

MINUTES

Baltimore County Planning Board Meeting

November 7, 2024

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**Baltimore County Planning Board Meeting Minutes
November 7, 2024**

Call to Order, Introduction of Board Members

Chair Holupka called the meeting to order at 4:15 PM and welcomed everyone. A roll call to account for the members of the Board was conducted. Through the meeting, the following Board members were:

Present	Absent
1. Mr. C. Scott Holupka, Chair	1. Ms. Beverly German
2. Mr. Peter Arrey	2. Mr. S. Chris Haffer
3. Ms. Emily Brophy, Vice-Chair	3. Mr. Derick Johnson
4. Mr. Mark Heckman	4. Ms. Cathryn Pinheiro
5. Mr. Steven Heintz	
6. Mr. Shafiq Hinton	
7. Mr. Wayne McGinnis	
8. Ms. Raquel Muñeses	
9. Mr. Jon Schulman	
10. Mr. Todd Warren	
11. Ms. Cathy Wolfson	

Attending County staff included: Mr. Steve Lafferty, Ms. Amy Mantay, Ms. Sydnie Cooper, Ms. Krystle Patchak, and Ms. Taylor Bensley, all of the Department of Planning.

Chair Holupka began by welcoming two new Board Members, Ms. Raquel Muñeses and Mr. Jon Schulman, and asking them to introduce themselves. Mr. Schulman stated he was born and raised in Baltimore County, that he worked in commercial real estate, and that he was happy to begin working with the Board. Ms. Muñeses stated she was born and raised in Baltimore City, was a retired neurosurgeon, and that she lived in White Marsh.

Chair Holupka then stated that he wanted to take a moment to recognize the former Chair of the Planning Board, Ms. Nancy Hafford, and honor her with a Citation from the County Executive thanking her for her dedication to the Board throughout the years. Mr. Lafferty, Director of the Department of Planning, presented the Citation to Ms. Hafford, stating that it contained language on her seeing the Board through the Comprehensive Rezoning Map Process, multiple Water Supply and Sewerage Master Plan Amendments, various Design Guidelines, and many other important projects. He then thanked Ms. Hafford for her dedication to the Board. Ms. Hafford stated she was grateful to have had the opportunity to work with everyone and stated she was honored to have been part of the Board. She encouraged the Board to remain committed to their goals, while continuing to be a collegial body that engaged in respectful, productive conversations. She then thanked staff for their assistance and dedication to the Board. Various Board Members, including Mr. Warren, Ms. Brophy, and Chair Holupka then thanked

Ms. Hafford for her dedication, commitment, leadership, and friendship, and stated she would be missed on the Planning Board.

Chair Holupka then noted that the Charter Amendment to change member composition for the Planning Board passed during the election and would go into effect next month. He then stated that Mr. Warren wished to offer comments and opened the floor to him. Mr. Warren then explained that he was unsure if the meeting would be his last or if he would be attending the November 21st Board Meeting, but stated he wanted an opportunity to express what an honor it had been to serve on the Planning Board. He continued by telling the Board Members to have a north star, to advocate for what they believed in, and to remain civil and friendly with fellow Board Members, even when disagreeing. He then thanked staff and the Board for their time, dedication, and assistance over the years.

Review of Today's Agenda

Ms. Bensley reported that a revised Agenda was published November 6th, 2024. The change included removing the votes on the Baltimore County Landscape Manual Update and the Baltimore County Open Space Manual Update. She noted that the items were now tentatively scheduled to be voted on at the November 21st, 2024 Board Meeting.

Minutes of the October 17, 2024 Meeting

Chair Holupka asked the Planning Board members if they had any changes to the October 17th, 2024 Minutes. Hearing none, Chair Holupka called for a motion to approve the Minutes as drafted. Mr. Warren moved to approve the Minutes as drafted. Mr. Heckman seconded the motion, which passed at 4:26 PM with affirmative votes being cast by Mr. Arrey, Ms. Brophy, Mr. Heckman, Mr. Heintz, Mr. Hinton, Mr. McGinnis, Ms. Muñeses, Mr. Schulman, Mr. Warren and Ms. Wolfson. There were no dissenting votes.

