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City of Salisbury – Wicomico County

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
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JULIE M. GIORDANO
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BUNKY LUFFMAN
DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

MINUTES

The Salisbury-Wicomico County Planning and Zoning Commission ("Commission") met in regular session on March 20, 2025, in Room 301, Council Chambers, Government Office Building, with the following persons participating:

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Charles "Chip" Dashiell, Chairman
Daniel Moreno-Holt
Matt Drew
Mandel Copeland
Joe Holloway
D'Shawn Doughty

PLANNING STAFF:

Amanda Rodriguez, City of Salisbury, Department of Infrastructure and Development ("DID")
Henry Eure, City of Salisbury, DID
Tracey G. Taylor, Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development ("PZCD")
Janae Merchant, Recording Secretary, PZCD

Laura Ryan, City of Salisbury, Department of Law
Andrew Illuminati, Wicomico County, Department of Law

Chairman Dashiell called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

MINUTES: The minutes from February 20, 2025, were brought forward for approval. Chairman Dashiell requested a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Daniel Moreno-Holt recused himself since he was not at the February meeting. Mr. Matt Drew entered a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Joe Holloway, and duly carried. The minutes from the February 20, 2025, meeting were **APPROVED**.

PRELIMINARY/FINAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPROVAL – SALISBURY MARYLAND KENNEL CLUB – Salisbury Maryland Kennel Club, Inc., rep. by Parker and Associates – Winterplace Parkway – LB-1 Light Business & Institutional District – Winterplace Executive Park – M-0039, G-0010, P-0720 – (B. Thayne)

Mr. Moreno-Holt recused himself.

Ms. Becky Thayne, Ms. Diane Spalding, a Salisbury Maryland Kennel Club, Inc.'s Board of Directors member, and Mr. Brock Parker of Parker and Associates approached the table. Ms. Thayne presented the Staff Report.

The applicant requested approval to construct an 11,710 sq. ft. building directly to the west of the existing building at 31663 Winterplace Parkway. This development plan also proposed developing the adjacent lot to provide parking for the expanded business. The new building will accommodate equipment storage and provide extra space for training and exhibitions.

Staff recommended that the Planning Commission grant approval for the proposed Salisbury Maryland Kennel Club subject to the following six (6) conditions.

1. The 30-day window following the February 27th Board of Appeals meeting must pass without appeal so that the parking deviation necessary for approval of this plan can be granted.
2. The site shall be developed in accordance with the approved Development Plan. Minor plan adjustments may be approved by the Wicomico County Zoning Administrator.
3. Subject to building permit approval by the Planning and Zoning Permits and Inspections Division.
4. Subject to further review and approval for stormwater management by the Wicomico County Public Works Department.
5. A corrected plat dissolving the lot line between the two existing lots must be recorded prior to the issuance of any building permits for the site.
6. Any future proposed signage must be approved by the Planning Commission.

Mr. Parker added that one of the challenges they experience is when they set up the agility course, they have to take it all back down to have their obedience classes. It is a conflict of space. This building will be large enough to accommodate obedience and agility courses and leave each of them set up.

Chairman Dashiell stated that he would entertain a motion to approve the Development Plan for the Salisbury Maryland Kennel Club, subject to the six (6) conditions listed in the Staff Report. Mr. Drew entered a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Doughty and duly carried.

Chairman Dashiell stated the motion was **APPROVED**.

PRELIMINARY COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPROVAL – VILLAGE AT MITCHELL POND APARTMENTS – Homes for America, rep. by Lane Engineering, LLC – 1117 Parsons Road – R-5A Zoning District – M-0106, G-0014, P-1118 – #25-006 (A. Rodriquez)

Ms. Amanda Rodriquez, Ms. Deepthi Jain from Homes for America, Mr. Tim Glass from Lane Engineering, and Mr. Robert Lane from Studio 343 approached the table. Ms. Rodriquez presented the Staff Report.

The applicant requested approval to modify the existing ten (10) apartment buildings. It is

proposed that they have both exterior and interior renovations. Exterior renovations include new roofing, siding, windows, doors, and entrance lights and repairs to the existing exterior stairs and stairwells. Interior renovations include new fixtures and finishes. Four (4) of the units will be renovated to become fully Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) compliant, with two (2) additional units being upgraded to accommodate individuals with visual or hearing impairments. The applicant also proposed performing general site upgrades to enhance visibility and security, as well as bringing the existing infrastructure into ADA compliance.

The existing 1,025 sq. ft. laundry and maintenance building will be demolished and replaced with a new 1,446 sq. ft. community center that includes a kitchenette, two (2) restrooms, and a business center. The existing 1,814 sq. ft. leasing office will be fully rehabilitated to include the laundry and maintenance facilities.

