

MINUTES
Baltimore County Planning Board Meeting
February 5, 2015

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Minutes

February 5, 2015

Call to order, introduction of Board members, pledge of allegiance to the Flag, and announcements

Vice Chairman Paul Miller called the meeting of the Baltimore County Planning Board to order at 4:45 p.m. The following members were:

Present

- Mr. Paul Miller
- Mr. Randy Thompson
- Ms. Christina Berzins
- Mr. Mark Schlossberg
- Mr. Howard Perlow
- Mr. Scott Jenkins
- Mr. Jon Herbst
- Ms. Nancy Hafford
- Mr. Eric Lamb

Absent

- Mr. N. Scott Phillips
- Mr. Rainier Harvey
- Ms. Lori Graf
- Mr. Wayne McGinnis
- Mr. Jeffrey Gordon
- Mr. Scott Holupka

County staff present included Andrea Van Arsdale, Jeff Mayhew, Steve Weber, Lynn Lanham, Matt Diana, and Janice Graves.

Review of Today's Agenda

Vice Chairman Miller asked if there were any changes to the tentative Agenda. Staff indicated that there were no changes to the tentative agenda.

Minutes of the January 15, 2015 meeting

There was one correction to the January 15, 2015 minutes. Jeff Perlow, not Howard Perlow, was cited, in error, in the minutes. The correction was made and noted by the Planning Board. Mr. Miller moved to accept the Minutes, as amended, of the January 15, 2015 meeting. Mr. McGinnis seconded the motion, which unanimously passed at 4:48 p.m. Absent were Messrs. Phillips, Harvey, McGinnis, Gordon and Holupka as well as Ms. Graf.

Other Business

1. Recent County Council Legislation of interest to the Board

Matt Diana gave a report on the recent County Council Legislation of interest to the Board.

a. Bill 72-14 – The C.T. District of Towson; East Towson

A bill for the purpose of redefining a portion of the C.T. District of Towson to which certain zoning regulation requirements are not applicable; authorizing certain additional exemptions in certain cases; requiring open space waiver fees to be utilized in a certain area; providing certain building height limitations in or near the East Towson Community Conservation Area; and generally relating to exemptions for certain properties in the C.T. District of Towson and building height limitations in or near the East Towson Community Conservation Area.

Adjournment of the Board Meeting

Vice Chairman Miller asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Schlossberg made the motion to adjourn and Mr. Thompson seconded. The motion passed unanimously at 4:55 p.m. Absent were Messrs. Phillips, Harvey, McGinnis, Gordon and Holupka as well as Ms. Graf.

Items for Public Hearing

1. Basic Services Maps

Steve Weber from the Department of Public works was in attendance to present the updated basic services maps. Mr. Weber noted that there were three changes to the transportation map. The intersection of Pulaski Highway and 66th Street has been changed from a ‘D’ classification to an ‘F’ classification, as has the intersection of Baltimore National Pike and Rolling Road. Also, the intersection of Pulaski Highway and Ebenezer Road has been changed from a ‘D’ classification to an ‘E’ classification.

Since no one signed up to comment at the Public Hearing, Vice Chairman Miller called for a motion to adjourn the Public Hearing. Mr. Thompson made the motion and Ms. Hafford seconded the motion, which passed unanimously at 5:06 p.m. Absent were Messrs. Phillips, Harvey, McGinnis, Gordon and Holupka as well as Ms. Graf.

However, after the adjournment of the Public Hearing, Mr. Weber remained to answer any questions that the Planning Board had. Mr. Schlossberg inquired about three intersections along Falls Road in the Greenspring Valley area, specifically the intersections of Falls Road and Joppa Road, Falls Road and Greenspring Valley Road and Falls Road and Seminary Avenue, and how their levels of service have changed. Mr. Weber noted that those intersections are all failing intersections. The issue in that area is that the Joppa Road and Falls Road intersection has been an ‘F’ level intersection for quite some and regardless of what happens at the other intersections, as long as the Falls Road and Joppa Road intersection remains at an ‘F’ level of service the others will remain at their current level of service too. Mr. Weber continued by stating that the volume of traffic going through those intersections is higher than what they can handle. Physical modifications would have to occur to improve those intersections. However, when a deficiency is placed on the map it triggers further research from the County and additional funds to be allocated in order to remedy the deficiency.