Item for Introduction

1. Reisterstown Main Street Streetscape Action Plan

Chair Holupka stated that the first item on the agenda was a presentation from Ms. Sydnie Cooper of the Baltimore County Department of Planning on the Reisterstown Main Street Streetscape Action Plan. He continued that after Ms. Cooper had finished her introduction, he would call for a motion to set a public hearing on the subject matter. He then welcomed Ms. Cooper.

Ms. Cooper introduced herself as the Community Planner for Council District 2, and stated that she had been working with the Reisterstown Improvement Association (RIA) for quite some time on the Reisterstown Main Street Streetscape Action Plan and the Reisterstown Main Street Design Guidelines, which would be introduced next. She explained that the Streetscape Action Plan was drafted by RIA in collaboration with the Neighborhood Design Center (NDC) to provide visions and strategies for growth for the Reisterstown Main Street, and that the Plan would be adopted as an amendment to Master Plan 2030.

Ms. Cooper then reviewed the timeline for the Reisterstown Main Street Streetscape Action Plan, which began in January of 2023 with community engagement by NDC. From there, RIA and NDC worked together to create a draft Plan, which was reviewed by the Department of Planning; the Department of Public Works and Transportation; the Department of Permits, Approvals, and Inspections; the Department of Economic and Workforce Development; the Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability; and the Board of Liquor License Commissioners from May to August of 2024. RIA and

NDC made the edits requested by the County, and now the Plan was ready for Planning Board review and, ultimately, County Council adoption.

Ms. Cooper then provided insight on the goals of the Reisterstown Main Street Streetscape Action Plan, which included making streets safer, enhancing the existing character, strengthening the business and retail identity, expanding the presence of arts and culture, creating focal points, creatively considering parking, and investing to enhance, highlight, and connect to existing assets. She then explained that the primary components of the Plan included information on existing conditions, goals and actions, and the appendices.

Ms. Cooper advised that she would return for the November 21st Public Hearing and that she would be joined by members of RIA to further present the Plan to the Board, and then stated she was available for any questions.

Chair Holupka thanked Ms. Cooper for her presentation and opened the floor up for discussion among the Board.

Mr. Warren asked the boundary of the Reisterstown Main Street, and then a map was presented.

Mr. Hinton asked what had been considered as far as creative traffic calming measures. Ms. Cooper stated that ideas included bollards, landscape buffers, asphalt art, and more.

Ms. Wolfson asked if the Plan addressed unsightly BGE utility poles. Ms. Cooper replied that, unfortunately, little could be done regarding the BGE poles, but that there were efforts to replace the County utility poles with more attractive ones.

Ms. Muñeses stated that one of the main problems with the area was parking and recommended parking be provided on either end so visitors could walk the length of Main Street. Ms. Cooper stated that there were suggestions in the Plan on parking and shared parking agreements.

Chair Holupka questioned how much input State Highway Administration provided, specifically on the creative traffic calming measures. Ms. Cooper stated that RIA would be able to answer that question at the Public Hearing.

With no further questions from the Board, Chair Holupka entertained a motion to set a Public Hearing on the matter. Ms. Brophy moved that the Baltimore County Planning Board set an in person public hearing regarding the Reisterstown Main Street Streetscape Action Plan for Thursday, November 21st, 2024 at 5:00 PM. Mr. Heintl seconded the motion, which passed at 4:37 PM with affirmative votes being cast by Mr. Arrey, Ms. Brophy, Mr. Heckman, Mr. Heintl, Mr. Hinton, Mr. McGinnis, Ms. Muñeses, Mr. Schulman, Mr. Warren and Ms. Wolfson. There were no dissenting votes.

2. Reisterstown Main Street Design Guidelines

Chair Holupka stated that the next item on the agenda was a second presentation from Ms. Sydney Cooper of the Baltimore County Department of Planning on the Reisterstown Main Street Design Guidelines. He continued that after Ms. Cooper had finished her introduction, he would call for a motion to set a public hearing on the subject matter. He once again, welcome Ms. Cooper.