Staff recommended that the Planning Commission grant approval for the Revised Final Comprehensive Development Plan subject to five (5) conditions.

1. The site shall be developed in accordance with a Final Comprehensive Development Plan Approval that meets all Code Requirements. Minor plan adjustments may be approved by the Salisbury Department of Infrastructure and Development.
2. Install a City Standard compliant fire hydrant along Mitchell Road as indicated on the Comprehensive Development Plan.
3. Provide a revised sign plan for Planning Commission approval prior to issuance of a sign permit.
4. Provide a detailed landscaping plan for review by the Department of Infrastructure and Development to include additional landscaping to offset the increase in parking.
5. This approval is subject to further review and approval by the Salisbury Department of Infrastructure and Development, Salisbury Fire Department, and other applicable agencies.

Ms. Jain mentioned these units serve families that earn 30% and 50% of the Area Median Income (“AMI”). They intend to preserve the affordable units through rehabilitation and renovation of the property.

Mr. Glass added that they intend to bring the property to current ADA accessibility standards. The landscaping plans will be submitted to Staff for review.

Mr. Moreno-Holt asked about the sidewalk along Parsons Road. Mr. Glass said the intersection had been redone, and the four (4) corners had handicapped ramps and crosswalks. They will remove the pavement up to the site, so the mobility of pedestrians going back and forth on Parsons will remain unchanged, and there will be no cross traffic.

Mr. Holloway inquired if there was a fence around Mitchell Pond to keep children from running into it. Mr. Glass indicated a fence will be around the pond and the on-site playground.

Mr. D’Shawn Doughty asked how the conversation started regarding closing the entrance off Parsons Road. Ms. Jain said it started as a security conversation because vehicles were speeding to enter the development, and the property has several children. Mr. Drew recommended adding a designated area for turning around so unfamiliar drivers do not get stuck trying to exit the site from this prior ingress/egress area.

Chairman Dashiell requested information on their Landscaping Plan. Mr. Glass said they would comply with the requirements. They intend to remove some dead wood around the property and enhance the shaded areas.

Chairman Dashiell stated that he would entertain a motion to approve the Revised Final Comprehensive Development Plan for The Village at Mitchell Pond Apartments, subject to the five (5) conditions listed in the Staff Report. Mr. Holloway entered a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Doughty and duly carried.

Chairman Dashiell stated the motion was **APPROVED**.

Chairman Dashiell welcomed Ms. Michele Gregory from the City Council to the meeting.

DISSOLUTION OF THE SALISBURY-WICOMICO COUNTY JOINT PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION (Julie Giordano and Mayor Randy Taylor)

Ms. Julie Giordano, County Executive, and Mayor Randy Taylor approached the table.

Ms. Giordano indicated that she and the Mayor believe it is time to dissolve the combined Planning Commission. All our municipalities, besides Salisbury, have their own Planning Commission. This is because the residents in that area should focus on their municipality. She had analyzed the previous agendas and discovered that many items listed were Salisbury projects. County resources are being utilized to plan and organize City projects when their time could be better spent focusing on County projects and needs. The change would better align with our Comprehensive Plans, and we can avoid conflicts of interest.

Ms. Giordano mentioned ten (10) items to support the dissolution of the County/City Planning and Zoning Commission.

1. Historical Separation
2. Efficient Use of Staff
3. Localized Decision-Making
4. Divergent Needs and Priorities
5. Accountability and Representation
6. Streamlined Approval Processes
7. Enhanced Public Engagement
8. Better Alignment with Comprehensive Plans
9. Avoiding Conflicts of Interest
10. Precedent in Other Jurisdictions

Mayor Taylor said there had been an overwhelming number of city applications and that allocating planning resource expenses became problematic. Since there are separate planning staff, it would make sense to separate the commission and make it a more vertical approval process.

Ms. Giordano added that both attorneys have drafted legislative bills for the County and City Councils to review and approve. The County's goal is to have seven (7) Commission members, while the Mayor added that they anticipate a five (5) member Commission. She also said she would provide a transition plan for the dissolution of the Planning Commission.

Mr. Holloway supported the separation of the Commission even though there have not been any serious issues over the past seventy (70) years.

Mr. Doughty inquired about the timeline for these changes. Ms. Giordano responded by saying they are potentially looking at August or September. The County Staff will be available to assist the City

Staff in this transition.

