# WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA <br> Thursday September 7, 2023 

## Worcester County Government Center, Room 1102, One West Market St. Snow Hill, Maryland 21863

I. Call to Order (1:00 p.m.)

## II. Administrative Matters

A. Review and Approval of Minutes - August 3, 2023
B. Board of Zoning Appeals Agenda - September 14, 2023
C. Technical Review Committee Agenda - September 13, 2023

## III. §ZS 1-325 Site Plan Review

A. Refuge at Windmill Creek - Preliminary Plat Review. Located at 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, The Refuge at Windmill Creek, LLC, owner / Carpenter Engineering, engineer.
B. Triple Crown - Preliminary plat review. Preliminary plat review for Phase II of Triple Crown Residential Planned Community (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, Triple Crown Estates, LLC, owner / Vista Design, Inc., architect.
C. Coastal Square Shopping Center - Major Site Plan Review

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, Coastal Square, LLC, owner / Becker Morgan Group, Inc., engineer.

## IV. Rezoning

A. Case 443 - Tax Map 16, Parcels 21 \& 53, Tax District 03, 27.57 acres, A-1 Agricultural District to 25.25 Acres as A-2 Agricultural District and 2.0 acres as C-2 General Commercial District, East side of Maryland 589 (Racetrack RD) directly across from the north entrance to Ocean Pines (Ocean Parkway), William and Linda Ayres Property Owner and Hugh Cropper, IV, Attorney.

## V. Text Amendment

A. §ZS 1-210(c)(5) - Single-family or Multi-family Dwelling Units in the C-2 General Commercial District, Hugh Cropper IV, applicant.

## VI. Miscellaneous

VII. Adjournment

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Planning Commission Agenda

# WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION <br> MEETING MINUTES - August 3, 2023 

Meeting Date: August 31, 2023
Time: 1:00 P.M.
Location: Worcester County Government Office Building, Room 1102

## Attendance:

Planning Commission
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
Roscoe Leslie, County Attorney

## I. Call to Order

## II. Administrative Matters

A. Review and approval of minutes, July 6, 2023

As the first item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the minutes of the July 6 , 2023 meeting.

Following the review, a motion was made by Ms. Knight to approve the minutes as written, Ms. Ott seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.
B. Board of Zoning Appeals Agendas, August 10, 2023

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the agenda for the Board of Zoning Appeals meeting scheduled for July 13, 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, August 9, 2023

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the agenda for the Technical Review Committee meeting scheduled for July 12, 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 - August 3, 2023 

## III. §ZS 1-325 Site Plan Review

A. Snow Solar

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed a site plan for development of a 4.0 MW AC utility scale solar energy system located at 6217 Timmons Road, Snow Hill, Tax Map 56, Parcel 10, Tax District 02, A-1 Agricultural District. Andrew Reese and Natalie Castro from Snow Solar were present for the review. Mr. Reese presented the project and explained that it was reviewed by Technical Review Committee (TRC) in July 2023 and the site plan had been revised to address staff comments. He described this project as small in comparison with other utility sized solar projects. The access point may need to be changed because the existing access driveway to the property is in the railroad right of way. Ms. Castro indicated that this will be addressed prior to the County Commissioners meeting should the Planning Commission give a favorable recommendation.

Following the discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Knight, seconded by Ms. Smith, and carried unanimously to give a recommendation of favor to the County Commissioners for the project.
B. Iqbal Solar

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed a site plan for the installation of a 240 kW ground mounted solar energy system located at 4629 Nassawango Road, Snow Hill, Tax Map 62, Parcel 35, Tax District 07, A-1 Agricultural District. John McCane from Sunrise Solar was present for the review. Mr. McCane presented the project to the Planning commission. He stated that the purpose for the solar array is to power the poultry operation and that all the power generated would stay on the farm.

Following the discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Knight, seconded by Ms. Smith, and carried unanimously to approve the site plan as submitted.

## C. Frontiertown Expansion

Hugh Cropper, IV esquire and Jason Loer from Davis Bowen and Friedel were present for the review. Mr. Cropper presented the project to the Planning commission. He stated that the site was the original septic drainfield site for the campground before the park was connected to public utilities. He added that a text amendment (Bill No. 18-7) was approved allowing the cluster design for the expansion which consists of 107 sites and a bath house. The site is not visible from Stephen Decatur Highway. He mentioned that they are adding four (4) additional bike racks and beefing up the landscaping. The sites will have 390 square-foot cabins in a variety of colors, utilizing the same design as the existing campground. He asked for waivers

## WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES - August 3, 2023

from the loading space requirement and the design of the bath house and color choices for the cabins as related to the Design Guidelines and Standards.

Following the discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Church, seconded by Ms. Knight, and carried unanimously to approve the proposal with the waivers.

## IV. Rezoning

## A. Case 442

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed a request for rezoning. Tax Map 20, Parcel 290, Lot 3,5 \&6, Tax District 03, 5.5 acres, C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District to C-2 General Commercial District., East side of US Route 113 approximately 2,600 feet north of US 50. Hugh Cropper, IV, applicant's attorney, Paul Sens representing Pin Oak Properties, LLC, and Steve Engel, registered landscape architect with Vista Design, were present for the review. The property owner purchased the petitioned area in 2006. Mr. Cropper testified that they are seeking to rezone lots 3, 5 and 6 from C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District to C-2 General Commercial District. Mr. Cropper submitted the purpose and intent statement of the C-1 District as Applicant's Exhibit \#1 and a site plan as Applicant's Exhibit \#2.

Mr. Cropper questioned Mr. Engel about the subdivision of the property on April 26, 1977, and then continued to state the history of the zoning of the property. The property was zoned B-1 Neighborhood Business District in the 1992 rezoning and then in 2009 it was given a C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District classification. At the time of the last comprehensive rezoning on November 3, 2009, there was a contractor shop on two (2) of the lots totaling almost 10,000 square feet. Although contractor shops were allowed as a special exception in the B-1 District, it is not currently permitted in the C-1 District. The contractor shop became a legally existing nonconformity as of the date of the comprehensive rezoning.

Mr. Cropper stated that it is the policy of the Comprehensive plan and the County Commissioners to bring things into compliance. Mr. Cropper then talked about the C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District and how it is a commercial district intended to bring day-to-day conveniences to local neighborhoods. Mr. Engel agreed with Mr. Cropper that this property currently does not meet the intent. Mr. Cropper then described the property as being on a busy highway near where the County has a Public Works facility. There is nowhere for someone to walk, ride a bike and no real residential development around it. Mr. Cropper stated that the property has no public water or sewer. It has small septic systems and that restricts what can be done to contractor shops or storage. C-1 District uses are not feasible on these lots.

## WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES - August 3, 2023

Mr. Cropper noted that per the staff report, if the rezoning was granted, it would isolate Lot 1 as the only remaining $\mathrm{C}-1$ zoned property in the area. He stated that the owners have contacted the owner of Lot 1 and while they are not party to this application, the property owner would be in favor of rezoning Lot 1 . Mr. Cropper noted that in the past this board has taken it on themselves to recommend a rezoning to complete an area and do what makes sense.

Mr. Cropper and Mr. Engel agree that the current zoning is a good-faith mistake because it was a hidden property and that a C-2 designation would be better suited for this property.

Mrs. Knight made a motion to find that there was a mistake in the zoning and that the C-2 District would be more desirable in terms of the Comprehensive Plan. Mrs. Ott seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

## B. Case 444

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed another request for rezoning. Tax Map 20, Parcel 290, Lot 3,5 \&6, Tax District 03, 5.5 acres, C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District to C-2 General Commercial District., East side of US Route 113 approximately 2,600 feet north of US 50. Hugh Cropper, IV, applicant's attorney, and Howard and Amy Kelly (Black Water Relics LLC), were present for the review. Mr. Cropper reviewed the zoning history of the property including the annexation into the Town of Snow Hill. When it was annexed into Snow Hill, the former property owner petitioned to the County Commissioners that it be rezoned to a Residential designation which was granted. When it was de-annexed, it was requested by Mr. Cropper that it retain a residential zoning classification, as described in a letter submitted as Applicant's Exhibit \#1. However, it reverted to the same zoning classification as which it left - A-1 Agricultural District. Mr. Cropper then stated that this property was not considered during the 2009 comprehensive rezoning, as it was annexed into the town at the time. Therefore, he is arguing that there was a mistake in the March 10, 1992 rezoning that changed the designation from B-2 General Business District to A- 1 Agricultural District, and that the property should go back to C-2 General Commercial District.

Mr. Gregory Wilkins, land surveyor, and Mr. Cropper presented Applicant's Exhibit \#2 which is the plat of the property. Mr. Wilkinson then described the property as containing asphalt from the building up to the road. The building is large with doors on the front facade and the property has a small rear yard with a septic tank that is on the property by less than eight (8) inches. The septic lines were unable to be located.

The petitioned property is identified as within a Growth Area on the Land Use Map as described in the comprehensive plan. Mr. Cropper therefore claimed that the existing zoning was a mistake because it is in a growth area and is now directly across from 200 acres that are

## WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES - August 3, 2023

zoned residential. This parcel, because of its size, cannot be used for agricultural purposes, making it unusable under the current zoning designation. Mr. Cropper described how this road was an extension of Business 113 and any commercial development would be used by residents of Snow Hill.

Mrs. Wimbrow raised concerns about traffic flow, parking requirements for commercial uses and septic capacity. Mr. Cropper explained that Black Water Relics, LLC also owned parcel 89 which is adjacent to the petitioned area and consists of 1.01 acres. Mr. Mitchell stated that adequate septic replacement area was found on adjoining parcel 89. Mr. Church noted that he was originally concerned about the rezoning, but in reviewing the site and surrounding area, he thought commercial would be a good use for the property. The Planning Commission also found that the use of the adjoining parcel 89 for services such as septic replacement and parking for the large commercial building on the petitioned area would be appropriate and should also be considered as part of the rezoning request.

Following the discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Knight, seconded by Ms. Smith, and carried unanimously in favor the proposal with the recommendation that the adjoining Parcel 89 also be included for rezoning to C-2 General Commercial District.

## V. Miscellaneous

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission elected officers for the next twelve month period. Following the discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Ott, seconded by Ms. Smith, and carried unanimously to keep the same officers, Mr. Barbierri, Chair, Mr. Wells, Vice Chair, and Ms. Knight, Secretary.
VI. Adjourn - A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Ott and seconded by Ms. Knight.

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# NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING <br> WORCESTER COUNTY <br> BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS <br> AGENDA 

## THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 14, 2023

Pursuant to the provisions of the Worcester County Zoning Ordinance, notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held in-person before the Board of Zoning Appeals for Worcester County, in the Board Room (Room 1102) on the first floor of the Worcester County Government Center, One West Market Street, Snow Hill, Maryland.
6:30 p.m.

Case No. 23-51, on the lands of Avalon Hall, on the application of George E. Young, III, requesting a variance to reduce the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Buffer from 100 feet to 50 feet (to encroach 50 feet) for a proposed 10' x 290' driveway through nontidal wetlands and the 100 foot buffer, pursuant to Natural Resources Code §§ NR 3-219 (c) (4) and NR 3-211 and Zoning Code $\S \S$ ZS 1-116(I) located on Hickory Point Road about 985 feet east of 250 Hickory Point Road, Tax Map 90, Parcel 13, Lot B, Tax District 1, Worcester County, MD.

