



Prince George's County Planning Department
Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations Rewrite
Meeting with District 1 Civic Associations
Saturday, March 21, 2015

Questions and Comments

- There should be more transparency of the review of development applications; ALL projects should be subject to public notice, including “by-right” projects. Are you saying that “by-right” development will have less transparency?

We should focus on the location—targeted locations, such as Regional Transit Districts identified by Plan Prince George’s 2035, should be more “by-right.” Sometimes good, quality projects can’t fit in that box, so you would move to a recommended Planned Development Zone. “By-right” would not have less transparency but would have less discretionary review.

- What constitutes “minor” can vary between projects.
- Transparency and the opportunity to trigger process? I want to call my council member to see how I can get involved to change things.
- How well were the initial forums attended? How do you outreach to adjoining counties with public outreach and public notification?

For this subject matter, we believe the initial forums were very well attended with between 60 to 80 attendees at each major meeting. Coordination to adjoining counties is important, particularly with regard to transportation and environmental networks.

- Regulations versus enforcement of regulations are needed to guarantee development. There is a tremendous lack of enforcement in the county.

Code enforcement is on the table. We need good, clear laws on the books and staff to enforce those laws.

- The community is not involved because they aren't responsible. How do we get citizens involved?

We are trying to reach out to everyone and are engaging in a “saturation outreach” approach. One attendee noted that it is also the public’s responsibility to participate in a project of this importance.



- Would we be willing to visit civic associations to discuss zoning rewrite?

Absolutely. Just get in touch with us and we'll ensure the team provides coverage and engages in conversation.

- What is the trade-off for community members with the pre-application community meeting? Residents believe they have no recourse in the current process other than going to their council member. I do not believe residents are getting much out of this proposed process.

Mandatory meetings are not a silver bullet in Clarion's expertise, but it is part of a broader approach. Understanding how real estate development actually happens is going to lead to a better Zoning Ordinance. Shifting the focus to looking at design up front is relatively easy and effective in other jurisdictions. Reorganizing our process so both the council and the community have the ability to influence the process up front.

- What is the two-week rule? Section 27-125.05 in the Zoning Ordinance.

This rule provides for two weeks of mailing and review of staff reports for Detailed Site Plans and Zoning cases. Some concern was expressed by attendees that M-NCPPC staff is unable to consistently meet this deadline.

- Many stakeholders we've heard from believe that today's development procedures are too difficult to understand.
- The main images of the PowerPoint show a lot of impervious surfaces. Is this what the future of Prince George's County will be?

This comment referred to the title slide of the presentation, which reflects several photos including a farm, a suburb image, and some urban images. The urban images depict development types that can incorporate green roofs, are within a block of existing urban park spaces, incorporate structured parking, and have other features that minimize impervious surfaces. These types of approaches are part of a sustainability approach recommended in this process.

- Enhance public outreach—the current forms for interested parties cater to civic associations. We should consider a broader list for interested parties for development applications.
- What about crumbling infrastructure and evaluation of the sewer system as to whether or not it is over taxed? Are other agencies in the mix for the project?

Yes, we are coordinating with numerous operating and implementing agencies. We are also



rewriting the Subdivision Regulations, which deal with adequacy and infrastructure requirements.

- Concern was expressed with the proposed review and approval streamlining and shifts in authority recommended in the Clarion report. What is the recourse of the people if they have an issue with a decision that was made? Concerns were also expressed with the Planning Board appearing to side with developers at the expense of communities.

Best practice recommendations and procedures as implemented in numerous areas across the country have more cases subject to administrative (staff level) approval than the historic trend in Prince George's County. Under Clarion's proposals, there would still be appeal procedures which could involve the Planning Board, District Council, and Circuit Court depending on the path of the application.

- How will interpretations be made? Rather than having staff interpretations, it may be more advisable to have this be a function of the Zoning Hearing Examiner, which could then provide formal notice to council.

Follow Ups

- Send Copy of ERR to Jo Whitlock.
- Add form on the ZOSR website for requesting a community meeting.
- Email Bridget Warren Copy of PowerPoint Presentation and place a copy online.