



**Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations Rewrite  
Prince George's County Council Town Hall  
Monday, July 17, 2017**

On July 17, 2017, the Prince George's County Council held a second Town Hall event in Upper Marlboro to hear from the County's residents, municipalities, and other stakeholders on the proposed Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. The community comments and questions are summarized below.

Don Elliott of Clarion Associates began with an overview of the proposed changes based on County stakeholder comments received during the past two years.

**Councilmembers Present**

Chairman Derrick L. Davis, Vice -Chair Dannielle Glaros, Mel Franklin, Todd Turner, Deni Taveras, Mary Lehman, Karen Toles, Obie Patterson, and Andrea Harrison

**Other Elected Officials Present**

The Honorable Lenford Carey, Mayor, Town of University Park  
A representative from Senator Chris Van Hollen's Office

**Speakers from the Community**

1. Macy Nelson, Esq. (Citizen Representative): Advocates for smart and good growth. Concerned that Walmart is trying to move to the County. Expressed belief that the proposed Zoning Ordinance liberalizes the standards for big-box stores, which would now be allowed by-right in many locations. Believes the rules are less stringent than those recently adopted by Montgomery County; Washington, D.C.; and Baltimore City. Requested that all big-box stores be made special exceptions (those stores larger than 75,000 square feet), so that everyone can get a fair hearing before the Zoning Hearing Examiner.
2. Mamie Small (Radiant Valley Civic Association): Have questions that need to be answered. In the interim of this project, what can they do about on-street parking and home occupancy issues? What can be allowed to sit in front yards? How many cars can be parked on the street? How can they get an inspector out for code enforcement? There are businesses operating in the single-family homes in my neighborhood.
3. Margaret Boles (Mitchellville): Longtime community activist attending zoning meetings for 40 years, working on master plans, and ensuring that sensible development occurs in the County. Wants new plan to focus on smart growth, agricultural and centralized development around Metro stations, and to limit strip malls. While believing the proposed codes are less complex and smaller than the current code, is uncertain the proposed codes improve the chances for more economic



development in the County. Do we believe developers talk in good faith to citizens before development occurs?

4. Deb Daniel (Laurel): There is a lack of clarity in a lot of the rental provision of the current Zoning Ordinance. It is unclear if rentals are boarding houses or rooming houses. Would like to explore accessory dwelling units and where they are appropriate.
5. Bill Scott (Croom): Wants additional information about Croom, which is all rural and mostly farmland. Wants to see more housing in the rural areas of the County and the ability to split lots for children to build their homes on one day; not all housing should be Metro-oriented. The permit process is too long and too expensive.
6. Ken Dunn (Maryland Building Industry Association): The building industry association is reviewing the draft codes and will provide written documentation. Treatment of existing efforts and entitlements for development needs to be clarified, as significant changes could do unintentional, significant harm. We have not yet viewed a zone map or a map of the proposed zoning change, which we need to better understand the specific changes. Want to look at mixed-use zones, such as the M-X-T Zone, with an eye to modernization.
7. Imani Kazana (Hyattsville): Wants the new code to prohibit the storage and processing of hazardous materials near residential properties. Wants to see a “greenway concept” for the greenway in the Chillum community. Indicated that the proposed zoning does not allow a 250-unit condominium or any other high-density structure in the residential neighborhood. Wants to have zoning that allows the construction of a multipurpose community.
8. Alicia Melendez (Bladensburg): Regulations regarding the integrating process, to ensure environmental justice concerns are addressed through the special exception process, should be incorporated. We should also ensure baseline measurements of public health. Health impact assessments are not required by the proposed Zoning Ordinance, but they should be. These assessments should look at compatibility and pollutants.
9. Denise Hamler (Cottage City): Applauds the County for the zoning rewrite, which is a long time coming. Indicated that there are unique issues in the Port Towns communities pertaining to industry development. Indicated that the proposed Zoning Ordinance does not carry forward protections for residents in requiring special exceptions for concrete batching plants and big-box retail. Believes proposals to reduce the number of uses requiring special exception approval will increase the number of incompatible uses in residential areas.
10. Andrew Bottner (Mitchellville): Has experience with the zoning process and has followed it for years. Also concerned with a reduction in potential special exception uses, and does not feel the process is cumbersome. Follow-up on zoning plans with traffic studies to determine the true



traffic generation of development. Would like to see something new that is better, and is not sure this is it. The old process works for him.

11. Joseph Jakuta: Thanked staff and the consultant team for hard work to date. Praised the County Council for their leadership on the Paris Climate Accord and efforts to combat climate change. The zoning rewrite can fulfill its obligation for green and sustainable development. Green buildings incentives should be strengthened and should become requirements.
12. Shee Newman (Upper Marlboro): What are the requirements for visitor parking? Revise notifications to allow citizens to provide comments on development drawings. Applicants should be required to include what has changed from the first iterations of a plan when they have subsequent meetings. Stormwater ponds and bioretention ponds should not be allowed near a playground. Do not use woodchips on playgrounds, as they are a safety hazard and prevent accessibility for those with disabilities. Deal with the food deserts and lack of schools in many communities.
13. Paul Tharp (Capitol Heights): Need an “industrial campus” approach for major industrial areas so we are not looking at industrial planning over multiple parcels as each parcel viewed independently from the others. Opposed to removing special exceptions for junkyards and outdoor ferrous metal uses. Need to have an administrative variance for minor floodplain development changes, and require special exception approval for larger changes.
14. John Rigg (College Park): Resident serving on city advisory planning commission. Expressed concerns about the current R-55 single-family residential zone, and that there is no attention being paid to the R-55 Zone for communities that are nonconforming (built prior to World War II). Look at frontage and driveway requirements. Consider creating an overlay zone for the inner-Beltway communities to help eliminate or reduce nonconformities in older residential neighborhoods.
15. Suellen Ferguson (Attorney Representing University Park): The town needs to see zoning maps, the procedures manual, and wants to review definitions to better understand what is being proposed. It is difficult to know how to comment without knowing how everything fits together. Do not reduce participation of municipalities on notice and ability to comment.
16. Pat Boyd (Temple Hills): The proposed 15-foot setback is a mistake. Are we going to look at limits to population moving into Prince George’s County? I reside in Yorktown Estates (located near MD 5 and the Beltway).
17. Belinda Queen (Capitol Heights): Concerned with code enforcement—who takes care of clean-up and enforcement of what is already in place? We keep building but nobody enforces what we have. Concerned about environmental justice. Wants to see redevelopment around Capitol



Heights and other areas inside the Beltway that have been overlooked for some time. Wants to see grocery stores, parks, and recreation facilities.

18. Krystal Oriadha (Capitol Heights): Has there been any supplemental research done around how the rezoning will impact lower-income communities? Make sure communities are developed for the people who live there and avoid gentrification. Have regulations been identified for green development standards? Making residential regulations for “going green” can be too expensive and will set people with lower incomes further back. Is there a high-level comparison of major changes? Provide predictability and do not force people to move out.
19. Amity Pope (Progressive Prince George’s; Capitol Heights): Need to consider the negative impact that the zoning rewrite can have on lower-income families and the school system. Conduct an adequacy assessment for schools.