## 6:35 p.m.

Case No. 23-67, on the lands of Beverly Glass, on the application of Mark Cropper, requesting a special exception to allow a 6 -foot-tall fence in a front yard setback, pursuant to Zoning Code §§ ZS 1-116(c)(3), \& ZS 1-305(k)(3) located at 9177 Old Ocean City Road, Tax Map 19, Parcel 49, Lot 2, Tax District 3, Worcester County, Maryland.

## 6:40 p.m.

Case No. 23-55, on the lands of Janet \& Daniel Trimper, IV Revocable Trust, on the application of Mark Cropper, requesting a variance to reduce the Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area Buffer Management Area from 50 feet to 33.67 feet (to encroach 16.4 feet) and a variance to exceed the 30 percent allowable forest clearing to 46.4 percent associated with a construction of a single family dwelling, Pursuant to Natural Resources Code $\S \S$ NR 3-104 (c)(4), NR 3-111 and NR 3-107 (c)(4) and Zoning Code §§ ZS 1-116(m), located at 11031 Piney Island Drive, Tax Map 15, Parcel 90, Lot 19, Tax District 5, Worcester County, MD.

## 6:45 p.m.

Case No. 23-60, on the lands of Martha's Landing Resort, LLC, on the application of Mark Cropper, requesting a variance to the front yard setback from 25 feet to .03 feet (to encroach 24.97 feet) for the proposed replacement of an existing building in the CM Commercial Marine District, pursuant to Zoning Code §§ ZS 1-116(c)(4), ZS 1-214(b)(1) and ZS 1305, on the southeast corner of Sunset Avenue and Golf Course Road, Tax Map 27, Parcel 447, Lot 78 (79 \& 80), Tax District 10, Worcester County, Maryland.

## 6:50 p.m.

Case No. 23-56, on the lands of Martha's Landing Resort, LLC, on the application of Mark Cropper, requesting a variance to the front yard setback off of Harbor Road from 50 feet to the center of the road right-of-way to 25.91 feet (to encroach 24.08 feet) and a variance to the front yard setback off of Golf Course Road from 75 feet to the center of the road right-of-way to 57 feet (to encroach 18 feet) for the proposed replacement of an existing building in the CM Commercial Marine District, pursuant to Zoning Code §§ ZS 1116(c)(4), ZS 1-214(b)(1) and ZS 1-305, on the northeast corner of Harbor Road and Golf Course Road, Tax Map 27, Parcel 447, Lot 78 (86 \& 87), Tax District 10, Worcester County, Maryland.

## 6:55 p.m.

Case No. 23-65, on the lands of Martha's Landing Resort, LLC, on the application of Mark Cropper, requesting a variance to the front yard setback from 25 feet to 18.5 feet (to encroach 6.5 feet) and a variance to the minimum lot size from 5,000 square feet to 1,920 square feet for a proposed pavilion for aquaculture in the CM Commercial Marine District, pursuant to Zoning Code §§ ZS 1-116(c)(4), ZS 1-214(b)(4) and ZS 1-305, located on Harbor Road, approximately 291 feet east of Golf Course Road, Tax Map 27, Parcel 372, Lot 96 ( 96 \& 97), Tax District 10, Worcester County, Maryland

## Administrative Matters

# WORCESTER COUNTY TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE AGENDA <br> Wednesday, September 13, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. <br> Worcester County Government Center, Room 1102, One West Market St. Snow Hill, Maryland 21863 

## I. Call to Order

II. Tulls Corner-Minor Site Plan Review

Site plan review for a proposed single-family dwelling for caretaker/employee housing for an existing RV repair business. Located at 2345 Tulls Corner Road, Tax Map 100, Parcel 2, Tax District 01, I-1 Light Industrial District, Carlton Mason, owner / George E. Young III, P.C., surveyor.
III. Pocomoke Mini-Storage - Minor Site Plan Review

Site plan review for an additional 4,980 square foot, 17 -unit self-storage building at an existing ministorage complex. Located at 2212 Bypass Road, Tax Map 84, Parcel 301, Tax District 1, R-2 Suburban Residential District, Pocomoke Storage, LLC, owner / George E. Young III, P.C., surveyor.
IV. Adjourn

# Worcester County 

GOVERNMENT CENTER

SNOW HILL, MARYLAND 21863

# WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION 

September 7, 2023
Cathy Zirkle, DRP Specialist III (ext. 1136)
******************************************************************************
Project: The Refuge at Windmill Creek Preliminary Plat - Proposed 90 single family lot subdivision, on the Northwest side of Beauchamp Road, north of Racetrack Road (MD Route 589), Map 15 Parcels 127 and 259 Tax District 3, R-1 Rural Residential and RP Resource Conservation Districts (RPC Overlay Zone)

## SPECIFIC COMMENTS:

All subdivision comments have been addressed.










DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND PERMITTING

## Worcester County

# WORCESTER COUNTY TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE 

August 9, 2023
Cathy Zirkle, DRP Specialist III (ext. 1136)
Project: Preliminary plat review for Phase II of Triple Crown Residential Planned Community (RPC). Proposed construction of 30 Single Family Units. Located on the northerly side of Gum Point Road east of Preakness Drive, Tax Map 21, Parcel 322, Tax District 3, R-1 RPC Rural Residential District.

## SPECIFIC COMMENTS:

1. Remove the road dedication statement from planning commission signature box.
2. Please add RPC to zoning note.

## TRIPLE CROWN ESTATES <br> TAX MAP 21 PARCELS 67 \& 74

THIRD TAX DISTRICT, WORCESTER COUNTY MARYLAND










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## WORCESTER COUNTY ATLANTIC COASTAL BAYS CRITICAL AREA LAW




GENERAL NOTES


SWM CERTIFICATION STATEMENTS




















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OR EQUIVALENT GRINDER PUMP


DHO71-129
OR EQUIVALENT GRINER PUMP


DHO71-129 FOR SINGLE HOME
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## Standard erosion and sediment control notes





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SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL NOTE





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| Tall fescue makes up 70 percent or more of cover. | $\begin{array}{\|l\|l\|l\|l\|l\|} \hline 10 \\ \hline 3010-10-1 \end{array}$ | $\left\lvert\, \begin{aligned} & 500 \\ & 400 \end{aligned}\right.$ | $\left\lvert\, \begin{aligned} & 1.5 \\ & 9.2 \end{aligned}\right.$ |  | Not closer than 3 inches, if occasional mowing is occasion desired. |
| Birsfoot Trevil | 0.20 .0 | 400 | 92 | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Spring, the year } \\ & \text { following establishment } \\ & \text { and every } 4 \text { to } 5 \text { years, } \\ & \text { thereafter. } \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | ${ }^{\text {Mow wo coser than2 }}$ indes |
| Fairly uniform stand of tall fescue or birdsfoot trefoil | 5.10.10 | 500 | 11.5 | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Fall, the year following } \\ & \text { establishment, and every } \\ & 4 \text { to } 5 \text { years, thereafter. } \end{aligned}$ | Not required, no closer than has matured. |
| Weeping lovegrass fairly uniform plant distribution. | 5.10.10 | 500 | 11.5 | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Spring, the year } \\ & \text { following establishment } \\ & \text { and every } 3 \text { to } 4 \text { years, } \\ & \text { thereafter. } \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Not required, not closer than } \\ & 4 \text { inches in fall after seed } \\ & \text { has matured. } \end{aligned}$ |
|  | 20-0.0.10 | $\begin{aligned} & 250 \\ & 1000 \\ & \hline 100 \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 5.8 \\ & 23 \\ & \hline 2 \end{aligned}$ | September, 30 days later. December, May 20, June | Mow no closer than 2 inches for red fescue and Kentucky bluegrass, 3 inches for fescue. |





# TRIPLE CROWN ESTATES 

SECTION 20 OCEAN PINES, MD 21811
OPEN SPACE NARRATIVE
TAX MAP: 0021, PARCEL: 67, \& 74

The open space requirements for this development are as follows:
Total Site Area (Phase-1 \& Phase-2) = 92.037 Acres
Required Open Space Area: 92.037 acres $\times 30 \%=27.611$ Acres

Required Open Space Areas:
Active $=27.611 \times 10 \%=2.761$ Acres
Passive $=27.611 \times 20 \%=5.522$ Acres
Natural $=27.611 \times 50 \%=13.806$ Acres
Total Open Space Provided $=46.995$ Acres (51.06\%)
Active = 3.458 Acres
Passive $=11.405$ Acres
Natural = 32.132 Acres
The Active Recreation space will consist of two areas. Area one located behind lots $28-39$ consist of 0.97 acres and area two behind existing lots 12-16 consisting of 2.564 acres. These areas will have commercial multi component playground equipment to include swings, slides, and climbers and will be in a defined boarder with wood chip/mulch surface. The surrounding area will consist of grass for additional active recreation activities.

The 11.405 acre passive recreation area will consist of existing wooded area with a four foot wide 1,800 foot long winding walking trail with a wood chip surface.

The 32.132 acre Natural recreation area consist of existing wooded area the will remain in its natural state for wildlife habitat.

## WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING DATE: September 7, 2023

PURPOSE: Major Site Plan Review

DEVELOPMENT: Coastal Square Shopping Center

PROJECT: Proposed regional shopping center with 120,790 square feet of leasable floor space and seven (7) proposed out-lots along the Route 50 frontage and Samuel Bowen Blvd.

LOCATION: 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.

ZONING DESIGNATION: C-3 Highway Commercial.
BACKGROUND: The property is currently unimproved, and much of the land is cultivated.

The project consists of two (2) retail shopping buildings. The western building includes a 66,454 square foot grocery store and a 20,400 square foot, nine (9)- bay shopping center. The eastern structure is a 34,936 square foot, 20 -bay shopping center.

The concept plan went before the Planning Commission May 6, 2021. It then went before the Technical Review Committee (TRC) on July 12, 2023 and received a favorable recommendation to proceed to the Planning Commission for review with the condition of making minor changes to meet all Code requirements.

SIGNS: Any signage shall meet the requirements of §ZS 1-324 and Section 14 of the Design Guidelines and Standards for Commercial Uses and shall be reviewed at permitting stage for compliance.

PARKING: Per $\S$ ZS 1-320, a minimum of one (1) space per 350 square feet and a maximum of one (1) space per 250 square feet of gross floor area is required for shopping centers or other mixed-use facilities having ten or more establishments. The minimum for the project is 348 spaces with a maximum of 488 . The site plan indicates 422 proposed spaces; 13 of which are handicap accessible. Any parking provided above the minimum requirements shall be constructed with a pervious paving system. The minimum required pervious spaces is 74 and the site plan proposes 92 .

Parking spaces shall be demarcated with painted stripes and parking bumpers where shown.

Handicap accessible parking spaces have been provided as required under the Maryland Accessibility Code. Also, all handicap accessible signs shall be posted a minimum of 84 " from grade to the bottom of the reserved sign. All handicap spaces shall also be a minimum of $20^{\prime}$ in depth, and where required, depressed curbing will need to be provided.

LOADING SPACES: For commercial establishments that are greater than 100,000 square feet in gross floor area, three (3) loading spaces are required, with a maximum of four (4) allowed. One three (3)-bay loading zone is located at the rear of the proposed grocery store and the areas behind the retail portions of the provide ample tractor trailer access to all units.