Ms. Cooper explained that the Reisterstown Main Street Design Guidelines were the second part of the project undertaken by RIA and NDC, and that the Design Guidelines would be adopted as part of the Comprehensive Manual of Development Policies (CMDP). She noted that the two documents were

originally one, however, because the Streetscape Action Plan was to be adopted as part of Master Plan 2030 and the Design Guidelines were to be adopted as part of the CMDP, they were broken into two documents.

Ms. Cooper then briefly reviewed the timeline for the drafting of the Reisterstown Main Street Design Guidelines, stating that it was widely the same as the Streetscape Action Plan with the primary difference being that only the Department of Planning; Department of Public Works and Transportation; and Department of Permits, Approvals, and Inspections needed to review.

Ms. Cooper then provided insight on the goals of the Reisterstown Main Street Design Guidelines, which included encouraging high quality design and providing a basis for the design of new and existing buildings while balancing the district's historic character and the needs of the 21st century. She then explained that the primary components of the Plan included information on the district style, street design, building materials and exterior design, lighting, signage, rendering of the Design Guidelines in action, and the appendices.

Ms. Cooper again stated that she would return for the November 21st Public Hearing and that she would be joined by members of RIA to further present the Design Guidelines to the Board, and then stated she was available for any questions.

Chair Holupka thanked Ms. Cooper for her presentation and opened the floor up for discussion among the Board.

Ms. Brophy asked if there were financial incentives for property owners to adhere to the Guidelines. Ms. Cooper advised that RIA had a façade improvement program for new and existing businesses and that it could assist with exterior alterations and signage. She noted that existing conditions would not be expected to be updated unless a site was redeveloped.

Ms. Muñeses questioned if the Guidelines covered retrofitting historic buildings to be ADA compliant. Ms. Cooper explained that the Guidelines did not, but that Maryland's Accessibility Guidelines still applied.

With no further questions from the Board, Chair Holupka entertained a motion to set a Public Hearing on the matter. Ms. Brophy moved that the Baltimore County Planning Board set an in person public hearing regarding the Reisterstown Design Guidelines for Thursday, November 21st, 2024 immediately following the conclusion of the Public Hearing on the Reisterstown Main Street Streetscape Action Plan. Mr. Warren seconded the motion, which passed at 4:34 PM with affirmative votes being cast by Mr. Arrey, Ms. Brophy, Mr. Heckman, Mr. Heintz, Mr. Hinton, Mr. McGinnis, Ms. Muñeses, Mr. Schulman, Mr. Warren and Ms. Wolfson. There were no dissenting votes.

Other Business

3. Recent County Council legislation of interest to the Board:

Ms. Bensley gave a report on the recent legislation passed by the County Council of interest to the Board, which included:

- a. Bill 77-24 – Zoning Regulations – Uses Permitted and Bulk Regulations in the O.T. (Office and Technology) Zone
- b. Resolution 44-24 – Planning Board – Reisterstown Streetscape Action Plan/Reisterstown Streetscape Design Guidelines

c. Resolution 45-24 – Opposition to Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP)

Adjournment of the Board Meeting

Chair Holupka called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Warren moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Wolfson seconded the motion, which passed at 4:49 PM with affirmative votes being cast by Mr. Arrey, Ms. Brophy, Mr. Haffer, Mr. Heckman, Mr. Heintl, Mr. Hinton, Mr. McGinnis, Ms. Muñeses, Mr. Schulman, Mr. Warren and Ms. Wolfson. There were no dissenting votes.

The meeting adjourned at 4:49 PM.

