

FREDERICK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of Meeting for
March 15, 2023 (day mtg)
In Person/Virtual Meeting

See video for further meeting details: <http://frederickcountymd.gov/5956/Video-Archives>

Members Present: Craig Hicks, Chair; Joel Rensberger, Vice Chair; Tim Davis, Secretary; Sam Tressler III, Carole Sepe; Robert White, Jr., and Masai Troutman.

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Kimberly Gaines, Livable Frederick Director; Kathy Mitchell, Senior Assistant County Attorney; Denis Superczynski, Livable Frederick Planning Manager; John Dimitriou, Livable Frederick Design Planner; and Karen James, Administrative Specialist.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Mr. Hicks
2. **ROLL CALL** - Mr. Hicks
3. **PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS**

Mr. Tressler expressed concern over the number of large projects currently being heard by the Planning Commission and the back and forth between projects. He asked if it would be better to work on a single project and then move on. Members shared their ideas. Solutions are being sought with regard to the scheduling of meetings. Mr. White shared his historical knowledge of the Planning Commission and the number of meetings in past years.

4. AGENCY COMMENTS / AGENDA BRIEFING **INFORMATIONAL**

Ms. Gaines reminded the members of the 6:30 p.m. meeting this day, along with two meetings scheduled in April that include Development Review items and Livable Frederick-related workshops.

5. SOUTH FREDERICK CORRIDORS PLAN **WORKSHOP**

*Kimberly Gaines, Director, Livable Frederick Planning & Design Office
Denis Superczynski, Livable Frederick Planning Manager
John Dimitriou, Livable Frederick Design Planner*

Ms. Gaines gave a brief recap, explaining that the current draft plan is the Planning Commission's second draft plan, reflecting changes and discussions from meetings and workshops.

Mr. Dimitriou began his presentation with a review of text changes including edits, corrections, revisions, and new and revised maps. Planning Commission members posed questions of staff members which led to a discussion about the need for additional schools. Likewise, the need for new public roads, new public parks, and other community amenities were explored.

Mr. Rensberger asked about implementation specifics – specifics missing from the "Strategies for Implementation" to include APFO considerations.

The presentation continued with Mr. Dimitriou sharing recommended revisions based on discussions with community members and others, and received feedback from the Planning Commission members.

Break taken at 11:03 a.m. Meeting resumed at 11:10 a.m.

The next steps were considered, including sending the plan to Maryland Department of Planning for 60-day review.

Public Comment:

In-Person: 0

Live call-ins: 0

Recorded Messages: 2

Presentation and discussion continued.

Decision: Mr. Tressler moved that the Planning Commission submit the South Frederick Corridors Plan to the State for 60-day review. Mr. White seconded the motion. Mr. Superczynski asked to clarify that the motion includes “as edited today” – edits discussed today. Mr. Hicks asked if that was consistent with Mr. Tressler’s motion; Mr. Tressler agreed that it was. Motion passed 7-0-0-0.

Planning Commission members	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Hicks-Chair	X			
Rensberger Vice-Chair	X			
Davis-Secretary	X			
Tressler	X			
Sepe	X			
White	X			
Troutman	X			

6. SUGARLOAF RURAL HERITAGE OVERLAY DISTRICT

WORKSHOP

(Public comment will be accepted)

*Kimberly Gaines, Director, Livable Frederick Planning & Design Office
Denis Superczynski, Livable Frederick Planning Manager*

Prior to the start of the presentation, Planning Commissioner Sepe provided a response to public comment received via e-mail addressing the topic of the cut-out. Mr. Hicks expressed to the writer of the e-mail that the Planning Commission acts as a body. There is a vote and the majority is the decision. He further stated that the Planning Commission will not entertain criticism of individual Planning Commissioners as it is not productive and invited anyone with concerns to review the record of the discussion (held January 19, 2022).

Ms. Sepe then brought up the topic of data centers in response to e-mails received by the Planning Commission, stating that, “there is no proposal in the Sugarloaf plan for a data center. It is not zoned for a data center. It cannot happen unless there is a rezoning -- a piecemeal rezoning, which is not something that’s easily done.” Mr. Hicks shared his agreement with the statement saying, “it is not on the table with us,” and further stated, “there has been misinformation circulating.”

Mr. White then said, "This is the problem, there's much paranoia in politics in the nation right now and I think this has overlapped into local issues as well. When somebody passes on a rumor about something and somebody else generates a form letter that they send to everybody they know and say, send this in, that expands the misinformation that is being spread around there. And while I don't like it, as others do not like it, I think that that just is part of what's happening in the political realm today. I think you [Sepe and Hicks] are absolutely right in explaining to people what is and what is not the factual truth of the matter, and one hopes that will help."

Ms. Gaines then began the presentation with a brief history of the Sugarloaf Plan. This was followed by the draft changes to the Sugarloaf Rural Heritage Overlay District that were made based on feedback received at small group discussions, issues that have come up throughout the planning process, and some of the amendments that were introduced by County Council members. Edits recommended at the prior meeting were reviewed line by line. Suggestions for additional edits were presented and discussed.

Lunch break taken at 12:36 p.m. Meeting resumed at 1:20 p.m.

Ms. Gaines and Mr. Superczynski continued with their presentation.

Decision: Following much discussion about building size, Mr. Rensberger moved that the Planning Commission recommend that Ms. Gaines change the maximum non-agricultural, non-residential building size to 10,000 square feet. Mr. White seconded the motion that passed 4-3-0-0.

Planning Commission members	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Hicks-Chair		X		
Rensberger Vice-Chair	X			
Davis-Secretary		X		
Tressler	X			
Sepe		X		
White	X			
Troutman	X			

Planning Commission members continued reviewing edits and asking questions of staff. Changes made during their conversations will be reflected in the next draft revision.

Following the staff presentation, Mr. Hicks announced that Public Comment would be accepted.

Public Comment:

In-Person: 6

Live call-ins: 0

Recorded Messages: 2

Additional discussion by Planning Commission members took place. Ms. Gaines said staff would provide a clean version and redline version of the latest draft to be reviewed, most likely at the April 19, 2023 Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Hicks declared the meeting adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

Craig Hicks
Craig Hicks, Chair

May 18, 2023
Date