TRAFFIC CIRCULATION: Access to the site will be from MD Rt. 589 (Racetrack Road), MD Rt. 50 (Ocean Gateway), and Samuel Bowen Blvd. A proposed new lane would be added to southbound Route 589 at the intersection of Route 50 to give access directly from Route 589 at the signalized intersection. Samuel Bowen Boulevard will extend across the site providing interconnection to the adjacent Ocean Landing Center and access to the proposed out-lots. The proposed new access at the Route 589/50 intersection will intersect Samuel Bowen Boulevard with a traffic circle. Access from Route 50 will be available from a single east bound right turn lane and two (2) westbound left turn lanes.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CONNECTIVITY: §ZS 1-320 requires one (1) rack for each 100 parking spaces or portion thereof. Five (5) bike racks have been provided. Two (2) crosswalks have been proposed, from the parking lot to the each of the buildings. A main pedestrian travelway is proposed across the center of the parking lot.

REFUSE REMOVAL: Two (2) double dumpster enclosures are proposed behind the western building. Five (5) trash collection cans have been proposed along the entrances.

LANDSCAPING: A landscape plan has been provided in accordance with §ZS 1-322. A maintenance and replacement bond for required landscaping is mandatory for a period not to exceed two (2) years in an amount not to exceed one hundred and twenty-five percent (125\%) of the installation cost. A landscape estimate from a nursery will be required to be provided at permit stage to accurately determine the bond amount.

FOREST CONSERVATION LAW: This property is subject to Forest Conservation Plan \#2134. This property will comply with the Worcester County Forest Conservation Law, by obtaining a credit from an off-site forest conservation mitigation area.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT/ SEDIMENT EROSION CONTROL: This project has obtained Stormwater Final Plan Approval.

CRITICAL AREA LAW: This property is located outside of the Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area (ACBCA) program boundary.

WATER SUPPLY AND WASTEWATER SERVICES: Public water and sewer services are provided by the Riddle Farm Sanitary Service Area. According to the comments provided by the Department of Environmental Programs at the Technical Review Committee meeting, an application had been sent to the Riddle Farm Sanitary Service Area. However, no EDUs had been assigned to the project property at that time. Please provide written confirmation from the Department of Environmental Programs that the appropriate number of EDUs are obtained.

A natural gas main has been installed and is available to this community.

Please provide written confirmation from the Department of Public Works, Water and Wastewater Division that the appropriate utilities and easements are shown on the plan prior to signature approval.

ARCHITECTURAL JUSTIFICATION: The building elevations have been designed and reviewed under the Design Guidelines and Standards for Commercial Uses. This development is located within the Seaside-Agricultural blend. Incorporation of many of these distinct traditions has been provided for in the proposed architecture. The design is modeled in similar fashion to the Oceans Landings shopping center to the east.

The Planning Commission is the approving authority on the colors; therefore, it is recommended that the applicants be prepared to elaborate on the color choices at the meeting.

The items requiring a waiver from the Planning Commission have been itemized below under "Planning Commission Considerations." The applicant is required to justify their waiver request based upon the criteria outlined in Section 2(b) of the Design Guidelines and Standards.

PROPERTY OWNER: Coastal Square, LLC

APPLICANT: Coastal Square, LLC

ENGINEER: Becker Morgan Group, LLC

PREPARED BY: Stuart White, DRP Specialist

# PLANNING COMMISSION CONSIDERATIONS - DESIGN GUIDELINES 

## Design Guidelines: Waivers Requested

| Sec 8(b)(4) | Roofs |
| :--- | :--- |

Section 8: Roofs. The appearance of flat roofs is prohibited in areas other than Town Center tradition. In this instance, the architectural style of the area has not been met.

Becrer Morgan Group, Inc.

## Port Evchavie

312 West MadN Street, Sutte 300 Saliseliry, Marmand 21801 $410.5+6.9100$

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August 11, 2023
Mr. Stuart White
DRP Specialist
Worcester County Department of Development Review and Permitting
1 W. Market Street, Room 1201
Snow Hill, Maryland 21863

## Re: Planning Commission Submission

## COASTAL SQUARE SHOPPING CENTER

Worcester County, Maryland
BMG Project No. 2019333.02
Dear Mr. White:
Per our recent conversations, please find enclosed, our Planning Commission Submission for the Coastal Square Shopping Center project.

As you are aware, this plan was the subject of TRC review at the July 12, 2023, TRC meeting.
Key revisions made since TRC include:

## Civil Site Plans

- Revisions to building configurations, removal of corner unit with area added back onto north end of eastern building. Former corner unit area shown with patio areas and landscaping. A change in total square footage from 120,561 s.f. to 121,790 s.f. realized.
- Updated landscape areas along building frontages.
- Added Seating, Façade Landscaping and Community Space tables located on Sheet L-100.
- Updated Estimated Water and Sewer Usage Data Table on Sheet C-001.
- Addition of Cart Corrals, On-Line Pick-Up Area and additional Handicap Parking Spaces in parking area.
- Adjusted Parking Count provided in Site Data on Sheet C-001.
- Minor adjustments to geometry of SHA entrance locations based on on-going SHA coordination.
- Revised Plant List counts based on minor revisions to landscaping plan.


## Architectural Plans

- Updated and added data on anchor tenant - floor plan, elevations, façade materials and renderings.
- Revisions to plaza designs, plaza locations and square footages, see landscaping plans.
- Added area calculations for windows/openings - all buildings.
- Additional details and minor edits to strip retail areas.

BECKER MORGAN

GROUP

ARCHITECTURE ENGINEERING

We look forward to the opportunity to discuss this project at Planning Commission. Please confirm receipt and the date the project will be heard. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,
BECKER MORGAN GROUP, INC.


Kevin W. Parsons, PLS, LEED AP
Senior Associate
kwp/
enc: $\quad$ Ten (10) Sets of PC Review Plans One (1) Duplicate Application Form
cc: Bill Krapf, J.J. Farnan

Worcester County, Maryland One West Market Street Room 1201, Government Center Snow Hill, MD 21863-1070 (410) 632-1200


## OFFICE USE ONLY:

Date Filed: $\qquad$
Meeting Date: $\qquad$

## APPLICATION TO THE DEPARTMENT - DRP, TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE, AND/OR PLANNING COMMISSION

## APPLICATION BEING MADE FOR:

$\qquad$ Administrative Waiver
Minor Site Plan/ Subdivision
$\qquad$ Sketch Plan Preliminary Plat
Major Site Plan Construction Plans Site Plan Revision Final Plat

## TO THE DEPARTMENT - DRP, TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE, AND/OR PLANNING COMMISSION:

A request is hereby made for: TRC REVIEW OF COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING
TRC REVIEW OF COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING 121,790 S.F. OF GROSS FLOOR AREA AND A TOTAL OF 7 HIGHWAY FRONT OUTLOTS, WITH ASSOCIATED SERVICE ROADS, SWM, ETC.

## LOCATION OF PROPERTY:

Tax Map: 26 Parcel: 299/320 Section: N/A Lot: N/A Block: N/A Physical Address: 11238 OCEAN GATEWAY, BERLIN, MD

## PROPERTY OWNER INFORMATION:

COASTAL SQUARE, LLC
Owner's Name: C/O WILLIAM J. KRAPF
Telephone: 302-429-8700
Address: 105 FOULK ROAD, SUITE 200, WILMINGTON, DE 19803
Signature $\qquad$ Email: bkrapf@capanoinc.com

## APPLICANT INFORMATION:

COASTAL SQUARE, LLC
Applicant's Name: C/O WILLIAM J. KRAPF Telephone: 302-429-8700
Address: 105 FOULK ROAD, SUITE 200, WILMINGTON, DE 19803
Email: bkrapf@capanoinc.com

## ENGINEER, SURVEYOR, OR LAND PLANNER INFORMATION:

Company Name: BECKER MORGAN GROUP, INC. Telephone: 410-546-9100
Address: 312 WEST MAIN STREET, SALISBURY, MD 21801
Contact Person \& Email: KEVIN W. PARSONS, PLS - kparsons@beckermorgan.com
Signature:
Company Name: $\qquad$ Telephone: $\qquad$
Address: $\qquad$
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Signature: $\qquad$

## COASTAL SQUARE COMMERCIAL

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## STAFF REPORT

## REZONING CASE NO. 443

PROPERTY OWNER: William and Linda Ayres
2710 Cortland PL, NW
Washington, DC 20008
ATTORNEY:
Hugh Cropper, IV
9927 Stephen Decatur Highway, F-12
Ocean City, Maryland 21842
TAX MAP/PARCEL INFO: Tax Map 16, Parcels 21 \& 53, Tax District 03
SIZE: The petitioned area is approximately 27.57 acres in size.
LOCATION: The petitioned area is located on the east side of Maryland 589 (Racetrack RD) directly across from the north entrance to Ocean Pines (Ocean Parkway).

CURRENT USE OF PETITIONED AREA: The current use of the petitioned location is farmland and forested area.

CURRENT ZONING CLASSIFICATION: A-1 Agricultural District.
As defined in the Zoning Code, the intent of this district is to preserve, encourage and protect the County's farms and forestry operations and their economic productivity and to ensure that agricultural and forestry enterprises will continue to have the necessary flexibility to adjust their production as economic conditions change. The Code also states, in part, that this district is also intended to protect the land base resources for the County's agricultural and forestry industries from the disruptive effects of major subdivision or nonagricultural commercialization.

REQUESTED ZONING CLASSIFICATION: 25.25 Acres as A-2 Agricultural District and 2.0 acres as C-2 General Commercial District.

A-2 Agricultural District.
As defined in the Zoning Code, the intent of this district is to foster the County's agricultural heritage and uses while also accommodating compatible uses of a more commercial nature that require large tracts of land. In addition, this district may also be used for limited residential development through consolidated development rights and as a place marker for future annexations only were adjacent to existing municipalities.

## C-2 General Commercial District.

As defined in the Zoning Code, the intent of this district is to provide for more intense commercial development serving populations of three thousand or more within an approximate ten- to twenty-minute travel time. These commercial centers generally have higher parking demand and greater visibility. The Code also states, in part, that site layout and design features within this district shall be compatible with the community and the County's character.

APPLICANT'S BASIS FOR REZONING: The application indicates that a substantial changes in the character of the neighborhood since the November 3, 2009, Comprehensive Rezoning.

ZONING HISTORY: At the time zoning was first established in 1964, the petitioned area was given a A-1 Agricultural District classification, and the A-1 zoning has been retained in comprehensive rezonings held in 1978, 1992 and 2009. This property was subject to a previous rezoning application (Case No. 421) which requested a reclassification for the entire property to C-2 General Commercial District. That application was withdrawn following the Planning Commission's review and unfavorable recommendation. A copy of the minutes from that meeting are attached.

SURROUNDING ZONING: Adjoining properties to the south and west are zoned A-1 Agricultural District. Two adjacent properties to the east are zoned C-2 General Commercial District and currently have a convenience store, bank, and medical building on them. Directly across MD 589 (Racetrack Rd) is R-2 Suburban Residential District and C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District.

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

The County's Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the County Commissioners on March 7, 2006, and is intended to be a general guide for future development in the County. Whether a proposed rezoning is compatible with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan is one of the criteria that is considered in all rezoning requests, as listed in § ZS 1-113(c)(3) and as summarized at the end of this Staff Report.

