

**Planning & Zoning  
Meeting Minutes  
July 15, 2013**

**ATTENDANCE:** Pete Reich, Ray Ryan, Erik Donald, Director of Planning & Zoning Mary Ann Skilling, Ralph Ryan, Town Engineer and Planning & Zoning Coordinator Dianna Battaglia.

**Meeting called to Order at 6:35 p.m.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

There is no quorum in attendance to approve the May 20, 2013 Planning & Zoning Meeting minutes and that item will be tabled until the next meeting.

**New Business:**

Members are to vote for a new Chairman due to the resignation of Mr. Fortner, but that should wait until the next meeting when new members are present and to have a quorum of board members. The vote will be tabled until the next meeting.

**CP2013-01 Perryville Elementary School Concept Plan:**

The concept plan was presented by Mr. Brian Morgan, engineer with KCI and Mr. Philip Conte, architect with Studio JAED, to give an idea of how the design evolved and how the concept came about from discussion with teachers and outreach meetings.

This is an extensive renovation to the school and is the first major renovation project that Cecil County Public Schools has done since 2006. The project is certainly overdue from a facilities standpoint. The school district puts a lot of emphasis and effort in assembling the educational specifications as a guide to the architects and engineers on what the spaces should be like to support the education curriculum. The project is scheduled to have a very minor addition with significant amount of building and demolition, but essentially the same basic footprint, with three thousand (3,000) square feet added to the school. In the area of the gymnasium, that space doesn't have the proper ceiling height, and there is significant amount of infrastructure there that is beyond its useful life, which includes taking out the pool. Originally the school housed a special needs program but that need is no longer centralized. The pool was filled in a number of years ago and was no longer functioning. That part will be demolished and rebuilt with minor addition of square footage and will be where the new kitchen and cafeteria is going to be.

There were some conceptual meetings with members of the staff, town and county administration, to focus on the needs of the site and the building. Major deficiencies noted were no separation of parent drop-off and bus drop-off, creating a safety hazard for students, and no real sense of identity or entrance onto the site. The site plan shows the additional square footage of the building as the hatched area and bus route is separated from the parent drop-off route, with both areas able to be monitored and controlled from a central, single point. A service area is added at the back of the school where the mechanical facilities are located, the kitchen and the cafeteria. The parent drop-off area was extended to be able to queue up twenty (20) to twenty-five (25) cars. The most significant addition to the site in terms of vehicular traffic is an entrance way that is closest to the northern property line, to allow buses to enter at the intersection of Maywood and Maryland to drop off the students and then exit the property. They typically empty three (3) buses at a time,

students exit to the right then the next three (3) buses would pull up. They usually empty about six to eight vehicles at a time, and those students would be exiting on the right side of the vehicle. The single control point enables someone to see both the parent student drop-off and also the bus driver and the students exiting the buses.

The biggest hurdle or aspect to tackle in the process is current storm water regulations. There are minor increases in the building footprint and parking blacktop reconfigured with some additional green space added, but even with the three thousand (3,000) square feet of additional square footage to the building there is no net increase in impervious coverage. So, with the Maryland requirements and also Cecil County Public Schools desired approach, they aim to have storm water management incorporated into their school curriculum along with other sustainability aspects.

The first step in the process is to introduce the project to you and get your support with comments and questions. The plan will be submitted to Cecil County T.A.C., as per the Town of Perryville requirements, to get their input and get all the parties together for their comments. Submittal after that is going to be for storm water and sediment control. The changes in the regulations now require a three-step submittal process: concept, site design, and final approval. Feedback has been provided from the field for ground water levels and that will really guide storm water. There are going to be some changes on the locations and may be different from what is proposed here but at concept we know the practices that are going to be required and we know we need to support that on the site. Another issue is with the actual topography and we'll still be supplementing additional information on top of this. So we're still at the very early stages and having a lot of pieces coming together when we're much further along. With actual survey work we've actually been able to refine those and we know impacts are going to remain within the site perimeters. Student safety is top priority and the site designed to keep faculty separate from the parent drop-off area and also separate the bus area, and give administration one access point to be able to see all areas. Safety from this point will be dramatically improved.

This is a preliminary rendering and floor plan of the proposed renovations with a significant amount of new construction which includes a new gym, cafeteria and classroom and office renovations throughout. Because there is a significant amount of construction it gives the opportunity to make some changes to the character of the school. For right now this is just a conceptual rendering of the school with new gym, new entrances with canopied structures overhead at the parent drop off. The proposed height of the gym measured from the bottom chord of the truss is about twenty-three (23) feet, with a total no higher than thirty (30) feet. The covered walkway is a roof structure, nothing transparent or translucent, just to protect students from the elements. All new electric service is planned with Delmarva and the building will be sprinklered.

