Salisbury Planning Commission

July 9th, 2026

MINUTES

The Salisbury Planning Commission met in session on Thursday, **July 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
Latonia Ayscue, Open Meetings Delegate
Susan Rall
Mike Piorunksi
Lynne Bratten

CITY STAFF
Judy Kuntz, Deputy Director of DID
Zachary White, Associate Planner
Scarlett Liberto, Associate Planner
Laura Ryan, City Attorney

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1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Mr. Chiddenton called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. A roll call took place for the members of the commission. It was noted that Mike Piorunski would be arriving late.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Bratten moved to approve the meeting minutes from the **May 31st, 2026** meeting. Ms. Rall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

At 4:14 PM, Mr. Piorunski arrived, giving the Commission a quorum to vote on the June meeting minutes.

Chair Chiddenton asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the **June 11, 2026** meeting. Ms. Rall requested a correction to the minutes to remove her from the "Yay" category regarding the public hearing on cannabis processors held last month. Ms. Bratten asked that it be noted she left the meeting at 5:30 PM.

Mr. Drew motioned to approve the minutes as amended, and Mr. Piorunski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. DISCUSSION

DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE & DEVELOPMENT
410.548.3170 | 125 N. Division St., Room 304, Salisbury, MD 21801 | www.salisbury.md

PRELIMINARY COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN – STORAGE STATION – Space Station Salisbury LLC rep. by Plitko Engineering LLC – Beaglin Park Drive – Planned Development District #1 – Robertson Farm – M-0121, G-0011, P-2582, Lots-4&30 - #26-008-(S.Liberto)

Plitko Engineering has submitted a Preliminary Comprehensive Development Plan for review by the Department of Infrastructure and Development. Mr. Ernie Lemp of Plitko Engineering and Mr. Walt Maizel, the construction manager of the project, approached the table.

Ms. Liberto read the staff report.

Chair Chiddenton opened up the discussion to the developers.

Mr. Lemp spoke to some of the stormwater requirements, noting that they plan on using some of the existing stormwater infrastructure and will be submitting the concept stormwater plan to DID after approval of the Preliminary Comprehensive Development Plan.

Ms. Ayscue had some questions regarding the access points on the plan, followed by Ms. Bratten, who inquired whether the access points would be used for both ingress and egress. Mr. Lemp confirmed that they would and pointed out their locations on the plan.

There was a further inquiry regarding construction debris mitigation. Mr. Lemp noted that the plan includes a construction fence and filter cloth during construction.

Mr. Drew noted that there could be future access issues as additional development occurs, particularly with larger trucks being unable to make the turning radius. He asked that they be mindful of that. Mr. Lemp acknowledged the comment.

Chair Chiddenton asked for a motion to approve the Preliminary Comprehensive Development Plan with the conditions noted in the staff report.

Mr. Drew motioned to approve, seconded by Ms. Bratten. The motion was **APPROVED** (6-0).

Yay	Nay
David Chiddenton	
Mike Piorunski	
Susan Rall	
Lynne Bratten	
Matt Drew	
Latonya Ayscue	

WORK SESSION – Text amendment to require Special Exceptions for Data Centers (S.Liberto)

DID recommended a text amendment to Chapter 17 of the Salisbury Municipal Code to add a definition for the term "data center," add data centers as a special exception use in the Light Industrial District, and remove "computer center" and "data processing center" from the list of permitted uses in the Light Industrial District. Staff noted that this is an effort to provide additional review and restrictions on data centers while more information can be gathered regarding their impacts on the community.

Ms. Liberto read the staff report.

Chair Chiddenton noted that staff and the Commission are still in the information gathering stage and that no decision is being made at this time regarding data centers. He also noted that a work session was held in June to allow members of the public to provide input. He stated that he would not be opening this agenda item for public comment.

Chair Chiddenton then opened the discussion to the Commissioners.

Mr. Drew asked about the process moving forward, in a hypothetical situation where a developer proposed a data center. He asked whether the development would have to come before the Planning Commission.

It was noted that special exceptions do not come before the Planning Commission.

Mr. Drew stated that he believes technical criteria for data centers should be developed by someone with the appropriate expertise, as the current language leaves too much open to interpretation.

Ms. Bratten noted that she would be more in favor of a six-month moratorium on data centers while additional information is gathered.

Ms. Rall stated that she would prefer staff conduct more research regarding data centers rather than move forward with the text amendment at this time.

Ms. Ryan noted that the purpose of the text amendment was to ensure that the existing zoning code definitions are not interpreted to include modern data centers. She explained that the amendment would require any type of computer center, data center, or similar use to obtain a special exception, ensuring that it comes before a board for review before any approval. She stated that this would provide a buffer of time while staff and the Commission continue to gather information regarding data centers.

There was further discussion regarding the direction of the proposed text amendment.

Mike Priorunski asked about the purpose statement for the Light Industrial District and the application of an ordinance permit for uses deemed hazardous. He noted that staff should consider using the ordinance permit mechanism, along with other development standards already included in the code. He also noted that there are additional safeguards for data centers at the state level.

Ms. Ryan noted that changing the existing definitions of "computer center" and "data processing center" to explicitly prohibit what is now understood as a data center would inherently prohibit those uses under the current code.

The Commission directed staff to draft additional changes to the zoning code for presentation at a future work session the following month.

Mr. Priounski asked whether there was an appetite for some type of focus group involving various stakeholders, particularly City and County planning staff, to discuss data centers.