According to Chapter 2 - Land Use of the Comprehensive Plan and the associated land use map, the petitioned area lies within the Agriculture Land Use Category. With regard to the Agriculture Land Use Category, the Comprehensive Plan states the following:
"The importance of agriculture to the county cannot be overstated. Its significance is economic, cultural, environmental, and aesthetic. Agriculture is simply the bedrock of the county's way of life. Agriculture faces challenges from international commodity prices, local development pressure, and the aging farm population to name a few. The county must do all it can to preserve farming as a viable industry." (Page 18)

Pertinent objectives cited in Chapter 2 - Land Use state the following:
2. Continue the dominance of agriculture and forestry uses throughout the county's less developed regions.
3. Maintain the character of the county's existing population centers.
8. Regulate development to minimize consumption of land, while continuing the county's rural and coastal character.
9. Minimize conflicts among land uses due to noise, smoke, dust, odors, lighting, and heavy traffic.
15. Balance the supply of commercially zoned land with anticipated demand of yearround residents and seasonal visitors.
17. Discourage highway strip development to maintain roadway capacity, safety, and character.
19. Limit rural development to uses compatible with agriculture and forestry.
(Pages 12 \& 13)

Areas surrounding Existing Developed Areas (EDA) shouldn't be rezoned simply because of their proximity to the EDA in this case Ocean Pines.(i.e. Ocean Pines). The EDAs are anticipated to remain the same until the next plan review period.
(Page 13)

## Chapter 3 Natural Resources

Prime farmland is a limited resource and is important for meeting short and long term food needs. Non-prime farmland is no less important for maintaining the Couties "critical mass" of working farms. (Page 49).

## Chapter 4 Economy

Objectives: Agriculture and Forestry
3. Reduce farm area fragmentation through agricultural zoning permitting only minor subdivisions (five or less lots), the state's agricultural preservation program, the Rural Legacy program and explore the use of a transfer of development rights and other preservation mechanisms
6. Review permitted land use in agricultural zones to ensure compatibility with agriculture as a quasi-industrial use. Adjust requirements to prevent inappropriate uses from developing in agricultural areas.
(Pages 59, 60)

WATER AND WASTEWATER: According to the attached response memo from Mr. Mitchell, the property is not currently connected to public sewer and/or water at this time. The subject property has a designation of a Sewer and Water Service Category of S-6/W-6 (No planned service) in the Master Water and Sewerage Plan, no comments were received from the County's Public Works Department.

The primary soil types on the petitioned area according to the Worcester County Soil Survey are as follows:

EmA - Elkton silt loam ( $1.3 \%$ of site), severe limitations to on-site wastewater disposal FadA - Fallsington sandy loams ( $3.7 \%$ of site), severe limitations to on-site wastewater disposal HmA- Hammonton loamy sand ( $16.8 \%$ of site), severe limitations to on-site wastewater disposal KeA - Kentuck silt loam ( $16 \%$ of site), severe limitations to on-site wastewater disposal NnA - Nassawango fine sandy loam ( $0.6 \%$ of site) severe limitations to on-site wastewater disposal
NnB - Nassawango fine sandy loam (43.3\% of site), severe limitations to on-site wastewater disposal
WddA - Woodstown sandy loam ( $18.2 \%$ of site), severe limitations to on-site wastewater disposal

EMERGENCY SERVICES: Fire and ambulance service will be available from the Ocean Pines Volunteer Fire Company approximately four minutes from the subject property. Service is also available from the Showell Volunteer Fire Company approximately also four minutes away. No comments were received from the fire companies with regard to this review. Police protection will be available from the Maryland State Police Barracks in Berlin, approximately nine minutes away, and the Worcester County Sheriff's Office in Snow Hill, approximately twenty-six minutes away. No comments were received from the Maryland State Police Barracks or from the Sheriff's Office.

ROADWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION: The petitioned area has frontage on MD Route 589 (Racetrack Road), a State-owned and maintained road. It is considered a two-lane secondary highway. This location is also directly across from the MD589 Ocean Parkway Intersection.

In Chapter 7 - Transportation, the 2006 Comprehensive Plan states that "Worcester's roadways experience morning and evening commute peaks; however, they are dwarfed by summer resort traffic. . . . Resort traffic causes the most noticeable congestion on US 50, US 113, US 13, MD 528, MD 589, MD 611 and MD 90." (Page 79)
"Of special note is the fact that the MD 589 corridor has experienced significant development and has reached an unsatisfactory level of service. . . [A]nd congestion has become a daily occurrence regardless of season. For this reason, MD 589 is considered impacted from a traffic standpoint. This implies that land use should not intensify in this area. Infill development of existing platted lots should be the extent of new development. This policy shall remain until road capacity is suitably improved." (Page 80)

Chapter 7 also includes a section on MD 589 and identifies it as a Two Lane Secondary Highway/Major Collector Highway and contains the following recommendations (Page 85):

- Limit development in the corridor until capacity increases.
- Conduct scenic and transportation corridor planning.
- Dualize after the US 113 project is completed.
- Continue to deflect US 113 traffic to MD 90 rather than MD 589.
- Introduce interparcel connectors and service roads where feasible.

In this same chapter, under the heading General Recommendations - Roadways, it states the following (page 87):

1. Acceptable Levels of Service-It is this plan's policy that the minimal acceptable level of service for all roadways be LOS C. Developers shall be responsible for maintaining this standard.
2. Traffic studies--Developers should provide traffic studies to assess the effect of each major development on the LOS for nearby roadways.
3. Impacted Roads--Roads that regularly have LOS D or below during weekly peaks are considered "impacted." Areas surrounding impacted roads should be planned for minimal development (infill existing lots). Plans and funding for improving such roads should be developed.
4. Impacted Intersections--Upgrade intersections that have fallen below a LOS C, for example, the intersection of US 13 and MD 756 Old Snow Hill Road, intersection of MD 589 and US 50.

The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) has no objection to the request. They note in their comments that any future development proposal will require review and approval from District 1 Access Management and any permitting as needed. As this parcel is not located on a county owned and maintained road, no comments were received from the County Roads Division of the Department of Public Works.

SCHOOLS: The petitioned area is within Zone 1 of the Worcester County Public School Zones and is served by the following schools: Showell Elementary, Berlin Intermediate, and Stephen Decatur Middle and High Schools. No comments were received from the Worcester County Board of Education (WCBOE).

CHESAPEAKE/ATLANTIC COASTAL BAYS CRITICAL AREAS: Mr. Mitchell also notes in his memorandum that the petitioned is located outside of the Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area (ACBCA) and will be subject to the Forest Conservation Law. The parcel included in the proposed rezoning has not previously been reviewed in conjunction with the Forest Conservation Law. The first portion of this rezoning would be a change from A-1 (Agricultural District) to A-2 (Agricultural District) and the afforestation/reforestation thresholds will not change if/when the property is further developed. The second portion of this request would be a change from A-1 (Agricultural District) to C-2 (General Commercial District). The afforestation and conservation threshold would be reduced for this request. A change from 20 percent to 15
percent and the reforestation threshold will change from 50 percent to 15 percent. No comments were received from the State Critical Area Commission relative to this request.

FLOOD ZONE: The FIRM map ( 24047 C 0045 H , effective July 16, 2015) indicates that this property is located outside of the floodplain in Zone X (Area of Minimal Flood Hazard).

PRIORITY FUNDING AREAS: The petitioned area is not within a designated Priority Funding Area (PFA). The closest PFA is Ocean Pines, directly on the other side of MD 589.

INCORPORATED TOWNS: This property is within 5.5 miles of the incorporated town of Berlin.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS RECEIVED: N/A

## THE PLANNING COMMISSION MUST MAKE FINDINGS OF FACT IN EACH

 SPECIFIC CASE, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING MATTERS:1. What is the applicant's definition of the neighborhood in which the subject property is located? (Not applicable if request is based solely on a claim of mistake in existing zoning.)
2. Does the Planning Commission concur with the applicant's definition of the neighborhood? If not, how does the Planning Commission define the neighborhood?
3. Relating to population change.
4. Relating to availability of public facilities.
5. Relating to present and future transportation patterns.
6. Relating to compatibility with existing and proposed development and existing environmental conditions in the area, including having no adverse impact on waters included on the State's impaired waters list or having an established total maximum daily load requirement.
7. Relating to compatibility with the Comprehensive Plan.
8. Has there been a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood where the property is located since the last zoning of the property (November 3, 2009) or is there a mistake in the existing zoning of the property?
9. Would a change in zoning be more desirable in terms of the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan?

# Worcester County Commissioners <br> Worcester County Government Center One W. Market Street, Room 1103 <br> Snow Hill, Maryland 21863 

PLEASE TYPE
OR PRINT IN

## APPLICATION FOR AMENDMENT OF OFFICIAL ZONING MAP

## (Office Use One - Please Do Not Write In This Space)

Rezoning Case No. CAse 443
Date Received by Office of County Commissioners:


Date Received by Development, Review and Permitting: $\qquad$
Date Reviewed by Planning Commission: $\qquad$
I. Application

Proposals for amendment of the Official Zoning Maps may be made only by a governmental agency or by the property owner, contract purchaser, option holder, leasee, or their attorney or agent of the property to be directly affected by the proposed amendment. Check applicable status below:
A. $\qquad$ Governmental Agency
B. $\qquad$ Property Owner
C. $\qquad$ Contract Purchaser
D. Option Holder
E.
$\qquad$ Leave
G. $\qquad$ Attorney for $\qquad$ (Insert A, B, C, D, or E) Agent of $\qquad$ (Insert A, B, C, D, or E)
II. Legal Description of Property
A. Tax Map/Zoning Map Numbers):

16
B. Parcel Numbers):

21 and 53
C. Lot Number(s), if applicable:
D. Tax District Number:

03

## III. Physical Description of Property

A. Located on Race Track Road
B. Consisting of a total of $\qquad$ 27.57 acres of land.
C. Other descriptive physical features or characteristics necessary to accurately locate the petitioned area:
D. Petitions for map amendments shall be accompanied by a plat drawn to scale showing property lines, the existing and proposed district boundaries and such other information as the Planning Commission may need in order to locate and plot the amendment on the Official Zoning Maps.

## IV. Requested Change to Zoning Classification(s)

A. Existing zoning classification(s): A-1 Agricultural District (Name and Zoning District)
B. Acreage of zoning classification(s) in " $A$ " above: 27.57
C. Requested zoning classification(s): A-2 Agricultural District (25.57 acres) and C-2, General Commercial District (2.0 acres) (Name and Zoning District)
D. Acreage of zoning classification(s) in " C " above: $\qquad$

## V. Reasons for Requested Change

The County Commissioners may grant a map amendment based upon a finding that there: (a) has been a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood where the property is located since the last zoning of the property, or (b) is a mistake in the existing zoning classification and that a change in zoning would be more desirable in terms of the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.
A. Please list reasons or other information as to why the rezoning change is requested, including whether the request is based upon a claim of change in the character of the neighborhood or a mistake in existing zoning:

This rezoning is based upon a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood, see attached.
VI. Filing Information and Required Signatures
A. Every application shall contain the following information:

1. If the application is made by a person other than the property owner, the application shall be co-signed by the property owner or the property owner's attorney.
2. If the applicant is a corporation, the names and mailing addresses of the officers, directors and all stockholders owning more than 20 percent of the capital stock of the corporation.
3. If the applicant is a partnership, whether a general or limited partnership, the names and mailing addresses of all partners who own more than 20 percent of the interest of the partnership.
4. If the applicant is an individual, his/her name and mailing address.
5. If the applicant is a joint venture, unincorporated association, real estate investment trust or other business trust, the names and mailing addresses of all persons holding an interest of more than 20 percent in the joint venture, unincorporated association, real estate investment trust or other business trust.
B. Signature of Ablicarfin Accerdance with VI.A. above.

