Salisbury
MARYLAND

Salisbury Planning Commission

April 9, 2026

MINUTES

The Salisbury Planning Commission met in session on Thursday, **April 9, 2026**. The meeting took place at 125 N. Division St, Room 301, with attendance as follows:

COMMISSIONERS:
David Chiddenton, Chair
Matt Drew, Vice Chair
Mike Piorunski
Susan Rall
Anthony Dickerson

CITY STAFF
Nicholas Voitiuc, Director of DID
Betsy Jackson, City Planner
Zachary White, Associate Planner
Scarlett Liberto, Associate Planner
Henry Pearson, Associate Planner
Laura Ryan, City Attorney

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **ROLL CALL:**
Mr. Chiddenton took roll call of the Planning Commission members.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
Mr. Chiddenton requested a motion to approve the minutes from the March 12th meeting.

Mr. Piorunski motioned for approval. It was seconded by Ms. Rall and the motion carried.

The minutes from the March 12th, 2026 meeting were **APPROVED.**

4. **DISCUSSION**

SIGN PLAN – CROSSING AT SUMMIT POINTE – The Crossing at Summit Pointe LLC rep. by Attar Enterprises – 122 Parker Rd. – R-10A – M-0038, G-0012, P- 0295 – #202600438 (H. Pearson)

Mr. Henry Pearson approached the table. Mr. Pearson presented the staff report.

He stated that a development is currently under construction on Old Ocean City Road, bounded by Beaglin Park Drive (west), Old Ocean City Road (south), and Parker Road (east). He stated that the R-10A district has no explicit sign regulations, so staff applied R5A standards.

Chairman Chiddenton asked the commission members if they had any comments. Hearing none, Mr. Chiddenton asked for a motion to approve.

Anthony Dickerson entered a motioned to approve, seconded by Mr. Piorunski. Chairman Chiddenton stated that the motion was **APPROVED (5-0).**

FINAL COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN – VILLAGE AT CANAL PARK PHASE 2 – Canal Park LLC, rep. by PLITKO Engineering – Canal Park Drive, R5-A Residential – M-0117, G- 0014, P-0181, Lots 2B, 2C, & 3A - #23-030 (Z. White)

Mr. Zachary White approached the table. Mr. White presented the comprehensive development plan. The proposed development is a 16-unit townhouse-style apartment development on three lots along Canal Park Drive, to be combined with two adjacent lots prior to construction. Phase 2 would add 1.25 acres for a total development area of 3.36 acres across both phases. The combined unit count will be 41 units.

Mr. White presented the approval history and an overview of the development plan.

Chairman Chiddenton raised issues that need to be addressed. He confirmed that the former clubhouse and pool were removed in 2007, prior to this project. He raised the issue of compliance with Maryland state law requiring recycling facilities for multi-family developments over 10 units. The applicant confirmed that space exists near the dumpsters, and stated willingness to accommodate single-stream recycling. Mr. Piorunski asked which private vendors offer recycling pickup (Seagull, Waste Management, etc.). Ms. Betsy Jackson stated that adequate space should be provided for recycling and the developer may select the vendor. Further, Ms. Susan Rall stated that the party could make it a condition to provide adequate space for a recycling container.

It was noted that Mr. Matt Drew arrived late. Mr. Drew stated that the Phase 2 plan showed Phase 1 as 'existing' when it had not yet been built. He asked about the removal of a parking easement on the Phase 2 property. The applicant confirmed that this had been resolved via a re-subdivision plat. He asked about wetlands setbacks. The applicant confirmed the that there were no regulated wetlands on site. He asked about the handicap fishing pier referenced in community impact statement. The applicant stated that the pier and other amenities (pickleball courts, basketball) have been removed from the plan, and that an amended community impact statement will need to be submitted to reflect these changes.

Mr. Drew recommended that a single condo association covers shared amenities, utilities, and stormwater management across both phases. Ms. Jackson noted condo documents must come before the Planning Commission for approval, and Mr. Drew directed this to be added as a condition.

Mr. Drew raised concern about the retaining wall on the south/pond side, which may reach 10 ft in height. He recommended a minimum setback from the forest conservation easement equal to at least the wall height (suggested 15 ft) to allow for construction access and future maintenance. Ms. Jackson noted this condition could significantly alter the site plan; potentially shifting the layout and affecting stormwater and amenities.

Chairman Chiddenton opened the meeting to public comment on this application. Members of the Canal Woods community addressed the Commission:

Justin Hemel presented a petition signed by approximately 50% of Canal Woods residents. He requested as a condition of approval that the new development join the master HOA. He cited shared concerns over trash, landscaping, snow plowing, and road maintenance costs, and noted that construction vehicles may damage community roads.