**Baltimore County Planning Board Public Hearing Minutes
November 7, 2024**

Call to Order, Introduction of Board Members

Chair Holupka called the Public Hearing to order at 5:00 PM and welcomed everyone. A roll call to account for the members of the Board was conducted. Through the Hearing, the following members were:

Present	Absent
1. Mr. C. Scott Holupka, Chair	1. Ms. Beverly German
2. Mr. Peter Arrey	2. Mr. S. Chris Haffer
3. Ms. Emily Brophy, Vice-Chair	3. Mr. Derick Johnson
4. Mr. Mark Heckman	4. Ms. Cathryn Pinheiro
5. Mr. Steven Heintl	
6. Mr. Shafiq Hinton	
7. Mr. Wayne McGinnis	
8. Ms. Raquel Muñeses	
9. Mr. Jon Schulman	
10. Mr. Todd Warren	
11. Ms. Cathy Wolfson	

Attending County staff included: Mr. Steve Lafferty, Ms. Amy Mantay, Ms. Krystle Patchak, and Ms. Taylor Bensley, all of the Department of Planning; Mr. Pete Gutwald, Ms. Sally Nash, and Mr. Jim Herman of the Department of Permits, Approvals, and Inspections; and Mr. Greg Strella, Baltimore County’s Chief Sustainability Officer.

Item for Public Hearing

1. Baltimore County Landscape Manual Update**

Chair Holupka stated that the Board had two Public Hearings on the Agenda and that the items would be addressed one at a time, beginning with the updated Baltimore County Landscape Manual. Chair Holupka continued that the item was first introduced to the Board on October 17th, 2024 with a presentation by Ms. Sally Nash of the Department of Permits, Approvals, and Inspections, and that Ms. Nash was in attendance to further present the updated Manual to the Board. He continued that following her presentation, Board members would have the chance to ask questions, and then members of the public would have the opportunity to speak on the matter. He then welcomed Ms. Nash.

Ms. Nash introduced herself as the Deputy Director of the Department of Permits, Approvals, and Inspections (PAI), and stated she would be introducing the updated Baltimore County Landscape Manual, which had not been updated since 2000. She explained that the Manual included an introduction, goals and objectives, general standards, requirements for project conditions, applications of standards, plan preparation, and appendices, and that PAI was primarily focused on making technical updates.

Ms. Nash then walked through the changes to each section. The Introduction was updated with new Code numbers and made more concise. The Goals and Objectives section clarified the Manual's relationship with the CMDP, removed redundancies, and added language for climate change and edible landscaping. The General Standards section was updated to include updated reference sources, to clarify language, and add information on lighting standards, however, foundational concepts, such as Planting Units and screen types, did not change. Likewise, no foundational changes were made to the Requirements for Project Conditions section. Updated to that section included new examples and graphics and to add additional information to select Conditions. The Application of Standards section was updated to provide various clarifications and added a provision that PAI could require replacement of lost vegetation. The Plan Preparation, Review, and Approval section was updated in accordance with current practices. Finally, the Appendices were updated to remove outdated information, add new details for Street Trees, add additional examples, remove checklists, and more.

Ms. Nash then provided a list of the internal and external reviewers, including the Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability; the Department of Planning; the Department of Recreation and Parks; and six Landscape Architects who formed the workgroup responsible for the updates. She then concluded her presentation by stating she was available for any questions.

Chair Holupka thanked Ms. Nash for her presentation and opened the floor up for discussion from the Board.

Ms. Wolfson clarified that edible landscaping included plants like fruit trees and berry bushes, and questioned how that worked with the deer and animal population. Ms. Nash explained that the group believed there was always a right place for the right plant and that edible landscaping may not always be appropriate, but that it was important to provide the information to allow Landscape Architects to make the best decisions for their clients.

Ms. Wolfson asked who would maintain edible landscaping, and Ms. Nash explained that information on who would maintain any plantings into perpetuity was included in the Final Landscape Plan, part of a Development Plan.

With no further questions from the Board, Chair Holupka began calling members of the public that signed up to speak.

William Alcarese spoke about tree liability, explaining that if a tree fell on a neighbor's property, the impacted party was responsible for cleaning it up. He stated that responsibility should fall with the property owner where the tree was planted, and that the owner should be responsible for maintaining landscaping, even if it grew over a property line.

