFO for schools and traffic, as recommended by the Plan. Infrastructure improvements needed to support the development would be the responsibility of the developer. The market will determine the rate of growth, and based on the number of years it took to build out other properties, it is likely to take a long time to build out. He supports the expansion of townhouse area.

Mr. Staley declined to speak.

Chairman Ennis called for a vote, to give staff direction.

***Member Brady, made a motion, seconded by Member Baker, to consider High Density Residential on the area currently designated Limited Industrial, and to consider Low Density Residential on the balance of the property, with the caveat that we assume it will be developed in stages. The motion passed on a vote of 4-2 (Kuster and Santullo voted against the motion)***

#### **B. Stone property, w/s MD 194**

Planner Hauver reviewed the request on the Stone property, filed on Mrs. Stone's behalf by Mr. Jeremy Holder of Ausherman Properties. The applicant requested a Low Density Residential designation, and also proposed an alternative design process and design standards that would allow for a mix of housing types and ensure the inclusion of neighborhood amenities.

Mr. Bruce Dean, attorney representing the property owner, said that they are proposing a development that would be a beautiful gateway to the town. It would not be a cookie-cutter, boring development. The Kellerton development in Frederick captures the developers vision and reflects the type of development process they are proposing.

Mr. Jeremy Holder of Ausherman Properties, noted the opportunity to build a great gateway and implement new techniques to make it aesthetically pleasing. He said that they would be yielding a lot of control over the development to the Town and that design process would be long. He encouraged the Planning Commission to lead the Town as to where growth occurs. The Burgess and Commissioners determine when growth occurs. If the Town does not allow growth, the cost of housing will escalate and there will be an impact on youth athletics. He said the Town has not grown rapidly over the last twenty years.

Member Santullo spoke in favor of the request, noting the applicants' excellent and comprehensive presentations. He feels the development of this property represents smart growth. He compared the property to the Staley property in terms of population growth, road infrastructure, and links to other developments and parks. The development of the Stone property with 200 to 300 homes would represent less than 10% growth, and Walkersville should accommodate some growth. The road infrastructure to serve the development is already in place. The development would provide a link to Spring View Estates, parks, and shopping areas and represent smart growth. It would be a great plan for walkability.

Member Brady felt the dwelling unit and population impacts of the Staley property versus the Stone property would not be that much different.

Member Brady said he felt this property was the most appropriate location for future development, especially if they do a nice job. He feels the development of this property ought to be part of the entrance to the Town, and they should make it the keystone. He feels they should decide whether the property should be agricultural or residential.

Member Kuster complimented the proposed design of the property, noting that this is how the Town ought to do planning. He liked the mixed level of pricing of homes that was presented. However, he noted the terrible traffic on 194. He feels they should not plan for growth until the

road is dualized. Biggs Ford Road is even worse, considering its intersection with Route 15. He sees the merits of the development, but he would still vote no.

Member Baker feels Walkersville does not need to be everything to everyone. Affordability is all relative. People looking forward to more affordable housing need to go to Thurmont and Emmitsburg. The homes in Spring View Estates and Longley Green are not entry-level prices. Homes on the Stone property won't be affordable.

Member Santullo said the traffic impacts should be mitigated as best as possible. Member Ennis noted the plan would include a recommendation that a traffic section be added to the APFO.

Member Brady said that it was important for citizens to understand the difference between the 20 year Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning map. Changing the plan designation just allows them to come to the Town with plans and begin the process.

**Member Brady made a motion, seconded by member Santullo, to consider designating the Stone Low Density Residential on the plan. The motion failed on a 3-3 vote (Members Shatto, Baker, Kuster opposed).**

#### **C. Delaplaine property, north side of MD 26, between MD 194 and Crum Road**

Mr. Brady said they should leave the Delaplaine property the way it is on the plan. The Town's intent is to see it remain Agricultural.

**Member Kuster made a motion, seconded by Member Brady, to deny the Delaplaine's request that their property be designated for development. The motion passed on a vote of 6-0.**

#### **D. Bowers**

**Member Brady made a motion, seconded by Member Kuster, to deny the Bowers' request that their property be designated for development. The motion passed on a vote of 6-0.**

#### **E. Greenwood property (formerly Nancy Nicodemus Franck, w/s MD 194 at Nicodemus Road)**

Mr. Dick Greenwood noted he was born and raised in Walkersville and is moving back to town. He would like the flexibility to explore age-restricted housing on the property. He knows there are accessibility issues. He would like to have some say over the use of the property, since it is located behind the home he is moving into.

Planner Hauver said she had added a Neighborhood Business designation to the plan that would correspond to the B-3 zoning district. B-3 is a mixed use district that permits residential development in accordance with the standards of the R-4 District.

Commission members discussed the difficulties of developing the property as well as its proximity to MD 194. They expressed a willingness to allow the property owner to see he might be able to do with the property, since agriculture is not the right long term designation.

**Member Santullo made a motion, seconded by Member Brady, to change the designation of the Greenwood property from Agricultural to Neighborhood Business. The motion passed on a vote of 5-0-1 (Baker abstained and noted that Mr. Greenwood is his wife's cousin).**

#### **F. Decaro property**

Mr. Josh Reeder said that the owner, Mr. Jeff Decaro, would be interested in high density age-restricted housing. They would like the same opportunity to explore the possibilities.

**Member Brady made a motion, seconded by Member Santullo, to change the designation of the Decaro property from Agricultural to Neighborhood Business. The motion passed on a vote of 6-0.**



**G. East Frederick Street area, between East Frederick St and MD 194**

**Member Kuster made a motion, seconded by Member Santullo to designate the entire block bounded by E. Frederick St, MD 194 and Crum Road Neighborhood Business. The motion passed on a vote of 6-0.**

**4. Public Comments**

There were no additional public comments.

Planner Hauver said that she would be working on the plan map and text to present a complete draft to the Commission. Commission members will have at least two weeks to review the draft prior to a vote to release it for public review.

Mr. Santullo said he would be away on September 27 and October 11.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan J. Hauver