Signature:


Printed Name of Applicant:
Hugh Cropper, IV, Attorney for Property Owners
Mailing Address: 9927 Stephen Decatur Hwy., F-12, Ocean City,
MD 21842
Phone Number: 410-213-2681
E-Mail: hcropper@bbcmlaw.com
Date: May 14,2023
C. Signature of Profty Owner in Agcordance with VI.A. above

Signature:
Printed Name of Owner:
William Ayres and Linda Ayres
Mailing Address: 2710 Cortland PI, NW, Washington, DC 20008
Phone Number: 212-586-1903
E-Mail: ayreswilliam@netscape.net; lindaayres_2710 ஹgmail.com
Date: May 142023
(Please use additional pages and attach to application if more space is required.)

## VII. General Information Relating to the Rezoning Process

A. Applications shall only be accepted from January $1^{\text {st }}$ to January
$31^{\text {st }}$, May $1^{\text {st }}$ to May $31^{\text {st }}$, and September $1^{\text {st }}$ to September $30^{\text {th }}$ of any calendar year.
B. Applications for map amendments shall be addressed to and filed with the Office of the County Commissioners. The required filing fee must accompany the application.
C. Any officially filed amendment or other change shall first be referred by the County Commissioners to the Planning Commission for an investigation and recommendation. The Planning Commission may make such investigations as it deems appropriate or necessary and for the purpose may require the submission of pertinent information by any person concerned and may hold such public hearings as are appropriate in its judgment.

The Planning Commission shall formulate its recommendation on said amendment or change and shall submit its recommendation and pertinent supporting information to the County Commissioners within 90 days after the Planning Commission's decision of recommendation, unless an extension of time is granted by the County Commissioners.

After receiving the recommendation of the Planning Commission concerning any such amendment, and before adopting or denying same, the County Commissioners shall hold a public hearing in reference thereto in order that parties of interest and citizens shall have an opportunity to be heard. The County Commissioners shall give public notice of such hearing.
D. Where the purpose and effect of the proposed amendment is to change the zoning classification of property, the County Commissioners shall make findings of fact in each specific case including but not limited to the following matters:
population change, availability of public facilities, present and future transportation patterns, compatibility with existing and proposed development and existing environmental conditions for the area, including no adverse impact on waters included on the State's Impaired Waters List or having an established total maximum daily load requirement, the recommendation of the Planning Commission, and compatibility with the County's Comprehensive Plan. The County Commissioners may grant the map amendment based upon a finding that (a) there a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood where the property is located since the last zoning of the property, or (b) there is a mistake in the existing zoning classification and that a change in zoning would be
more desirable in terms of the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

The fact that an application for a map amendment complies with all of the specific requirements and purposes set forth above shall not be deemed to create a presumption that the proposed reclassification and resulting development would in fact be compatible with the surrounding land uses and is not, in itself, sufficient to require the granting of the application.
E. No application for map amendment shall be accepted for filing by the office of the County Commissioners if the application is for the reclassification of the whole or any part of the land for which the County Commissioners have denied reclassification within the previous 12 months as measured from the date of the County Commissioners' vote of denial. However, the County Commissioners may grant reasonable continuance for good cause or may allow the applicant to withdraw an application for map amendment at any time, provided that if the request for withdrawal is made after publication of the notice of public hearing, no application for reclassification of all or any part of the land which is the subject of the application shall be allowed within 12 months following the date of such withdrawal, unless the County Commissioners specify by formal resolution that the time limitation shall not apply.

## REASONS FOR REQUESTED ZONING CHANGE

William Ayres and Linda Ayres, by their attorney, Hugh Cropper IV, respectfully submit the following in support of their Rezoning Application:

This Rezoning Application is based upon substantial changes in the character of the neighborhood since the November 3, 2009 Comprehensive Rezoning. The property is currently zoned A-1, Agricultural District. This is a request to rezone approximately 2 acres of the property to $\mathrm{C}-2$, General Commercial District, being that portion of the property abutting the existing $\mathrm{C}-2$ Zone, which is currently improved by a convenience store. This is a request to rezone the remainder of the property, slightly over 25 acres, to A-2, Agricultural District.

A copy of the March 7, 2006 Land Use Plan, which accompanies the Worcester County Comprehensive Plan, is attached (Exhibit 1). The Land Use Plan is a broad brush approach, or guide, to future zoning. In the actual Plan which the undersigned obtained from the County Commissioners' Office back in 2006, it appears that a portion of the property, being part of the 2 acres proposed to commercial zoning, is actually in the Commercial Center in the Land Use Plan. Again, given the scale of the actual Land Use Plan, it is difficult to tell. At a minimum, it abuts the Commercial Center.

The remainder of the property is designated Agriculture and, as such, the proposed rezoning to A-2, Agricultural District, is consistent with the Land Use Map, and the Worcester County Comprehensive Plan.

This property was the subject of a previous rezoning application, which
requested a reclassification of the entire property to $\mathrm{C}-2$, General Commercial District. That application was withdrawn.

Circumstances with respect to this specific property have changed since that application; namely, the current tenant farmer has refused to plant the property because: (1) due to its location, it is inaccessible to combines and tractors; (2) the soils are poor, and do not support good production; and (3) it is in an area remote from large tracts of farmland, and it is not economically feasible to take large farm equipment to this property.

The neighborhood is defined as the commercial corridor along Maryland Route 589, as shown on the attached diagrams (Exhibits 2 and 3). The property is shown on the Zoning Map, which was an attachment to the January 2019 proposed rezoning (Exhibit 4).

Among other substantial changes to the character of the neighborhood, are the following:

1. Coastal Venture Properties, LLC has obtained special exceptions and other unplanned for approvals in connection with its medical office complex on Worcester County Tax Map 16, Parcel 24, directly across Maryland Route 589 from the subject property. The substantial construction can be seen on the aerial photograph which is attached as an exhibit to this summary (Exhibit 5). In fact, the property has become a large multi-disciplinary medical complex operated by Tidal Health in connection with the Tidal Health Hospital in Salisbury. This major expansion, in and of itself, would represent a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood, and it is literally across Maryland

Route 589 from the subject property.
2. Upgrades to the Ocean Downs Casino represents a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood. Perhaps more importantly, Worcester County amended its Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan to permit a force main under Turville Creek to a pump station at the Ocean Downs Casino. This allowed the Ocean Downs Casino to purchase additional EDU's, thereby authorizing the expansion (all of which was unplanned for). The pump station was designed to accept additional effluent, and Crabs to Go is in the process of running a force main along Maryland Route 589 and connecting to this pump station.
3. On March 15, 2016, the Worcester County Commissioners rezoned 11.5 acres for the Estate of Mildred Parsons, Margaret Bunting, Personal Representative, in Case Number 398.
4. On September 4, 2012, the Worcester County Commissioners rezoned 30.9 acres in Rezoning Case No. 392. This rezoning was appealed to the Circuit Court, and subsequently appealed to the Court of Special Appeals, which upheld the decision of the Worcester County Commissioners (Exhibit 6). The Protestants filed a Petition for Writ of Certiorari, which was denied by the Court of Appeals (effectively confirming the rezoning). The aforementioned two rezonings were based on substantial changes in the character of the neighborhood since the last Comprehensive Rezoning, November 3, 2009.
5. The Worcester County Commissioners recently amended the Worcester County Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan to include

Worcester County Tax Map 21, Parcels 66A and 66B, for connection to the Greater Ocean Pines Sanitary Service Area. A force main will be designed and installed along Maryland Route 589.
6. The sectional rezoning at Maryland Route 589 (Racetrack Road) represents a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood.
7. There have been other expansions/connections to the Greater Ocean Pines Sanitary Service Area. There have been other changes in the neighborhood, some of which are outlined in the Silver Fox Court of Special Appeals Opinion, a copy of which is attached hereto (Exhibit 6).

Although the property is designated Agricultural in the Worcester County Land Use Plan, it does abut Commercial Center. It is directly across from the North Gate of Ocean Pines. It is adjacent to commercially zoned property to the south. It is part of a predominantly commercial neighborhood. Taken as a whole, the Comprehensive Plan is a broad brush approach to guide future development.

Having found a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood, the proposed rezoning is more desirable with respect to the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. For the majority of the property, the proposed A-2, Agricultural District, will allow for quasi-commercial uses, such as farmers markets, which will be an asset to the neighborhood, and consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The applicants respectfully request that the application be granted.

Respectfully submitted,


Hugh Cropper IV
Attorney for Property Owners
William Ayres and Linda L. Ayres

## Memorandum

To: Matt Laick, Deputy Director, DDRP
From: Robert J. Mitchell
Director, Environmental Programs
Subject: EP Staff Comments on Rezoning Case No. 443
Worcester County Tax Map 16, Parcels 21 \& 53
Reclassify approximately 25.57 Acres of A-1 Agricultural District to A-2 Agricultural District and Reclassify 2 acres A-1 Agricultural District to C-2 General Commercial District

Date: 7/21/23

This response to your request for comments is prepared for the map amendment application associated with the above referenced property. The Worcester County Zoning and Subdivision Control Article, Section §ZS 1-113(c)(3), states that the applicant must affirmatively demonstrate that there has been a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood since the last zoning of the property or that a mistake has been made in the existing zoning classification. The applicant is contending that there has been a change in the character of the neighborhood. The Code requires that the Commissioners find that the proposed "change in zoning" would be more desirable in terms of the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Department of Environmental Programs has the following comments:

1. This property has an Agricultural land use designation in the Land Use Map in the Worcester County Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan), as do properties to the west and south. This district is reserved for farming, forestry, and related industries with minimal residential and other compatible uses permitted. It is expected that residential and other conflicting land uses although permitted, are discouraged within this district. The surrounding zoning and land uses for the most part have corresponded with their land use designations in the Comprehensive Plan.
2. The existing property is not connected to public sewer and/or water at this time. The subject property has a designation for a Sewer Service Planning Category of S-6/W-6 (No planned service) in the Master Water and Sewerage Plan. Our well and septic records indicate a septic tank served the existing building for the property until the system was demolished and abandoned. To get an amendment approved for water \& sewer planning area classification changes that permit connection to public systems, the underlying agricultural land use designation for the properties would need to change to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
3. We would note the Comprehensive Plan's Chapter 7 Transportation notes on MD Route 589 , referenced on Page 80: "Of special note is the fact that the MD 589 corridor has experienced significant development and has reached an unsatisfactory level-of-service. During the period from 1990 to 2003, traffic increased by 112 percent and congestion has become a daily occurrence, regardless of season. For this reason, MD 589 is considered impacted from a traffic standpoint. This implies that land use should not intensify in this area. Infill development of existing platted lots should be the extent of new development. This policy shall remain
until road capacity is suitably improved." The applicant should be prepared to address how this rezoning, if approved, would not negatively affect local traffic congestion.
4. This proposed rezoning is located outside of the Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area (ACBCA) and will be subject to the Forest Conservation Law. The parcel included in the proposed rezoning has not previously been reviewed in conjunction with the Forest Conservation Law. The first portion of this rezoning would be a change from A-1 (Agricultural District) to A-2 (Agricultural District) and the afforestation/reforestation thresholds will not change if/when the property is further developed. The second portion of this request would be a change from A-1 (Agricultural District) to C-2 (General Commercial District). The afforestation and conservation threshold would be reduced for this request. A change from 20 percent to 15 percent and the reforestation threshold will change from 50 percent to 15 percent.
5. The applicant submits that the character of the neighborhood has changed to an extent that justifies this amendatory action to change the zoning designation. The example properties the applicant submits that justify a change in the character of the neighborhood had underlying land use designations of either commercial center or existing developed.

