

**WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – September 7, 2023**

Meeting Date: September 7, 2023

Time: 1:00 P.M.

Location: Worcester County Government Office Building, Room 1102

Attendance:

Planning Commission

Jerry Barbierri, Chair
Rick Wells, Vice Chair
Mary Knight, Secretary
Ken Church
Marlene Ott
Betty Smith
Phyllis Wimbrow

Staff

Jennifer Keener, Director, DDRP
Matthew Laick, Deputy Director, DDRP
Kristen Tremblay, Zoning Administrator
Stu White, DRP Specialist
Cathy Zirkle, DRP Specialist
Roscoe Leslie, County Attorney

I. Call to Order

II. Administrative Matters

A. Review and approval of minutes, August 3 2023

As the first item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the minutes of the August 3, 2023 meeting.

Following the review, a motion was made by Ms. Ott to approve the minutes as written, Ms. Smith seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously with Mr. Barbierri abstaining.

B. Board of Zoning Appeals Agendas, September 14, 2023

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the agenda for the Board of Zoning Appeals meeting scheduled for September 14, 2023. Ms. Tremblay was present for the review to answer questions and address concerns of the Planning Commission.

No comments were forwarded to the Board.

C. Technical Review Committee Agenda, September 13, 2023

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the agenda for the Technical Review Committee meeting scheduled for September 13, 2023. Mr. White was present for the review to answer questions and address concerns of the Planning Commission.

No comments were forwarded to the Committee.

**WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – September 7, 2023**

III. §ZS 1-315 Residential Planned Communities (RPC)

A. Refuge at Windmill Creek – Preliminary Plat Review

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the preliminary plat for Refuge at Windmill Creek RPC, proposed construction of 90 single family homes located on the northwest side of Beauchamp Road, north of Racetrack Road (MD Route 589), Tax Map 15, Parcels 127 & 259, Tax District 03, R-1 Rural Residential District & RP Resource Protection District. Kristina Watkowski and Ronnie Carpenter were present for the review. Ms. Watkowski presented the project and stated that all Staff comments from the Technical Review Committee (TRC) review of the preliminary plat had been addressed and that there are no outstanding issues remaining. Mr. Barbierri questioned if the road would be a private lane or would be turned over to the County to which Ms. Watkowski responded that it would be a private lane. Ms. Ott questioned how they are handling any potential stormwater issues coming across from Ocean Pines beneath Beauchamp Road. Mr. Carpenter responded that they have been working with Ocean Pines to resolve any drainage issues that they have and further stated that they are picking up a small amount of drainage from the roadside area but not a tremendous amount that's flowing over naturally to pick up and accept. Ms. Ott stated that she had been made aware that it has been an issue for over thirty years because the drainage must flow naturally to Windmill Creek and over to the St. Martins River. She expressed concern because of the amount of flooding that occurs in the Beacon Hill Road and Pinehurst Road areas. Mr. Carpenter responded that there were various possible solutions to the problem, and they made a good faith effort to work with Ocean Pines to address any issues.

Following the discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Knight, seconded by Ms. Ott, and carried unanimously to approve the preliminary plat as submitted.

B. Triple Crown Phase II – Preliminary Plat Review

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the preliminary plat for Phase II of Triple Crown RPC, proposed construction of 30 Single Family Units, located west of Preakness Drive, east of Racetrack Road, Tax Map 21, Parcel 322, Tax District 3, R-1 Rural Residential District. Mark Cropper, Greg Wilkins, and Greg Steen were present for the review. Mr. Wilkins presented the project to the Planning commission. He stated that all Staff comments from the TRC review of the preliminary plat had been addressed and that there are no outstanding issues remaining. Mr. Barbierri questioned if the active open space requirement had been addressed. Ms. Tremblay stated that the active open space amenity needs to be identified or a bond established for the construction of a future proposal. Mr. Steen responded that he would identify the amenity, obtain a cost estimate, and bond the construction costs with the County.

WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – September 7, 2023

Following the discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Wells, seconded by Ms. Smith, and carried unanimously to approve the preliminary plat with the condition of bonding the active open space amenity.

IV. §ZS 1-325 Site Plan Review

Coastal Square Shopping Center

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the site plan for Coastal Square Shopping Center, a proposed regional shopping center with 120,561 square feet of leasable floor space and seven proposed out-lots along the Route 50 frontage. Located on the southern side of US Route 50 (Ocean Gateway) at the intersection with MD Route 589 (Racetrack Road), Tax Map 26, Parcels 299 & 320, Tax District 3, C-3 Highway Commercial District. Mark Cropper and Jeff Harman were present for the review. Mr. Cropper introduced the project and stated that the site plan being reviewed was strictly commercial and that there was no residential development included with this project. Mr. Harman stated that the project has been altered from the initial sketch plan that was previously reviewed by the Planning Commission because of the recent passing of a Text Amendment which allows residential use in the C-3 Zoning District. The proposed shopping center is approximately half the size of the sketch plan submittal and consists of one anchor store and multiple strip units. He explained that they are currently working with State Highway Administration (SHA) with respect to the entrance requirements and will be dedicating the extension of Samuel Bowen Boulevard to the County. He added that there will be a roundabout at the intersection of Racetrack Road and Samuel Bowen Boulevard at the request of SHA to allow for smoother traffic flow in and around the center. Ms. Wimbrow asked if the County agreed to accept the dedication of the Samuel Bowen Boulevard. Mr. Harman responded that he was in discussion with County officials regarding the matter. The County would be responsible for the extension and roundabout and that the lane south of the roundabout would be private.

Following the discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Knight, seconded by Ms. Ott, and carried unanimously to approve the Coastal Square Shopping Center site plan.

V. Text Amendment

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed a request for a text amendment to allow Single-family or Multi-family Dwelling Units in the C-2 General Commercial District. Kristina Watkowski and Keith Iott were present for the request. Ms. Watkowski explained the current text of the zoning code. Emplacing that there would not be any increasing with the housing units allowed. She explained that processes will remain in place since this is a special exception. Ms. Watkowski called Mr. Keith Iott who is a professional Architect and Engineer. He gave his background and that he does primary private

**WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – September 7, 2023**

work and does land plans as part of his firm. Ms. Watkowski passed out a zoning map of the area and they explained that some parcels would be perfect for this text amendment since the lot is a deep lot and is surrounded by residential. The area also supports a walkable community. Mr. Iott believes that this is a reasonable modification.

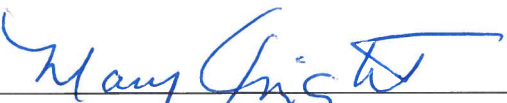
The planning Commission held a discussion on open space requirements. It was decided that this text amendment would have open space requirements identical to the recent C-3 Text Amendment which states, that at least sixty-five percent (65%) or more of the net lot area for a given parcel be developed with a commercial use or structure permitted in the C-3 District, a minimum of 15% open space based upon the net lot area of the single-family and multi-family dwelling use.

Discussion occurred around the definition of the meaning of Open Space whether it was Passive, Active, or natural Open Space such as forest conservation easements. Mr. Mitchel stated that they have allowed forest conservation easements to be used as open space for a property in Snow Hill, but Mr. Mitchel would discourage the use of it. Mrs. Keener stated the definition of Open Space from the Zoning code and Mrs. Wimbrow stated that it would meet the definition per the code.

Mrs. Wimbrow brought up a concern about the potential of the housing component being built before the commercial portion. Mrs. Keener stated that the residential calculation is based on the established commercial use.

Following the discussion, a motion was made by Mrs. Wimbrow to provide a favorable recommendation on the text amendment, provided that it include 65%/35% a minimum of 15% of the 35% as Open Space dedicated to residential uses as open space. Ms. Knight seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

VI. Adjourn – A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Knight and seconded by Ms. Ott.



Mary Knight, Secretary



Stuart White, DRP Specialist