Ms. Skilling stated it should be noted that most of the work here, construction wise, is interior to this building with redevelopment throughout and some outside. We would issue a Zoning Certificate and the County reviews all construction plans for this type of work. To review my comments (staff report attached separately) the plan is conceptual and has to be approved by the Planning Commission prior to them moving forward with the County. This plan will be submitted to Cecil County and we will still be doing some work on it right now but it will be submitted for storm water management and then once its submitted for storm water management and meet all their criteria with this same layout and that's basically the hopes of everyone, but sometimes they do come back, so when it comes back hopefully it will be in similar format as what you are seeing here. One of the considerations that Mr. Morgan had put on the general notes was regarding a special exception. It is a State, local project, a County project and therefore don't need that. If there is any possibility on how to deal with that encroachment buffer from the residents in the area and would like to see road work extended to at least Cecil Avenue. Sidewalks are another issue.

Most of the children in the downtown use Otsego and there is a crossing guard there. If there are any sidewalks that need to be in that route it should be part of, especially with any road work, if possible. We need to make sure there is a direct route for most of the children in the downtown. So look at those and make sure there is a nice direct route and there is funding available that the Board of Education could go through for sidewalks for safety for schools. I think it's really important in our Town because children do walk in this Town to school and we want to keep that because moving around small towns is sometimes difficult if not impossible for buses. With the existing storm water facilities, will you be required to do any upgrades to the existing storm water?

Mr. Morgan responded during the outreach presentation in our conversations with Cecil County that was one of the requests. We have some of the storm water management design information for those facilities. There are two difficulties that I see; one, the facilities were designed under the old regulations and are discouraged by the current regulations, so improvements to those may or may not get us where we need to be. It is a requirement of the school to incorporate into their curriculum as many aspects of environmental site design practices possible. The site design will include many differing storm water practices as we can so right now we're looking at rain gardens, bio-retention and structured wetlands, in addition to the current feature behind the school that can provide evidence of older, more structured practices. The plan would have three different types of new environmental site design practices. Cost of a typical storm water pond is One Hundred Forty Thousand Dollars (\$140,000) with non-structural practices more economical. Putting funds into the newer practices and adding more curriculum components and more visibility to the students is a benefit. We're trying to keep as much of the dollars for use in the classroom, for those improvements Perryville Elementary School really need.

Ms. Skilling reiterated that is the main point. If you have the facilities already there and if they are functioning in the existing conditions there why change it, it's only the maintenance thing. And I know Cecil County DPW has looked at all the facilities to make sure they are functioning and if they function then there may not be a need, except for potentially other efforts to put in some other new type of bio-retention.

Mr. Morgan responded we are required under the new regulations for development criteria, but this is a discussion we are going to have again with Cecil County about possibly retrofitting the existing facilities, with new environmental site practices providing an educational benefit.

Discussion continued about the site as a redevelopment project with different criteria. It has been discussed some time ago about a walking path to the library. It is recommended this path be included in the plan to accommodate walking and/or bicycling to the library. It's really important because those children do go back and forth and the teachers take them to the library so it would really be nice to have an official walking path or bicycle trail to move back and forth. Site design will be looking at potential alignments to be able to accommodate that because it would certainly be a benefit and to make it ADA compliant. And the bottleneck really is there is a lot going on at the back of the site, wetlands crossing, things that were previously provided with the storm water practices that was in a hydric soils area. It is important to get connectivity to important sites in the community.

Commissioner Ryan commented regarding access for emergency vehicles, ways to reach the rear of the buildings with ambulances, fire engines, emergency vehicles, to research possible connection in the rear via the middle school parking lot. That may not be feasible because of wetland issues but possibly provide a hard path to make access easier for emergency services. Occasionally a student gets hurt on the playground in the back of the school and need a way to get trucks in there, so we're not having to go through classrooms or going through back doors, taking all that time to respond.

Mr. Conte indicated we have a specialty security and emergency management consultant on our team who made a similar point. We are looking at that: getting emergency vehicles back there or if there was an evacuation from the school, a logical place to go is to the middle school and how to safely get them across to there.

Construction is estimated to be approximately two years, depending upon phasing and timing, but it is up to the school district how they are going to phase the project.