If you have any questions on these comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

From: Aws Ezzat [AEzzat@mdot.maryland.gov](mailto:AEzzat@mdot.maryland.gov)
Sent: Wednesday, June 21, 2023 8:07 AM
To: April Mariner [amariner@co.worcester.md.us](mailto:amariner@co.worcester.md.us)
Cc: Jeffrey Fritts [JFritts@mdot.maryland.gov](mailto:JFritts@mdot.maryland.gov)
Subject: Re: Rezoning Case \#443

April,

After a review of Rezoning Case \#443, MDOT SHA has no objection to the rezoning as proposed. If this parcel is proposed to be developed in the future, the proposed development will require review and approval from District 1 Access Management and need to obtain permitting, as necessary.

As reflected in our aforementioned comments, MDOT SHA has no objections to the proposed rezoning as determined by Worcester County. I would highly appreciate if you can copy/inform me in the future for any rezoning submissions.

Thank you,


Aws Ezzat, P.E.
Regional Engineer, Access Management
District 1
660 West Road

Salisbury, MD 21801

AEzzat@mdot.maryland.gov
(410) 677-4048 (office)

## WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND



## WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND

REZONING CASE NO. 443
A-1 Agricultural to A-2 Agricultural \& C-2 General Commercial Tax Map: 16, Parcel 21 and 53

AERIAL IMAGERY


DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND PERMITTING Technical Services Division - Prepared June 2023

| 0 | 250 |
| :---: | :---: |
| Feet |  |

## WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND



## WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND



REZONING CASE NO. 443
A-1 Agricultural to A-2 Agricultural \& C-2 General Commercial Tax Map: 16, Parcel 21 and 53


LAND USE MAP


DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND PERMITTING Technical Services Division - Prepared June 2023

This map is intended to be used for illustrative purposes only and is not to be used for regulatory action.

## WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND



This map is intended to be used for illustrative purposes only and is not to be used for regulatory action.

## WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND

REZONING CASE NO. 443
A-1 Agricultural to A-2 Agricultural \& C-2 General Commercial Tax Map: 16, Parcel 21 and 53


HYDRIC SOILS MAP



## MAP LEGEND

| Area of Interest (AOI) |  |
| :--- | :--- |
| $\square$ | Area of Interest (AOI) |
| Soils |  |
| $\square$ | Soil Map Unit Polygons |
| $\square$ | Soil Map Unit Lines |
| $\square$ | Soil Map Unit Points |

Special Point Features
(0) Blowout

B Borrow Pit
㳟 Clay Spot
$\triangle$ Closed Depression
Gravel Pit
$\therefore$ Gravelly Spot
(5) Landfill

A Lava Flow
Marsh or swamp
, Mine or Quarry
(-) Miscellaneous Water

- Perennial Water
- Rock Outcrop
$\uparrow$ Saline Spot
$\because$ Sandy Spot
응 Severely Eroded Spot
- Sinkhole

3. Slide or Slip
(6) Sodic Spot

## MAP INFORMATION

The soil surveys that comprise your AOI were mapped at 1:12,000.

Warning: Soil Map may not be valid at this scale.
Enlargement of maps beyond the scale of mapping can cause misunderstanding of the detail of mapping and accuracy of soil line placement. The maps do not show the small areas of contrasting soils that could have been shown at a more detailed scale

Please rely on the bar scale on each map sheet for map measurements.
Source of Map: Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey URL:
Coordinate System: Web Mercator (EPSG:3857)
Maps from the Web Soil Survey are based on the Web Mercator projection, which preserves direction and shape but distorts distance and area. A projection that preserves area, such as the Albers equal-area conic projection, should be used if more accurate calculations of distance or area are required.
This product is generated from the USDA-NRCS certified data as of the version date(s) listed below.
Soil Survey Area: Worcester County, Maryland
Survey Area Data: Version 20, Sep 14, 2022
Soil map units are labeled (as space allows) for map scales 1:50,000 or larger.

Date(s) aerial images were photographed: May 30, 2022—Jul 4, 2022

The orthophoto or other base map on which the soil lines were compiled and digitized probably differs from the background imagery displayed on these maps. As a result, some minor shifting of map unit boundaries may be evident.

## Map Unit Legend

| Map Unit Symbol | Map Unit Name | Acres in AOI | Percent of AOI |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| EmA | Elkton silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes | 0.4 | 1.3\% |
| FadA | Fallsington sandy loams, 0 to 2 percent slopes, Northern Tidewater Area | 1.1 | 3.7\% |
| HmA | Hammonton loamy sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes | 4.8 | 16.8\% |
| KeA | Kentuck silt loam | 4.6 | 16.0\% |
| NnA | Nassawango fine sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes | 0.2 | 0.6\% |
| NnB | Nassawango fine sandy loam, 2 to 5 percent slopes | 12.5 | 43.3\% |
| WddA | Woodstown sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, Northern Tidewater Area | 5.2 | 18.2\% |
| Totals for Area of Interest |  | 28.7 | 100.0\% |

Exhibit 1


## Commercial Corridor along RTE 589, from RTE 50 to Beauchamp Road



## Commercial Corridor along RTE 589, from RTE 50 to Beauchamp Road



1/30/2019 10:24:02 AM
State Boundary Mask
Tax Map Image

## Exhibit 4

## WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND

REZONING CASE NO. 421<br>A-1 Agricultural District to C-2 General Commercial District Tax Map: 16, Parcel 21 and 53

## ZONING MAP




## Exhibit 6

## UNREPORTED

## IN THE COURT OF SPECLAL APPEALS

## OF MARYLAND

No. 0144
September Term, 2013

SIL VER FOX, LLC, ET AL.
v.

WALTER M. STANSELL, JR., ET AL.

Meredith,
Zarnoch,
Eyler, James R. (Retired, Specially Assigned),

JJ.

Opinion by Zarnoch, J.

Filed: July 22, 2014

In this zoning case, appellants Silver Fox, LLC and Burbage/Melson, Inc. (collectively, "Silver Fox") petitioned the Worcester County Commissioners ("County Commissioners") to rezone/reclassify Silver Fox's property from A-1 Agricultural District to $\mathrm{C}-2$ General Commercial District under the Worcester County Zoning Code. The County Commissioners granted this petition. Appellees in this case are nearby property owners ("the Residents")' who protested the rezoning/reclassification and petitioned the Circuit Court for Worcester County for judicial review. The circuit court reversed the decision of the County Commissioners. We now reverse the judgment of the circuit court, leaving intact the County Commissioners' decision to grant the rezoning.

## FACTS AND LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

Silver Fox owns the property at issue in this case, which consists of two parcels totaling about thirty-one acres ("the Property"). The Property is located in Worcester County, on the east side of Maryland Route 589 ("Rt. 589"), also known as Race Track Road, and on the south side of Manklin Creek Road. The Property is adjacent to the southwesterly side of the Ocean Pines subdivision, and contiguous to the westerly side of R-1 Single-Pamily Residential District zoned land, which is currently undeveloped. Turville Creek separates the Ocean Pines neighborhood and the Property from the Ocean Downs Racetrack and what is now called the Casino at Ocean Downs ("the Casino").

[^3]The Property currently consists of cropland and woodland, with a seasonally-operated produce stand. It has been zoned A-1 Agricultural District since 1965, and is the only A-1 Agricultural District property south of Route 90, though some property is zoned as an A-2 Agricultural District on the opposite side of Rt. 589.

In 2006, the Worcester County Comprehensive Land Use Plan ("Comprehensive Plan") designated the Property as a combination of "Existing Developed Area" and "Commercial Center." The Comprehensive Plan stated that its policy would be to limit development of the Rt. 589 corridor until road capacity improved.

In September 2009, the Video Lottery Facility Location Commission awarded a slots license to the owner of the Ocean Downs Racetrack, land zoned A-2 Agricultural. The Casino is about 2,000 feet south of the Property, on the same side of Rt. 589. On November 3,2009, Worcester County adopted a Comprehensive Rezoning Plan ("2009 Rezoning Plan"), which found an adequate supply of commercial zoning in the area and discouraged additional development along Rt. 589 until the roadway improved.

Since the 2009 Rezoning Plan, the 35,000 square foot Casino has been constructed on the site, along with a 10,000 square foot clubhouse. The Casino presently has 800 video lottery terminals, though the Maryland General Assembly has approved a total of 2,500 video lottery terminals for this location. ${ }^{2}$ Rt. 589 now has more traffic signals and turn lanes.

[^4]Additionally, the owners of the Casino received "site plan approval" for the construction of a movie theater and bowling alley, which have not yet been constructed.

Also, since the 2009 Rezoning Plan, an adjacent seventy-acre property ("the Steen Property") received approval from Worcester County to reclassify from a Resource Conservation Area, which permitted one dwelling unit per twenty acres, to a Limited Development Area, which would allow a total of sixty residential units on the Steen Property. The Steen Property shares at least "a few hundred feet" of common property line with the Property.

On May 28, 2010, Silver Fox submitted a petition to Worcester County to rezone the Property, requesting a change from A-1 Agricultural District to C-2 General Commercial District. It set forth two grounds for rezoning in its petition: a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood since the 2009 Rezoning Plan, and a mistake in the existing zoning classification. On April 12, 2012, the Worcester County Planning Commission ("Planning Commission") held a public hearing on the application. Silver Fox presented evidence, including a witness from Atlantic General Hospital, whotestified that the Property is an ideal site for a medical campus facility. Ocean Pines residents stated that traffic congestion is a serious health and safety issue. On May 3, the Planning Commission held a
${ }^{2}$ (...continued)
expansion), the facility at that time was more appropriately characterized as a "racino," i.e., a slots parlor at a racetrack. See http://en,wikipedia.ore/wiki/Ocean_Downs (last visited July 10, 2014).
work session to discuss the character of the neighborhood, and then forwarded its Findings of Fact and Recommendation to the Worcester County Commissioners ("County Commissioners"),

On August 7, the County Commissioners held an advertised public hearing. ${ }^{3}$ Silver Fox presented testimony from three professional engineers, including a traffic engineer, a land planner, and a surveyor. On September 4, the County Commissioners granted the rezoning request. They adopted the Planning Commission's Findings of Fact and Recommendation. The County Commissioners concluded that the neighborhood had substantially changed since the 2009 Rezoning Plan, based on the opening of the Casino, ${ }^{4}$
${ }^{3}$ Commissioner Church was asked to recusehimself because of an affiliation with the Atlantic General Hospital and with Mr. Burbage, a principal of Silver Fox. The County Attomey determined that this was not a conflict of interest.

4The Commission granted the rezoning request some two weeks after the Governor signed legislation that would result in a significant expansion of gambling at Ocean Downs and the other casino sites. See Chapter 1, Laws of 2012, (2d Spec. Sess.). Although the it authorized a licensee: 1) to offert a November, 2012 referendum, among other things, offer live entertainment.

The legislation contemplated that Ocean Downs would generate additional revenue from table games, see Revised Fiscal \& Policy Note on SB 1 (2012 2d Spec. Sess.), dated September 19, 2012, and provided for an increase in rovenues for Ocean Downs as long as surprisingly, as a result of these changes in the law, Ocean Downs, in September, 2013 http://en. wikipedia,org/wriki/Q expansion to include table games and a new restaurant. See takes place, Ocean Downs will no longer be (last visited July 10, 2014). When this expansion takes place, Ocean Downs will no longer be a racino, but will be a genuine casino.
the approval for the movie theater and bowling alley, and the anticipated subdivision on the Steen Property.