Mr. White noted that there is already collaboration between City and County planning staff on a variety of topics and that similar focus groups have been created for other issues in the past.

Acting Director of the Department of Infrastructure and Development, Judy Kuntz, approached the table and informed the Commissioners that City and Wicomico County planning staff already have plans to meet monthly regarding this topic.

The commission reached consensus to move forward.

WORK SESSION – Text amendment to allow Accessory Dwelling Units as required by HB 1466 (S.Liberto)

Planning staff recommends a text amendment to the zoning code to comply with Maryland House Bill 1466, which requires local jurisdictions to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on lots with single-family detached homes by October 1, 2026. The proposed amendments incorporate the State's minimum standards for ADUs, including provisions related to size, setbacks, density, and parking requirements.

Ms. Liberto read the staff report.

A question was raised regarding how many people would be permitted to occupy an ADU. It was noted that ADUs are subject to the same occupancy regulations as the zoning district in which they are located.

Mr. Piorunski raised concerns about neighborhood density increasing over a short period of time, as well as the potential increase in renter occupied units throughout the City. He suggested adding a provision requiring one of the residences on the property to be owner occupied.

There was further discussion regarding water and sewer connections, the permitting process for ADUs, and code enforcement. Several Commissioners expressed concerns about ADUs being constructed and occupied without permits or regular inspections by City staff, as well as the reduced setback requirements permitted under the proposed regulations.

Staff noted that there is a sub department within DID that handles building permits and inspections, and a separate department altogether (Housing and Community Development) which handles other issues related to code violations.

The Commission agreed to move the text amendment forward to a public hearing the following month, with additional provisions addressing owner occupancy and restricting short-term rentals.

WORK SESSION – Text amendment to regulate Vape Shops (J.Kuntz)

Planning staff recommended the proposed text amendment to the zoning code in response to public concerns regarding the rapid growth of vape shops, particularly their proximity to schools. The amendment would establish regulations for vape shops, including definitions, annual business permits, distance requirements, signage restrictions, and provisions for nonconforming uses, variances, and violations.

Ms. Kuntz approached the table and read the staff report.

Mr. Priounski suggested that staff model the proposed regulations after Baltimore City's smoke shop ordinance, which he noted includes stricter distance requirements, restrictions on storefront lighting, a sunset period requiring existing vape shops to relocate, and Board of Appeals approval.

Ms. Kuntz noted that vape shops would be required to go through the standard permitting process with DID and that the proposed text amendment already includes provisions restricting storefront lighting.

The Commissioners asked questions regarding how the 500-foot distance requirement would be measured, who would monitor existing vape shops, and which agency issues business licenses.

Staff explained that the distance would be measured from building corner to building corner, existing vape shops would be monitored by DID and HCDD, and business licenses are issued by the County.

The Commission reached a consensus to move the proposed text amendment forward to a public hearing before the Planning Commission next month.

DISCUSSION: Downtown Parking Study (J.Kuntz)

Ms. Kuntz read the correspondence from the Mayor's office regarding the parking study:

"The Mayors office would be glad to meet the Planning Commission to discuss regarding this matter"

Matt Drew noted that he believes there has not been a credible parking study done, and that he believes it is in the commissions purview to request one in order to make an informed decision. He notes that he does believe there is a greater discussion to be had about how such a parking study will be funded.

Mr. Chiddenton asked what the cost of such a parking study would be. Ms. Kuntz noted that it depends on the type of study and the length of the study. She referred to a previous parking study that was done by the City that cost nearly $50,000.

Mr. Piorunski agreed that he feels a decision cannot be made without a parking study done by a credible third party.

There was further discussion about how to proceed

The commission ultimately decided to draft a letter to the Mayor's office requesting that there be funds allocated to the procurement of a parking study performed by a third party.

DISCUSSION: Salisbury Market Center (Lot 30) Status update (J.Kuntz)

Mr. Drew referenced a public comment made at the previous meeting suggesting that review of the Lot 30, also known as Salisbury Market Center development had been unduly delayed. He requested an update on the status of the project.

Ms. Kuntz reviewed the project's timeline throughout the development review process and stated that City administration is not satisfied with the proposed plan in its current form due to insufficient parking.

Mr. Drew asked whether staff was continuing to review the plan.

Ms. Kuntz confirmed that staff review of the plan has ceased.

Further discussion followed regarding the review process and whether any portion of the project would come before the Commission.

Department of Infrastructure and Development (DID) staff confirmed that the project had already received the necessary planning and zoning approvals from the former joint Salisbury–Wicomico Planning Commission.

The Commission then discussed potential paths forward. Mr. Drew expressed disappointment with how the project was being handled.

Ms. Kuntz informed the Commission that discussions are ongoing among the Department of Infrastructure and Development, City administration, and the City's legal team to reach an agreement on how to proceed. She noted that no agreement has been reached at this time.

Mr. Piorunski asked whether City administration is involved in all development projects within the City.

Ms. Kuntz confirmed that administration is aware of all development projects in the City and will provide input. She noted that infrastructure projects are generally signed by the Director of DID. The Lot 30 project has not been signed by DID per administration's direction.

Adjournment:
At 6:05 PM Chair Chiddenton entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Piorunski made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Bratten. The motion was **APPROVED** (6-0).

Dave Chiddenton, Chair — 10-1-2026 Date

Scarlett Liberto, Acting Secretary — 10/1/2026 Date