

Minutes
Walkersville Planning Commission Meeting
July 11, 2023

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

1. Minutes: June 27, 2023

Member Kuster made a motion, seconded by Member Winch, to approve the minutes of the June 27, 2023 meeting. The minutes were approved on a vote of 7-0.

2. Circle K, 100 Sandstone Drive, conversion of convenience store space to Taqueria Los Primos Restaurant

Member Brady apologized to Planner Hauver for misreading or misunderstanding an email and responding that there were issues that were not addressed. Consequently, he realized he was in error, and that issues had been addressed properly.

Mr. Flores, representing the restaurant, arrived late. Before he arrived, Member Winch commented that the Town needs to be consistent in the way it handles property owners who establish uses that may not be in compliance with the Code. He cited the installation of shipping containers in places he did not think they should be located.

Planner Hauver reviewed the history of the gas station on the property, noting that when the ownership changed in 2015, the service bays were eliminated and a chicken vendor shared the space with the convenience store. The chicken vendor is gone, and at least half of the convenience store space has been converted to a restaurant. Mr. Flores owns the restaurant and leases the spaces from the property owner. The use was established without the zoning and permit approvals. Mr. Flores has been working with Frederick County permits staff to obtain the appropriate permits. Planner Hauver noted the use and parking are in compliance with the Code. The signage installed exceeds the permitted 50 square feet per vendor on site.

Mr. Flores explained he was unaware of the local permit requirements. Commission members discussed the signage and Mr. Flores agreed to eliminate some of the signage. It was noted that the property owner needs to come to the Town and sort out the signage for the whole site. Mr. Flores said he would contact the owner.

3. Draft Comprehensive Plan Update – Release for public review

Planner Hauver requested that the Commission vote to release the draft plan for public review. She intends to finish editing the document and send it out for review on Friday, July 14, 2023.

Member Brady made a motion, seconded by Member Shatto, for staff to distribute the draft Comprehensive Plan for public review. The motion passed on a vote of 6-1 (Winch opposed)

Member Winch explained that he voted against the motion because the plan allows residential growth which is not supported by a majority of the Town residents.

4. Code Updates—Zoning and Subdivision Regulations

Planner Hauver said the Town is in the process of digitizing the Town Code so that it will be available and searchable online. Part of the process entails updating the Code with regard to archaic and duplicative language, minor corrections, changes in agency name changes, and

State and County Code reference changes, and other non-substantive amendments. The Commission will hold a public hearing on the changes to the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations on August 8.

5. Public Comment

Ms. Darby Jones, representing the Stone property, spoke on behalf of the request that their property be designated for residential development on the draft plan. She noted that the property is surrounded by development. Mrs. Stone has assembled a great team who would work with the Town on the design and development of her property.

Member Brady noted his support of the residential designation on the Stone property, noting that the applicants are willing to work with the Town on a new zoning category. He feels this is a gateway property that would draw attention away from Discovery as you enter the Town. He is disappointed the Planning Commission said no to their request, and feels growth would be good for the Town.

Member Winch noted his support of development for businesses. He feels the Commission needs to take into account what people want, and that an overwhelming number do not want residential growth.

There were no additional public comments.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan J. Hauver