Sheila McQuinn, a Canal Woods resident, spoke. She described the community as isolated with a single road in and out. She raised concerns about the city's responsibility for infrastructure improvements including the lift station, the road sinking/flooding issue under Army Corps of Engineers review, bulkheading requirements, and the impact of heavy construction vehicles on the deteriorating road.

Shahriar Khan expressed community support for housing growth while noting concerns about externalities on existing residents. He requested that several conditions be required, including: (1) joining the master HOA; (2) a construction management plan; (3) additional soil testing given demolition of a mid-century building on site for which a demolition permit cannot be found; and (4) grid soil testing for contaminants.

Jacob Davis said that he supported development but emphasized the importance of joining the master HOA to maintain community cohesion and shared responsibility for common areas.

Chairman Chiddenton closed questions from the public. He raised again the question of the pool, and what state said pool is currently in. The applicant responded that they do not have information on it.

Mr. Drew asked whether the developers have agreed on how to fund the project. Mr. White responded that this is a completely separate operation, and Mr. Nicholas Voitiuc added that such concerns will be covered by the engineering review and if an upgrade is required, it will be required as part of the final approval and site plan approval.

Mr. Drew inquired if a bulkhead will be a requirement for the property. The applicant confirmed that there is currently an existing bulkhead at the rear of Phase 2.

Mr. Drew raised a question on the road sinking issue. Mr. Voitiuc noted that sewer capacity issues are handled through engineering review and that an Army Corps road study was confirmed it to be a flooding and low road issue, not a sinking issue.

Mr. Drew inquired on what the Master HOA plan will be moving forward. The applicant stated that revising condo documents at this stage is not feasible given agreements already in place with the general contractor, but committed to encouraging future ownership to join the master HOA once the units are sold.

Chairman Chiddenton asked the commission members if they had any comments, hearing none Mr. Chiddenton asked for a motion to approve. Before moving to approval, Ms. Jackson presented the conditions added by commission:

- Sign plan must be submitted to Planning Commission for approval prior to installation.
- Completed condo association documents must come before Planning Commission for approval.
- Add recycling facility with adequate space near dumpsters.
- Provide amended community impact statement for Phase 1 and Phase 2 reflecting current amenity plan.
- Retaining wall maintenance easement — setback from forest conservation easement to be determined and reflected in a revised site plan.

Given that the retaining wall condition would likely require significant changes to the site plan, Ms. Jackson recommended tabling the application rather than approving with conditions, so that the revised plan could be reviewed and approved as the final plan of record.

Ms. Jackson said she would provide the applicant with a written list of required revisions. The application will return to Planning Commission after revisions are made.

Chairman Chiddenton made the motion to table the application. Mr. Anthony Dickerson entered the motion, seconded by Ms. Susan Rall, and the motion was **APPROVED (5-0).**

WORK SESSION – Text amendment to add multi-use facility to the Light Business and Institutional District (Z. White)

Mr. White approached the table. Mr. White presented a text amendment to add "multi-use facility" as a permitted use in the Light Business and Institutional District.

Mr. Drew asked what the genesis of his proposal is. Mr. White responded that this text amendment would permit multiple uses in one building, allowing for better land use and reduce awkward configurations in units with multiple businesses.

In response, Mr. Drew cited a Dunkin' Donuts/Baskin-Robbins in same building as an example of multi-tenant professional buildings.

Ms. Jackson inputted that what brought this to the party's attention was that a building in the LBI district was subdivided into multiple business spaces without permission. Ms. Jackson determined the use makes sense and the current restriction appears to be an unintended gap in the code.

Chairman Chiddenton opened the floor for public comment. No public comment was received.

Commission agreed to advance the text amendment to public hearing. No formal motion was required at work session stage and next steps will be to schedule public hearing.

WORK SESSION – Text amendment to alter location requirements for cannabis growers and processors (S. Liberto & B. Jackson)

Ms. Scarlett Liberto approached the table. Ms. Liberto presented research and proposed amendments to current cannabis location restrictions, which are considered overly restrictive.

Ms. Jackson presented a visual map, presenting the current 500 ft and proposed 250 ft buffers overlaid on industrial park and light industrial zones. Mr. Henry Pearson explained the meaning of the symbols and representations within the map.

Mr. Drew posed a clarification on if these uses are permitted uses, rather than special exceptions. Ms. Liberto responded that this is correct. Mr. Drew recommended making decisions on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Piorunski raised a concern that the visual map may not be accurate in representing the actual commercial space and possible land use. Further explanation of the map was discussed by the Commission and the Staff.

Chairman Chiddenton opened the floor for public comment. No public comment was received.

The Commission discussed that they were comfortable eliminating the 1,000 ft distance requirement, but preferred retaining the 500 ft sensitive-area buffer as a by-right standard. They discussed adding a special exception process allowing the buffer to be reduced to 250 ft on a case-by-case basis.