Allison Schulze stated she was speaking on behalf of the Green Towson Alliance (GTA) Executive Committee. GTA urged climate change be taken into account in greater detail in the Manual and was requesting GTA and the public have a chance to participate in a stakeholder group meeting, as the guidelines in the Landscape Manual would have lasting impacts on County residents for decades to come.

Kirsten Hoffman stated she was speaking on behalf of the Maryland Native Plant Coalition. She explained that there should be requirements in the Landscape Manual for diversity in plantings and that the Manual should better address climate change. She referenced a new development in Baltimore County that was required to plant at least 58 trees and explained that the developer only planted two species; she explained that this increased the odds of a tree getting a disease and spreading it to all of the other trees in the development, and encouraged the Manual to speak on planting diverse groups.

Judy Fulton stated she was speaking on behalf of the Maryland Native Plant Society. The organization wanted the native plant list in Appendix G to be updated and was seeking additional recommendations on native plant requirements for all projects. Maryland Native Plant Society's recommendation was that at least 25% of plantings be required to be native plants for the next two years, and then the minimum be increased to 50% thereafter. She then noted that invasive species should be prohibited in efforts to increase environmental and human health.

Kristina Schlagger spoke on updating the tree pit specifications to include guidelines on soil volume and area design within the Landscape Manual, as urban trees often had short lifespans because they did not have the space to develop roots, and therefore did not have a chance to grow and mature. She noted that the Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability (DEPS) emphasized the importance of native trees, and stated that the Manual should link to DESP's recommendations.

Ashley Fulton-Howard stated she was speaking on behalf of Wild Ones Greater Baltimore and that Appendix F should be updated to reflect current best practices to protect the Chesapeake Bay, as recommended by University of Maryland Extension (UME) Home and Garden Information center's best practices and Maryland laws. She provided recommendations on lawn height mowing, limiting use of fertilizers, only using pesticides with an Integrated Pest Management approach, and not over-mulching. She encouraged the Board to delay the vote until the items could be addressed.

Beth Miller stated she was speaking on behalf of the Green Towson Alliance Executive Committee and explained that no environmental groups had an opportunity to weigh in on the proposed updates. She continued that GTA encouraged requirements for green infrastructure, as private development should work hand-in-hand with County and public efforts. Ms. Miller noted that landscaping played a role in assisting with the impacts of climate change, and that it was important environmental community stakeholders have an opportunity to provide feedback on the Manual.

Nick Linehan explained that he was part of the original drafting of the Landscape Manual in 2000 and that he agreed with the comments he had heard from fellow speakers. He explained that, in 2000, the County worked with an advisory committee of stakeholders to review the Landscape Manual and that that should be the case with the update, as well.

Katharine Barnes introduced herself as a member of the workgroup of Landscape Architects that worked on the updates to the Landscape Manual, which she stated had been in dire need of an update. She explained that the Landscape Manual was primarily used by Landscape Architects to know how many planting units were required, and stated that they had many other resources for what should be planted and where. She continued that the updated Landscape Manual would make Landscape Architects jobs easier, as it was more concise and easier to follow, and that she was proud of the product the workgroup delivered, but that she welcomed any comments and the input provided.

With the completion of public speakers, Chair Holupka asked if there were any further questions from the Board.

Ms. Wolfson stated that things like cutting your grass high and not over-mulching were common sense best practices and asked why the Manual did not address such practices. Mr. Gutwald, Director of PAI, explained that the comments heard could all be addressed and added, but that many of them were assumed. He noted that best practices and more in-depth requirements were also outlined in the certification agreements and legal documents that approved developments.

Mr. Heckman asked if green infrastructure was dictated by the State. Mr. Strella, Chief Suitability Officer, confirmed there was a separate document for that.

Mr. Heckman stated he felt many of the recommendations made were sensical and questioned how they could be rolled into the Manual for the Board to vote on it in two weeks' time. Mr. Lafferty stated that the Board could choose to delay the vote further, if they wished. Mr. Gutwald noted that the Manual would also go before Council, so the Board had the option of conditionally approving the Manual and then PAI could make those changes before submitting to Council. Chair Holupka confirmed PAI would have time to make any edits before submitting to Council, and Mr. Gutwald stated yes, as PAI had 75 days to submit the Manual to Council following the Board's decision.