Chairman Dashiell asked the attorneys to provide the next steps. Ms. Laura Ryan stated that it depends on what sections of the code will be changed. Any changes would come before the Commission as any text amendment does. First, there will be a work session and then a public hearing. However, if there are not many changes in the Zoning Code, additional work would not be needed. Mr. Andrew Illuminati added the current Planning Commission review and comment would be beneficial. Ultimately, the County Council will look at the County's proposal. Ms. Ryan also said the actual legislation would select a start date a few months out, so it would not be effective immediately.

Chairman Dashiell inquired about the process for the City's Comprehensive Plan. Mayor Taylor explained that the plan is for the city to complete data collection at the stakeholder group meetings. Once the division has been made, they will be prepared for a more thorough conversation.

Mr. Illuminati stated in Chapter 64 of the County Code there is mention of an areawide planning organization. If there ever becomes a point to consider a broader planning approach, the entire County can come together.

Mr. Drew did not support the split of the Planning Commission for various reasons. He believes it will eliminate regional coordination and advantages in economic development. He also thinks they would lose coordination and innovative thinking, such as annexation and growth management, as well as public engagement and transparency.

Ms. Tracey Taylor mentioned that although the Planning Commission might dissolve into separate City and County Commissions, she assured the Planning Commission that regional planning efforts will continue between Wicomico County and all its municipalities. As a part of the comprehensive plan processes, County Planning works with all jurisdictions. We review their plans and provide comments to them and will provide guidance if they choose to include us in their meetings and update sessions. We also work jointly with Dave Ryan, Executive Director of Salisbury-Wicomico County Economic Development, and with the Department of Commerce. Additionally, the County has an RFP out now for the Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan update and County Planning Staff will be the ones meeting with each municipality and gaining input for the Plan.

A lengthy discussion on the City's Comprehensive Plan ensued with respect to how the current City/County Planning Commission should review the City's Comprehensive Plan given the potential split of the Commission. Chairman Dashiell expressed concern over the current Commission spending a great deal of time reviewing the draft City Plan if this Commission was not going to be the one to ultimately make a recommendation on the Draft Plan. Mayor Taylor agreed that it will likely be a separate City Commission that will review the final Draft Plan, but that Staff is working on getting a revised schedule for the Draft Plan and City Staff will keep the current Planning Commission updated as the City works through this process.

DISCUSSION – CANNABIS TEXT AMENDMENT (A. Illuminati and T. Taylor)

Mr. Illuminati mentioned that the County has limited growing and processing of cannabis in the I-1 and I-2 Districts as a permitted use. They have also limited sales to the I-1, I-2, C-1, C-2, and the C3 Districts by special exception. However, the County did not differentiate between micro and standard licenses. A micro license authorizes the holder to do a smaller portion of what a standard license does. For example, a grower cannot operate at more than 10,000 sq. ft at a micro license, but a standard license can be up to 300,000 sq. ft. Also, a micro dispensary can only operate as a delivery service, not

a physical storefront, with no more than ten (10) employees. Currently, both licenses are lumped together in the Code. The question is, should a micro license be allowed in the A-1 District?

Ms. Taylor added that we have our first dispensary request in the County at the Board of Appeals meeting this month. It would be located in Delmar near Foskey Lane. She added that Cannabis Legislation is an ever-changing topic, and new state regulations could be passed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Taylor mentioned adding a standing item to the monthly agenda for the dissolution of the Commission to provide updates. She announced the County had a pre-bid meeting for the Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan update, and there were four (4) interested consultants. Ms. Taylor also announced she has included money in the FY'26 budget for the County Comprehensive Plan update. The County also has an RFP out for a housing study focused primarily on the condition of existing housing stock, which includes all the municipalities except Salisbury. The last update was completed in 2006 – 2007.

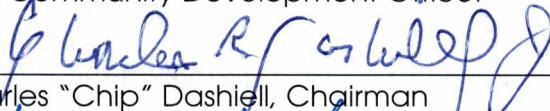
Regarding the potential City/County split of the Planning Commission, Ms. Taylor spoke with the Mayor, and mentioned that Janae is willing to help train City Staff in preparing the packages, taking the meeting minutes, and sitting here during the meetings to train. County Planning has offered to do all that during the transition and even sit with City Staff for some time once we become separated.

With no additional comments, Chairman Dashiell requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Holloway made the motion, seconded by Mr. Doughty and duly carried.

The meeting adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

The next regular Commission meeting will be on April 17, 2025,

This is a summary of the proceedings of this meeting. Detailed information is in the permanent files of each case as presented and filed in the Wicomico County Department of Planning and Zoning and Community Development Office.


Charles "Chip" Dashiell, Chairman


Tracey G. Taylor, Secretary


Janae Merchant, Recording Secretary