Mrs. Jackson said that staff will draft revised language incorporating the agreed framework and bring back with formal motion with a public hearing to follow.

Work Session – Review the remainder of the public comment received by staff and determine what changes or additions to make in response:

Ms. Jackson approached the table. Ms. Jackson presented and reviewed outstanding public comments on Chapters 7 (Transportation), 8 (Community Facilities), and 10 (Environment/Sustainability), presenting staff responses and seeking Commission consensus on each item.

Chapter 7: Transportation

- Bike and pedestrian projects to be added to the Comprehensive Plan (not CIP); CIP now includes: citywide traffic signal upgrades, urban greenway improvements, North Mill Street reconstruction, and Naylor Mill Road corridor study.
- Urban Greenway (Pemberton Park to Shoemaker Pond Park, 11 phases): To be re-added to the plan.
- Port/multi-user facility: Staff reached out to Greater Salisbury Commission; the Delmarva Water Transport Committee confirmed still active, but there will be more updates to follow.
- Downtown parking: Acknowledged as unsatisfactory in the plan. Staff discussed need for an ongoing oversight body (e.g., reactivating the Central Business District Commission) rather than a one-time study. Staff recommended an implementation strategy and for another study to be done to encompass all the known developments and development potential for the Downtown area. Mr. Piorunski and Mr. Drew referenced a body with regular review mandate, noting involvement of planning staff and ABCD department.
- Stroads/Road design: Staff recommended avoiding the term "stroad". Commission agreed on adding discussion supporting pedestrian-friendly redesign where possible, referencing vision zero goals. Recent Chick-fil-A site on Route 13 cited as positive example (consolidated access points).
- Speed enforcement: Implementation strategy to include mandatory speed reductions and targeted enforcement on high-crash corridors "where possible" to account for state highway jurisdiction.
- Transportation capital project prioritization based on crash data: To be added, with language clarifying that other factors (funding, environmental constraints) also apply.
- Adopt-a-Road program: To be added in Chapter 10
- Airport: Addressed the existing paragraph on third airport service confirmed present; no change needed.
- In response to request for city-owned parking facilities paragraph repeating what is in Chapter 7, staff recommended that this paragraph should just be removed to avoid duplicates and redundancy.
- Agreed to rewrite goals to include a standalone priority for the safety of all user, especially vulnerable road users.
- In response to discussing river dependent users, such as Vulcan and Chesapeake Shipbuilding, and their economic impact, Staff stated that this was outside the scope of what is needed in the comprehensive plan and require additional research and economic impact analysis from experts.

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Chapter 8: Community Facilities

- Drinking water contaminants (lead, PFAS, microplastics): Addressed in Water Resources Element; no change needed here.
- Stormwater system upgrades: To be added with language "to the extent possible."
- Water/sewer allocation and annexation: City participating in county water and sewage plan update; maps to be updated. No new goal needed.
- Add this to Chapter 7: Pedestrian safety / safe routes to school: Mr. Piorunski highlighted children in Salisbury who walk to school with no bus access – to be added to the plan. Strategy to be added addressing safe routes to schools, coordinating with the county Board of Education.
- Ms. Jackson stated that is may be unnecessary to add discussion of city regulated utilities essential to development. These aspects are negotiations between the developer and the city, so it is not something that can be put in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Salisbury University facilities master plan: Staff to obtain specific projects from SU plan for inclusion in text; reference to master plan preferred over large appendix.
- TidalHealth expansion: Staff to research; noted TidalHealth is working on a parking garage. Mr. Dickerson noted a planned Title Health clinic near the shelter may offer free/low-cost healthcare.
- Provide table listing all city owned properties with square footage, occupants, functions, ownership status, long-term needs, and compliance with Maryland Building Energy Performance Standards. Staff suggested finding this information and putting it in an appendix; and if unavailable, the city should add a goal to actively track this information.

Chapter 10: Environmental Resources

- In regards to establishing a standard light fixture for park streets and urban cores to mitigate light pollution, Staff stated that there is already an implementation strategy for light pollution in general. Mr. Drew discussed requiring photometric plans for large developments.
- Invasive species: Staff to add implementation strategy referencing invasive species as a potential code enforcement/property maintenance matter (e.g., English ivy, bamboo). Mr. Piorunski noted landscaping plans already require native species for new development. Ms. Laura Ryan inputted possible legal implications and legislations involved with this in the past.
- Strategy to be added regarding habitat restoration near industrial sites.
- LEED tax incentives: Wording to be added: "research and implement incentives for LEED-certified buildings such as tax incentives."
- Greenhouse gas emissions (Scope 1/2/3): Existing implementation strategies address GHG indirectly; staff to add a paragraph linking them to greenhouse gas reduction goals.
- Dense development and increased open space: Explanation to be added; staff to research "blue zone" concept materials provided by Mr. Piorunski.

DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE & DEVELOPMENT

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- Park system expansion: Noted that parks are referenced in the LPPRP (Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plans), run by the county. But pocket park implementation strategy can be moved to Community Facilities or referenced in both. City capacity noted as a constraint.
- Wicomico landfill capacity: City to encourage recycling and work with county; wording to be added encouraging compliance with state law and coordination with county. Ways for the landfill to not reach capacity and for multi-family facilities to require recycling is to be addressed.
- Strategy to be added noting the BPS requirements and need for city compliance.
- Flood mitigation data: Goal to be added to collect measurable results from future flood mitigation projects.
- Stormwater utility transparency: Staff to highlight recent and planned CIP projects; full financial history not to be included in the plan. Mr. Piorunski noted importance of publicly accessible utility fund data. Mr. Drew noted the need for future projects to also be considered when viewing the new funding developments.

Ms. Jackson concluded that moving forward, the Staff will take these comments and consensuses and amend the draft. Changes will be tracked and highlighted to note how each item was addressed. Chairman Chiddenton clarified the previous Adopt-a-Road edit. Chairman Chiddenton opened the floor for public comment. Ms. Carol Dunahoo from the Wicomico Environmental Trust approached the table.

Ms. Dunahoo commended the Commission for welcoming public input on development proposals and encouraged institutionalizing that practice. Ms. Donahoo noted the draft plan is largely silent on electoral issues, such as parking policy and the bicycle network. She referenced supplemental written comments and research from experts that have been submitted to staff. She urged the Commission to be more ambitious on completing the bike network, pedestrian safety, and parking governance.

Discussion – procedure/policy for public comment

Chairman Chiddenton introduced this item in response to questions and inconsistency about when public comment is permitted. Ms. Jackson noted concerns about applying public comment selectively to development applications, as this could create unequal scrutiny among developers beyond what is codified.

Ms. Jackson stated the following concerns:

1. Work session items (text amendments): Staff agreed public comment is particularly valuable before legislation is drafted, allowing public input before the formal public hearing.
2. Development applications: Discussion of whether public comment should be allowed on preliminary and/or final site plan reviews. Staff cautioned that if public comment is

allowed on some applications but not others, it creates unequal treatment. Also noted risk of conditioning approvals on items outside the Planning Commission's purview.

3. Posting/notification: Staff noted that some PRD applications require properties to be posted. Expanding posting requirements could reduce the need for impromptu public comment at meetings.
4. Timing: Commission noted that receiving public letters just hours before a meeting (e.g., 12:30 PM for a 4:00 PM meeting) is problematic. Suggested minimum one-week advance submission for public comment letters.

In response, Mr. Dickerson noted how public commentary on the Canal Park project was very helpful. Mr. Piorunski added that particularly for work sessions, it is important for public comment to be allowed on text amendments for zoning. This will allow for a greater understanding of the impact that projects have on adjacent property owners.

Mr. Piorunski inquired whether there will be added clarification for when public comment is offered -- on the agenda or on work session items.

Ms. Ryan added legal input on how public comment is necessary when drafting new legislation, post work session during the public hearings that follow.

Ms. Jackson recommended adding this clarification with a star on the agenda to clarify whether public comment will be permitted during work sessions and at the end of meetings.

Ms. Ryan raised the concern that allowing for discretion on whether or not this "star" would be present would cause some developments to face public comment while others do not. Allowing for public comment on actual development plans runs the risk of conditioning approval on something that is not permitted under the code. She recommended that this be written as a rule so it will not be up to the Staff to make the call.

The consensus from the Commission was for:

- Public comment to be allowed on all text amendment work sessions, held as each item is presented (not at the end of the meeting).
- Public comment on development applications: To remain at the Chair's discretion for now, particularly for preliminary plan reviews.
- General public comment at the end of meetings: Discussed but no firm consensus; may be revisited.
- Agenda to reflect when public comment is available (e.g., notation or star symbol on relevant items).
- Staff to develop a predictable, written policy going forward to avoid inconsistency.

Mr. Drew inquired about staff workload and project backlog. Ms. Jackson reported:

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- Project backlog has been cleared; all current reviews are forward-looking with no applicants waiting for months.
- Text amendment backlog continues; some amendments are staff-initiated to fix code gaps rather than responding to problems.
- Engineering division noted as carrying the heavier current load.
- Overall, the department is in a stable, functional position, and projects are all forward looking.

Adjournment:

Chairman Chiddenton requested a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Mr. Dickerson and seconded by Mr. Piorunski. The motion carried **(5-0)** and the meeting was adjourned.

Dave Chiddenton
Dave Chiddenton, Chair

7/7/26
Date

Betsy Jackson
Betsy Jackson, Acting Secretary

6/15/2026
Date