There was an issue of whether or not the roads being State roads impacted the County’s ability to repair and/or improve the intersections. Mr. Weber noted that, first and foremost, safety and capacity issues

dictate changes to the intersections. He continued by stating that the County works with the State all the time to improve joint County and State intersections, noting specifically the intersection of Pulaski Highway and Middle River Road where the County contributed financially to help repair that intersection.

Mr. Miller noted that the Falls Road intersections have been failing for years, even after the County attempted to address the issues, and that he doesn't see anything that could be done without spending extreme amounts of money. Mr. Weber responded by saying that there are fixes, from an engineering standpoint, that could solve the issues over time on Falls Road. Mr. Weber also noted that the planned I-695 widening will alleviate some of the pressure on Joppa Road (and others) by shifting some of the commuter traffic back onto I-695. Traffic on I-695 has been so bad over the years that drivers started using arterial roads to travel and not I-695, which added to the commuter traffic on roads such as Joppa Road.

Mr. Perlow asked Mr. Weber to explain the criteria used to evaluate these intersections. Mr. Weber responded by saying that at the inception of the Basic Services in 1979 the standard was to utilize the Highway Capacity Manual of 1965. While standards have shifted since then, this is a directly measurable standard still used to calculate the levels of service for County intersections. Groups of surveyors go out to each 'D', 'E' and 'F' rated intersection and determine not only how much vehicular traffic there is traveling in each direction, but how long it takes the last stopped car to get through the intersection when the light changes to green. A percentage is then calculated based on how many trips it takes for that last car to get through the intersection. These intersections are evaluated based on the worst approach during the worst hour of the day. Therefore, even if the intersection is operating normally during the other parts of the day, it will still be evaluated based on its performance during the worst hour of the day.

Mr. Thompson asked about the intersection of Pulaski Highway and Ebenezer Road and at what level it is rated. Mr. Weber stated that it runs at a level of service 'E', but that it has 90 trips left until it reaches halfway between an 'E' and 'F' level of service. Mr. Thompson asked if the train tracks there are taken into consideration. Mr. Weber responded that the issues at that intersection have been reported at the afternoon peak hours and that he is not sure if there have been any trains crossing that intersection during the time of the surveys. Mr. Thompson also asked if it was possible to have 3 lanes at that intersection (one turning left, one turning right and one straight travel lane). Mr. Weber responded that he did not think it would be possible currently, but with road widening it could happen in the future.

Mr. Lamb asked whether the State also measures and grades the intersections where State roads and County roads intersect. Mr. Weber responded that the State does not routinely study these intersections to the level that the County does, but yes the State does rate them also. Mr. Lamb also asked if the County plans to change the standard being used from the 1965 manual. Mr. Weber stated that at this time there is no intention to change the standard.

Mr. Thompson asked if there was a standard for left and right turn lanes and the length of time that the signal stays on, and if there is a standard for that. Mr. Weber responded that the turn signals should adjust based on demand for that turn. He also noted that the County is shifting towards video detection but that there are still many intersections that use loop timing, which is a method that uses wiring in the road bed that measures magnetic fields as the cars go over them. If indeed that signal is malfunctioning, Mr. Weber stated that he could send a report the State Highway Administration noting that there have been issues with the left turn signal at the Pulaski Highway and Ebenezer Road intersection and that they should investigate it further.

Adjournment of Board Meeting

Vice Chairman Miller asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Perlow made the motion to adjourn and Mr. Thompson seconded. The motion passed unanimously at 5:35 p.m. Absent were Messrs. Phillips, Harvey, McGinnis, Gordon and Holupka as well as Ms. Graf.