**Motion** made by Mr. Ryan and seconded by Mr. Donald to approve the concept plan conditioned all staff comments are addressed satisfactorily and Cecil County approvals. **All in Favor.**

**Motion Passed.**

### **Town Hall Complex Proposed Plan:**

Town engineer, Ralph Ryan, prepared a conceptual view of proposed redevelopment of this site to include a police facility, reconfigured little league ball field, and future town hall. There were several reiterations of the site and this layout was chosen. The town is currently going through the design phase for the police facility and planning the entire site to include future expansion. The concept plan evolved from discussions with the design architect and reviews by the Mayor and Commissioners, and is necessary to be able to move forward with finalizing the design of the police facility. The concept plan has the police facility fronting Otsego Street and is oriented for the sally port, a secure entrance for prisoners, to be facing the rail tracks to keep it private and secluded from public use. A significant amount of parking has been added and storm water management per current regulations. The entrance road includes a roundabout to address concern about traffic and safety and will act as a drop off point for both the little league and for Town Hall. Roundabouts typically are used for traffic calming and to handle intersections but was incorporated here to accommodate traffic coming in for drop off and parking, with sidewalks surrounding the whole area. The little league has a contract with the Town and will be continued on this site for their use, as well as the benefit of utilizing town owned property. There is better utilization of land because the present configuration of the area is not used for the most part. The plan includes a mini park which presently is a big focus behind the police station and the old DPW building. The existing pavilion is shown on the plan and may be improved, with the park facility placed in a new area.

Discussion continued regarding construction cost benefits of building one building instead of the two separate buildings. Commissioner Ryan indicated separate buildings allow the chief to run the police department to instill confidence and continue the availability of being close together by being on the same piece of property. Keeping the buildings separate prevent the chance for something to happen in the police department that could spill over to Town Hall. Looking at the sally port, consideration is for a gated area with a fence around both the parking area and the sally port area, in case something happened and a prisoner escaped from the vehicle.

Conversation continued regarding more expense with breaking ground for two separate buildings instead of going higher with one. Comment was made that other small towns have it all in one big building, and from a financial point that should be cheaper. Currently finances are not available to build a larger building. The police facility is urgently needed now because when you walk across the floor there is a chance you could go through the floor. Immediate need versus long term need, so if the need is there and financially we have the funds to do the one building we need to do that and not worry about the second phase. There were many discussions about the site and looked at a lot of things about safety and the kids and what is the best way to operate and separation is the best

way to deal with that, a lot safer for everyone. Research included inspecting other town halls and police facilities and most people advised to keep them separate.

Discussion continued regarding safety of the ball field and further protection by fencing the area. The ball field should remain here in the center of town. Moving the location would be more expensive to locate a site and that is another financial issue. We would have to buy up more property and build a whole new field to give them what they have in kind, and it would be difficult to find suitable land. Just to buy the property is going to be expensive, another financial issue. So there was discussion about that, keeping the field in the center of the town, and to continue bringing people into our town. We tried to separate it as much as we could and this is the best plan we have in place.

Discussion continued about the proposed police facility. The sally port is big enough for two police cars to pull into because one of the concerns was being able to have assistance without having to wait for them to park, they would pull in side by side, close the door and discharge the prisoners, or if there were multiple prisoners. Another consideration is that funds are more readily available for construction of police facilities. Right now the finances are not available to build a larger building to accommodate everything. This concept will be implemented in phases, as the Town hall building isn't even in the planning stage yet. This plan takes everything in consideration for storm water management, utilities, parking and access for the entire site so everything is taken care of. Having all these things in place makes more sense to show what is proposed on the entire site and to do a total site plan that is reviewed once to meet all regulations. The police facility would be phase one, the ball field as phase two, and eventually a new town hall as phase three. There are more opportunities for funding and grant money for police facilities, more so than for a town hall, so there is a greater potential to build separately. There are many considerations for safety issues building the police facility. This is only a concept plan and doesn't include all elements such as site lighting, landscaping, parking details. Additional parking will be provided for the ball field and those spaces could be utilized by customers going to the retail shops at Aiken and Broad. The parking lot for specific use by the police department will be changed for direct access from Otsego Street. The chief was concerned that during an emergency situation the police officers would have to negotiate the roundabout and that would slow them down so they mentioned having a private driveway with an electronic gate. Essentially reverse this configuration so they will have their own private entrance.

Mayor and Commissioners have asked the Planning Commission to look at this proposed plan and provide comments and discussion for a recommendation to either approve or at least accept what is before you. All in attendance approved the concept plan overall as presented with future consideration for fencing for safety and to provide adequate lighting throughout, especially near the basketball court as it tends to be darker back there and secluded. The relocation of the ball field better utilizes the site and additional parking could be used by the train station.

**Motion** made by Mr. Donald and seconded by Mr. Ryan to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. **All in Favor. Motion Carried.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Dianna M. Battaglia  
Planning & Zoning Coordinator