Mr. Hinton stated that testimony provided noted that no environmental groups weighed in and questioned if that was accurate. Mr. Gutwald explained that the Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability did an internal review, but that external reviewers were the Landscape Architects that consulted the Manual on a day-to-day basis.

Mr. Arrey asked if the Manual could reference State documents on best practices. Mr. Gutwald explained that it could, but that PAI tried to stay away from that, as those documents also became outdated with time.

With no further questions from the Board, Chair Holupka concluded the first Public Hearing.

2. Baltimore County Open Space Manual Update**

Chair Holupka stated that the second Public Hearing was on the updated Baltimore County Open Space Manual. He explained that the item was also first introduced to the Board on October 17th, 2024 with a presentation by Ms. Sally Nash of the Department of Permits, Approvals, and Inspections, and that Ms. Nash was in attendance to further present the updated Manual to the Board. He noted that following her presentation, Board members would have a chance to ask questions, and then members of the public would have the opportunity to speak on the matter. He once again, welcome Ms. Nash.

Ms. Nash again introduced herself and stated she was present to further introduce the Open Space Manual, which had been renamed to be the Baltimore County Residential Open Space and Greenway Manual. She explained that this Manual applied to development projects that included a residential component and worked in conjunction for the Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan.

Ms. Nash then reviewed the changes to each section. Changes to the Introduction included changing the name of the Manual; the Goals and Objectives section was reorganized; the Definitions and Standards section was updated to add definitions for previously undefined terms, clarified existing standards, and updated the terminology of "waiver" to "fee in lieu"; the Development Process section was updated to the current development plan review process, to clarify information on greenway transfer, and to add a requirement that playgrounds be certified; finally, the Appendices were updated to include new sample forms.

Ms. Nash then provided a list of the internal and external reviewers, including the Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability; the Department of Planning; the Department of Recreation and Parks; and six Landscape Architects who formed the workgroup responsible for the updates. She then concluded her presentation by stating she was available for any questions.

Chair Holupka thanked Ms. Nash for her presentation and opened the floor up for discussion from the Board.

Ms. Wolfson asked if off-site open space could be provided in a different Council District. Mr. Gutwald confirmed it could not. Ms. Wolfson replied that page 7 stated otherwise. Mr. Gutwald stated that PAI would confirm and clarify.

With no further questions from the Board, Chair Holupka began calling members of the public that signed up to speak.

Phyllis Joris stated she was speaking on behalf of Neighbor Space of Baltimore County and that she had concerns about process used to update the Open Space Manual. She explained that Baltimore County residents and Neighbor Space were not involved, were not consulted, and did not have a chance to provide feedback. Ms. Joris stated that Neighbor Space complimented the County's work and 20% of Open Space Waiver fees came to their organization, so it was important the County and Neighbor Space work together productively. She stated there should be a stakeholder workgroup created to review and provide feedback, and that the Manual should not be voted on until that could be done.

With the completion of public speakers, Chair Holupka asked if there were any further questions from the Board.

There were no additional questions or comments from the Board.

With no further questions from the Board, Chair Holupka concluded the second and final Public Hearing. He reminded the Board that the items were tentatively scheduled to be voted on at the next meeting on November 21st, and noted that the meeting would be in person.

Adjournment of Public Hearing

Chair Holupka called for a motion to adjourn the Public Hearing. Ms. Brophy moved to adjourn the Public Hearing. Mr. Heckman seconded the motion, which passed at 6:02 PM with affirmative votes being cast by Mr. Arrey, Ms. Brophy, Mr. Haffer, Mr. Heckman, Mr. Heintl, Mr. Hinton, Mr. McGinnis, Ms. Muñeses, Mr. Schulman, Mr. Warren and Ms. Wolfson. There were no dissenting votes.

The Public Hearing adjourned at 6:02 PM.