On October 4, the Residents filed a petition for judicial review of the County Commissioners' decision. Silver Fox filed a cross-petition for the County Commissioners' failure to find there had been a mistake in the 2009 Rezoning Plan. On March 18, 201 3, the circuit court held a hearing on the petition. The court denied Silver Fox's motion challenging the Residents' standing, and held that no mistake occurred in the 2009 Rezoning Plan, and that Silver Fox had not demonstrated a substantial change since that date. Judge Beck explained his denial of the rezoning:

So the Commissioners rely primarily on three points for the change: the . . . casino gambling at the racecourse. On that point, the site location commission approved the one mile area in September of 2009 prior to this rezoning and I believe that what happened at the racecourse with regard to casino gambling was known to the Commissioners at the time that they adopted their comprehensive rezoning. The Steen property has always been R-1. Some changes were made with regard to the density, but also [known] to the Commissioners at the time that they granted comprehensive rezoning in November of 2009. The movie theater and the bowling alley are extensions of nonconforming use and certainly could be within the contemplation of the Commissioners at the time they granted the comprehensive rezoning. The Atlantic Hospital interest in perhaps someday putting a medical facility on the subject property was speculative or remote at best. I read somewhere that soils are suitable for this kind of development which clearly does not fall within the realm of substantial change.

So there's been a number of changes. The appellate courts are clear that mere changes are not enough, it must be a substantial change to affect the character of the neighborhood and even
cumulatively I can't find that that occurred in the facts that before the Court.

On April 12, the court issued a written order reversing the decision of the County Commissioners. On May 7, Silver Fox filed a notice of appeal. The issue of mistake was not raised in this appeal. Additional facts will be provided as necessary in our discussion of the issues.

## QUESTION PRESENTED

Silver Fox presents the following question for our review:
Was the decision to rezone/reclassify the [Silver Fox's] Property from the A-1 Agricultural Zoning District to the C-2 General Commercial District, fairly debatable and supported by substantial evidence, considering the aggregate, cumulative changes in the neighborhood since the last rezoning?

We answer in the affirmative, and reverse the decision of the circuit court.

## DISCUSSION

## I. Standard of Review

When a decision of an administrative agency like the County Commissioners comes to us from the circuit court, we review the decision of the agency itself, not the decision of the circuit court. Long Green Valley Ass'n v. Prigel Family Creamery, 206 Md. App. 264, 273 (2012). We will review the agency's decision in the light most favorable to the agency because its decisions are prima facie correct, though we are "under no constraint to affirm an agency decision premised solely upon an erroneous conclusion of law." Catonsville Nursing Home, Inc. v. Loveman, 349 Md. 560, 569 (1998) (Citations omitted).

We "will not disturb an administrative decision on appeal if substantial evidence supports factual findings and no error of law exists." Long Green Valley Ass'n, 206 Md . App. at 274. Substantial evidence means "such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion." Catonsville Nursing Home, Inc., 349 Md . at 569. Thus, "[i]t is only where there is no room for reasonable debate, or where the record is devoid of supporting facts, that the court is justified in declaring the legislative action of the board arbitrary or discriminatory." Offutt v. Bd. of Zoning Appeals of Baltimore Cnty., $204 \mathrm{Md} .551,562$ (1954). We appraise and evaluate the agency's fact finding, but do not make an independent decision on the evidence. Catonsville Nursing Home, Inc, 349 Md . at 569 .

## II. Substantial Change in Character

Zoning authorities in Maryland, like the County Commissioners, "implement their plans and determinations regarding appropriate land use zoning categories" through original zoning, comprehensive rezoning, and piecemeal rezoning. Mayor \& Council of Rockville v. Rylyns Enterprises, Inc., $372 \mathrm{Md} .514,532$ (2002). The zoning regulations and boundaries may be amended or repealed. Md. Rule 4-204(a). The zoning authority may grant a change in a zoning classification based on a finding that there was a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood where the property is located or a mistake in the existing zoning classification. Md. Rule 4-204(b)(2). See also Rylyns Enterprises, Inc., 372 Md . at 535-36.

To change the zoning of a property based on change of character in a neighborhood, the petitioner must establish:
(a) what area reasonably constitutes the neighborhood of the subject property, (b) the changes which have occurred in that neighborhood since the comprehensive rezoning and (c) that those changes resulted in a change in the character of the neighborhood.

Montgomery v. Board of Cnty. Comm'rs for Prince George's Cnty., 256 Md. 597, 602 (1970). The changes in the character of the neighborhood must be evaluated cumulatively, in order to determine "whether the aggregate changes in the character of the neighborhood since the last zoning were such as to make the question fairly debatable." Bowman Grp. v. Moser, 112 Md. App. 694, 700 (1996).

## A. Definition of Neighborhood

The first step in determining a change in a neighborhood is to define the neighborhood. Montgomery, 256 Md , at 602 . Silver Fox contends that the issue is not preserved. It argues that the circuit court rejected the Residents' argument that the County Commissioners' definition was incorrect, and the Residents did not file a cross-appeal. The Residents contend that because this Court evaluates the decision of the administrative agency and not the circuit court, the Residents were not required to file a cross-appeal on the issue of the neighborhood.

We agree with the Residents that they did not need to file a cross-appeal to preserve this issue. However, we find that the neighborhood was sufficiently defined by the County

Commissioners. The Planning Commission clearly considered the definition, shown by their alterations to the definition originally presented by Silver Fox. The Planning Commission excluded the commercial property on the south side of U.S. Route 50 . At the public hearing, the County Commissioners heard testimony concerning the neighborhood from Steven Soule, an engineer, and from an Robert Hand, a lander planner. Hand explained that when he was asked to define the neighborhood as an expert witness, he included areas that were a five to ten minute drive from the population centers as described in the Comprehensive Plan. Based on this evidence, the County Commissioners accepted the definition of the Planning Commission. Judge Beck explained that "there was no mistake in the appropriateness of the neighborhood and I'm not going to put my judgment in place of the Commissioners on the appropriateness of the neighborhood. I think that is fairly debatable ...." On this point, we agree with the circuit court.

## B. Changes in the Character of the Nelghborhood

Silver Fox contends that the County Commissioners' determination concerning the changes in the neighborhood was based upon substantial evidence. It looks to the construction of the Casino, the approval of the bowling alley and movie theater, the authorization of a subdivision at the Steen Property, and other changes. We will address each factor in tum.

## 1. Casino

Silver Fox contends that the County Commissioners were correct to find that the addition of the Casino was a significant change in the character of the neighborhood. Silver Fox argues that the County Commissioners found a change due to the Casino's $\$ 45,000,000$ complex, adjacent 10,000 square foot clubhouse, and related road improvements like traffic signals and turning lanes. It points to evidence such as testimony from an engineer representing the Casino, and testimony from the County Attorney, John Bloxom, who described how the Casino went from a "simple venue that's open two or three months during the summer, evening time for racing, now to a casino that's open $24 / 7$ with all of the traffic that comes and goes every day of the year, 24 hours a day." Silver Fox also argues that the slot machines were an unanticipated change after the 2009 Rezoning.

Residents contend that the County Commissioners knew prior to the 2009 Rezoning that the Casino had been approved. They argue that prior to the Casino, there was more than harness racing because the center was open for more than 320 days for off-track betting.

In our view, it is at least fairly debatable for the Commissioners to conclude that the opening and operation of the casino represented a substantial change in the neighborhood. What they knew at the time of the 2009 Rezoning was that a slots license had been issued to the owner of Ocean Downs. By 2012, racino interests were more than poised at the gate. A large and unique facility was in place and in operation. Moreover, by the time the Commissioners granted the rezoning request, the General Assembly had enacted legislation
that contemplated that Ocean Downs and the other sites would become genuine 24-hour casinos with table games and entertainment. It is hard to think of a more substantial change in a neighborhood.

## 2. Bowling Alley and Movie Theater

Silver Fox contends that the County Commissioners were correct to find a cumulative change in the character of the neighborhood because of the design waivers granted for the bowling alley and movie theater. It notes that the County Commissioners stated that the grant of the waivers was a discretionary decision after the 2009 Rezoning Plan. The Residents argue that the County Attomey said these would not constitute a change in the character of the neighborhood.

We find the County Commissioners were correct to find that the granting of the waivers for the bowling alley and movie theater was a substantial change. Zoning authorities are entitled to consider projects that are "reasonably probable of fruition in the foreseeable future." Jobar Corp. v. Rodgers Forge Cnty. Ass'n, 236 Md. 106, 112 (1964). It is fairly debatable that the granting of these waivers and the future projects were unforeseeable at the time of the 2009 Rezoning Plan and that they represented a substantial change for a neighborhood that previously offered only off-track betting and hanness racing.

## 3. Steen Property Subdivision

Silver Fox contends that the County Commissioners also found a change in the character of the neighborhood since the 2009 Rezoning Plan due to the rezoning of the Steen

Property. It argues that the County Commissioners heard testimony that the development was not a planned change for the neighborhood.

The Residents contend that the Steen Property was classified as a Residential District in the 2009 Rezoning Plan, and though now it may develop at a greater density, there was no evidence that any actual development has occurred or would be a change from the plan.

A change in residential density can constitute a substantial change. Bosley v. Hosp. for Consumptives of Md., 246 Md . 197, 204 (1967), and again the County Commissioners are entitled to consider probable future changes. Jobar Corp., 236 Md . at 112 . We find when considered cumulatively with the opening and operation of the Casino and the design waivers for the bowling alley and movie theater, the change in the zoning of Steen Property contributed to a fairly debatable change in the neighborhood.

In light of our conclusion that the Commissioners did not err in finding a substantial change in the neighborhood, we need not consider additional factors addressed by the parties.

## III. Worcester County Zoning Ordinance Criteria

In addition to the issue of a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood, the parties disagree over the Commissioners' application of some of the other criteria specified in the County zoning laws. To change the zoning classification of a property, the Worcester County Code, Zoning and Subdivision Control Article ("ZS"), § 1-113(c)(3)(2009) requires the County Commissioners to make certain findings of fact. These findings shall include:
(a) population change,
(b) availability of public facilities,
(c) present and future transportation patterns,
(d) compatibility with existing and proposed development and existing environmental conditions for the area, including having no adverse impact on waters included on the State's impaired waters list or having an established total maximum daily load requirement,
(e) the recommendation of the Planning Commission, and
(f) Compatibility with the County's Comprehensive Plan.

The County Commissioners are permitted to adopt the findings of the Planning Commission, id., and they did so in this case, in addition to making findings of their own. For reasons set forth below, we find that the County Commissioners did make appropriate findings on the required factors.

## A. Popalation Change

The Residents did not challenge that the County Commissioners made a sufficient finding on population change.

## B. Avaflability of Public Facilities

The Residents have not contested the issue of whether the County Commissioners made an appropriate finding on the availability of public facilities.

## C. Present and Future Transportation Patterms

Silver Fox contends that the County Commissioners made findings on traffic patterns when it stated that "with minor configuration changes at one intersection all the intersections in the defined neighborhood would operate at a minimum Level of Service "C" which is acceptable under the Comprehensive Plan and the State High Administration Guidelines. ${ }^{\text {s }}$

The Residents argue that the County Commissioners did not base their traffic findings on the evidence. They state that there was no testimony about a plan for road improvernents or funding. They also contend that there was no evidence to support the County Commissioners' assumption that the increased traffic would be mitigated by the potential jobs created by the rezoning. The Residents argue that the County Commissioners ignored findings from the Comprehensive Plan that Rt .589 is impacted by traffic congestion.

