

**WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
WORK SESSION  
MEETING MINUTES – October 10, 2024**

**Meeting Date:** October 10, 2024

**Time:** 1:00 P.M.

**Location:** Worcester County Government Office Building, Room 1102

**Attendance:**

**Planning Commission**

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

**Staff**

Jennifer Keener, Director, DRP  
Matt Laick, Deputy Director, DRP  
Kristen Tremblay, Zoning Administrator, DRP  
Roscoe Leslie, County Attorney  
Bob Mitchell, Director, Dept. of Env. Programs  
Gary Pusey, DRP Specialist III

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Code Requirements Waiver Request – Landscaping Irrigation and Gravel Travelway**

As the first item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed a request to waive the landscaping irrigation and surface treatment requirements for a proposed project by Fritz Eisenbrandt to allow the accessory use of a principal agricultural structure or use of land for the commercial hosting of non-agricultural functions and events in the A-1 Agricultural District located at 11930 Ocean Gateway. The applicant and his attorney, Kristina Watkowski presented the request. Mr. Church recused himself from the vote.

Also known as the Harry Kelly Farm (near Taylor Marine), Ms. Watkowski asserted that asphalt would not be in alignment with the surroundings and has asked that the Planning Commission would waive this requirement and allow for gravel with a millings top. Ms. Watkowski provided examples of other Agritourism sites within the County that also do not have asphalt.

Additionally, the applicant requested a waiver of the automatic landscaping irrigation requirement stating that the landscaping will be bonded and that a landscaping maintenance installation and agreement would be signed and recorded with the Clerk of Court, which would ensure that the long-term maintenance of the plants would be properly managed. ]

Ms. Wimbrow asked how wastewater would be managed, and was informed by Mr. Mitchell that they would be using portable facilities which would be used at every event.

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On a motion made by Ms. Knight and seconded by Ms. Wimbrow, the Planning Commission approved the waiver requests for the automatic irrigation and surface treatment to be gravel with a millings top, with Mr. Church abstaining.

**III. Comprehensive Plan Work Session**

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission met with Michael Bayer and Angela Fleck from Wallace Montgomery to discuss the draft Communities Facility chapter of the proposed Worcester County Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Bayer provided a status of the overall project schedule. He then explained that they are currently working on the development capacity analysis, which will use the existing land use map and assumptions to determine whether the existing land uses can absorb the growth during this planning cycle, or whether additional areas will need to be set aside by the Planning Commission. He advised that the analysis will also be input into the Water Resources Element (WRE), which involves infrastructure planning and capacity. Then we will meet with the municipalities to obtain their feedback on the existing and proposed growth areas to ensure that we are working together to plan for the County's growth. The Planning Commission will see that in the early part of 2025.

Mr. Bayer stated that the draft Housing Element will be presented for the next work session in November. There are significantly more requirements for the housing element than what is in our existing comprehensive plan, and it is to be strongly data driven and intensive. We are required to address issues surrounding housing availability, affordability, workforce, and fair housing. Ms. Ott stated that the Coastal Association of Realtors could provide data resources to inform this chapter. Mrs. Keener advised that the County would be issuing an RFP for a Housing Study to update the 2004 documents relative to substandard housing in the next few weeks. This study will overlap with our comprehensive plan and may inform the housing chapter.

The Planning Commission then reviewed the draft Community Facilities Chapter. Mr. Bayer noted that it is essentially an inventory of existing facilities in the county. The Planning Commission made the following recommendations:

- Under Goals and Objectives No. 2, it was recommended to revise the term “demanded” to better reflect the intent (“needed” was suggested).
- Consider adding a sentence about the private school system in Worcester County.
- Map 3-1 Public Safety, both Ocean Pines and Ocean City have two fire stations. Only one is documented for each. There was also discussion about overlap of fire and EMS services

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at various stations in the county. It was recommended to add the Sheriff's Office in Snow Hill.

- Within the list of Fire Departments on draft page 3, it was noted that Ocean City has both paid and volunteer fire departments. Only the volunteer fire department was listed.
- In the discussion of Parks and Recreation, it was requested that state parks be identified. As each municipality and Ocean Pines have their own park systems, it was recommended that the language in this section be enhanced to acknowledge those systems, without providing a full inventory.
- Map 3-2 Recreation and Parks, include public campgrounds.
- Map 3-4 Community Facilities, there are several post offices missing, and locating Health Department facilities was suggested.
- Within the Health Services section of draft page 9, it was recommended that additional language be included pertaining to outpatient campuses for Tidal Health, Atlantic General Hospital, and the development on Franklin Avenue in Berlin.
- It was recommended that the consultant review the newly developed greenways master plan and see if there are major components that can transition into different goals and recommendations to support their funding and development.

The Planning Commission reiterated their request that staff brief the County Commissioners regularly as the chapters are drafted. Mr. Bayer also noted that if there are any issues that the Planning Commission thinks the County Commissioners may not agree with them on, that we address those issues during the review process to get a consensus before the entire plan is presented to the County Commissioners.

**The next work session will be held on Thursday, November 14, 2024, to discuss the Housing Element.**

**IV. Adjourn**

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Mary Knight, Secretary

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Jennifer Keener, Director