A zoning board "is entitled to consider . . . proposed improvements to existing highways in determining the proper classification of property" if the improvements are reasonably probable to occur in the foreseeable future. Cnty. Comm'rs of Howard Cnty. v. Merryman, 222 Md. 314, 323 (1960). Here, the County Commissioners based their finding on testimony from Betty Tustin, a traffic engineer, ${ }^{6}$ which is sufficient evidence to consider
${ }^{\text {sen }}$ Under the State Highway Administration guidelines, the Level of Service standard that should be achieved at State intersections is "D." Intersections are graded from A through $F$, with $A$. being the best and $F$ being the worst. The grades take in to account vehicle length, traffic light cycle times, and queue times. See Maryland Dep't of Transp, State Highway Access Manual, Guidelines for Traffic Impact Reports/Studies, Appendix E, $\mathrm{http}: / \mathrm{www}$ coads.maryland,gov/Index.aspx?PageId=461.
${ }^{6}$ Tustin explained that to conduct traffic counts her firm will:
an issue "at least fairly debatable." Montgomery, 263 Md , at 6-7. We conclude that the County Commissioners made a sufficient finding on the issue of traffic patterns.

## D. Compatibility with Development and Environmental Conditions

Silver Fox contends that the County Commissioners made sufficient findings of fact on the rezoning's compatibility with development and environmental conditions: that the Property is not within any environmentally critical areas; that the property was too small to be productively farmed and residential use was not desirable; and that the majority of the mixed uses within the neighborhood were commercial or residential in nature that were not compatible with agricultural uses.

The Residents contend that the County Commissioners' finding regarding the compatibility with development and environmental conditions was not supported by the evidence. They argue that the County Commissioners rezoned the Property in the A-1 Agricultural District within the last three years, making a change inappropriate.
${ }^{6}$ (...continued)
analyze what the worst case scenario would be. For example, we study the worst hour of the day, and then we actually take the worst 15 minutes within that hour and add a factor to our setting. So that we are assuming-we're adding the safety factor in, if you will, so to make sure that we are analyzing what the worst hour of the whole week, and in this case since we did summer, of the whole year would be. If we can provide for that traffic, then we can provide for traffic for the other 23 hours of the day.

We find that the County Commissioners made sufficient findings of fact on this issue. They cited evidence such as a staff report included in the Planning Commission's findings of fact,' exhibits on the record, and their judgment that the present area consists of tilled cropland, a produce stand, and wooded areas.

## E. Recommendation of the Planning Commission

The parties do not disagree on whether the County Commissioners made findings on the Planning Commission's recommendations. The Commissioners stated: "[We] find that the Planning Commission gave a favorable recommendation to the rezoning of the petitioned area from A-1 Agricultural District to C-2 General Commercial District. Having made the above findings of fact, the County Commissioners concur with the recommendation of the Planning Commission."

## F. Compatibility with County's Comprehensive Plan

Silver Fox contends that the County Commissioners made findings on compatibility and desirability with the Comprehensive Plan: an environmental consultant testified that the soil was suitable for development; a land planner stated that the property is designated as "Existing Developed Area" on the land use plan, which encompasses many commercial uses,
${ }^{7}$ This staff report addresses the Chesapeake/Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Arcas by stating, "According to an emall received from Roby Hurley, Natural Resources Planner for the Critical Area Commission, the petitioned area is not within either the Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area or the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area."
and that commercial zoning was more desirable; and the Property was unlikely to be utilized for viable and profitable agricultural purposes.

The Residents contend that the County Commissioners' finding disregards statements in the Comprehensive Plan about the development of Rt. 589. The Residents argue that purpose of $\mathrm{C}-2$ zoning is to provide for more intense commercial development, which is contrary to the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan.

Generally, comprehensive plans are
advisory in nature and have no force of law absent statutes or local ordinances linking planning and zoning. Where the latter exist, however, they serve to elevate the status of comprehensive plans to the level of true regulatory device. In those instances where such a statute or ordinance exists, its effect is usually that of requiring that zoning or other land use decisions be consistent with a plan's recommendations regarding land use and density or intensity.

Rylyns Enterprises, Inc., 372 Md at 530-31. Here, the Worcester County Zoning Code does not require consistency. Instead, it requires the County Commissioners to consider the Comprehensive Plan by making findings on the issue of compatibility, and it directs the Commissioners to make a finding "that a change in zoning would be more desirable in terms of the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan." ZS § 1-113(c)(3).

The County Commissioners' decision stated that they
recognize[d] that the Comprehensive Plan state[d] that development along the MD Rt .589 corridor should be limited until capacity increased but note[d] that the traffic study provided by the applicant indicates that MD Rt. 589 will still operate at least a Level of Service C or greater, the threshold
called for by both the County's Comprehensive Plan and State Highway guidelines, if the petitioned area is rezoned and developed commercially.

They also noted that a portion of the Commercial Center Land Use Category already extends on to the Property. The County Commissioners explained that rezoning would lead to a more profitable use of the land and would likely create more jobs in the neighborhood. We conclude that the County Commissioners sufficiently considered the compatibility of the zoning change with the Comprehensive Plan.

Viewing the record as a whole, we believe the County Commissioners' findings were consistent with the requirements of ZS §1-113(c)(3). We cannot say that the County Commissioners acted arbitrarily in granting Silver Fox's request to rezone the property.

For all of these reasons we reverse the judgment of the circuit court and uphold the decision of the County Commissioners.

JUDGMENT OF THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR WORCESTER COUNTY REVERSED. COSTS TO BE PAID BY APPELLEES.
have to consider. Ms. Smith asked if the people on the fixed income could afford the additional metering cost if individual meters were required. A resident stated that they pay the same tax rate as anyone else in the County. Another resident said they had more issues with short term rentals, not year-round occupancy.

Mrs. Wimbrow said that rather than amend or retrofit the campground subdivision regulations, perhaps consideration should be given to another type of residential planned community that lent itself to more affordable housing with the use of reduced lot requirements and smaller residential units.

Following the discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Barbierri, seconded by Mr. Knerr, and carried unanimously to postpone a recommendation on this matter and present further discussion at an upcoming meeting.

## VII. Map Amendment

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed Rezoning Case No. 421, requesting a change from A-1 Agricultural District to C-2 General Commercial District, associated with Tax Map 16, Parcels 21 and 53, southerly side of MD Route 589 across from the Ocean Pines North Gate. Present for the review were Hugh Cropper, IV, Esquire, Greg Wilkins, surveyor, Chris McCabe, environmental consultant, and Tim Metzner, Davis, Bowen and Friedel. Mr. Cropper stated that this request consisted of two parcels, but that he is reconsidering keeping the forest in the rear as A-1 Agricultural District as it could serve as the Forest Conservation Area for any development project. He said that he is arguing for a change in the character of the neighborhood. The first change is the roundabout proposed by the State Highway Administration (SHA) at the north gate of Ocean Pines. It would give a suitable commercial entrance directly onto this property almost dead center as designed. Mr. Cropper said that the Ayres family was contacted by SHA, and SHA requested that they donate approximately one acre of land. If donated, they would construct a commercial entrance at no cost to the property owner. Mr. Cropper identified the proposed roundabout and entrance as Applicant's Exhibit No. 1. Mr. Cropper said that Mr. Gillis (owner of the Ocean Pines Medical project on the opposite side of Racetrack Road from the subject properties) is considering contributing to the expenses of the project. The roundabout has gone through concept phase with SHA, and is now in the design phase. Mr. Cropper stated that he was not sure where this project stands with respect to the timing of physical construction of the road improvements.

Mr. Cropper and Mr. Wilkens defined the neighborhood as far south as the Casino at Ocean Downs north to the intersection of the MD Route 113 and MD Route 589 interchange as shown on the exhibit included in the packet. Mr. Cropper provided the Findings of Fact from the MD Route 589 sectional rezoning case across from the casino, as well as all of the other rezoning cases that were approved since 2009 along Racetrack Road that constitute changes in neighborhood (Applicant's Exhibit No. 2). Other examples of changes include the casino itself, expansion of sewer service from Ocean Pines to the Crabs to Go property, as well as the special exception approvals and subsequent development of Mr. Gillis' medical office project. While not
in the defined neighborhood, Mr. Cropper referenced the Nichols Neff properties on Beauchamp Road that were recently rezoned from E-1 Estate District to R-1 Rural Residential District. While Mr. Cropper said that the subject properties were in the Agricultural Land Use category according to the Land Use Plan in the Comprehensive Plan, he believes that it might be possible to connect to public facilities since the same was recently granted for the Nichols Neff project.

With respect to population change, he noted that there has been very little residential development, with the exception of the Nichols Neff project (anticipated 90 single-family residential lots). Relating to transportation patterns, Mr. Cropper referred again to the exhibit illustrating the roundabout. Relating to compatibility with existing and proposed development, Mr. Cropper stated that this property abuts commercial uses, and the remaining road frontage is of Ocean Pines subdivision along MD Route 589 . He stated that there were no significant environmental conditions on the property with the exception of a low spot by the driveway that leads to the tower. The properties are not located in the Critical Area.

Relating to the Comprehensive Plan, Mr. Cropper stated that a commercial use is more consistent with the terms of the Comprehensive Plan. He said that this property is not suitable for agriculture once the roundabout is constructed, especially with quantity of land remaining or the difficulty for access by farm equipment. Residential uses would not be desirable, as headlights and noise would impact any resident. Mr. Cropper even asserted that there may be a need for additional medical offices in the area.

Mr. Cropper then introduced Chris McCabe, an environmental consultant. Mr. McCabe agreed with Mr. Wilkins' definition of the neighborhood. Mr. McCabe discussed the proposed Nichols Neff project, which would result in an increase in the population in the surrounding neighborhood. As a consultant for Frontier Town and Fort Whaley, Mr. Cropper noted that the County Commissioners have downzoned commercially zoned lands to agricultural zoning, with a net reduction of 64 acres. Even if you deduct all of those lands recently rezoned to commercial, there is still a net loss. Mr. Cropper noted that since the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Code and Zoning Maps were prepared, the County has experienced a building boom, then a bust, and a slight resurgence.

Regarding the rear parcel, since it is fully wooded, while Mr. Cropper doesn't want to amend the application, he would be fine if the Planning Commission were to only give a favorable recommendation for the rezoning on the front portion, and not the back portion. Submitted as Applicant's Exhibit No. 3 were newspaper articles on the roundabout. Mr. McCabe stated that from an environmental perspective, there are no adverse impacts by rezoning the subject properties commercial except for potential impacts to the currently farmed non-tidal wetlands. Mr. McCabe agreed that it would be extremely challenging to access property with farm equipment if the roundabout were to be constructed. With respect to the potential for a residential development, this property is not well suited. Therefore, commercial is better, and would represent a continuation of the commercial migration north.

Mr. Cropper then introduced Tim Metzner with Davis, Bowen and Fridel. Mr. Metzner handles water and wastewater engineering, and he assisted in the design of the pump station at Frontier Town campground. Mr. Metzner confirmed that in order to connect to public sewer, the developer would have to get approvals for a Sanitary Service Area expansion and a Water and Sewerage Plan Amendment. Mr. Metzner submitted as Applicant's Exhibit No. 4 an aerial photograph illustrating the location of the existing water and sewer lines in the vicinity of the subject properties. Mr. Metzner noted that the sewer force main is currently located on the opposite side of MD Route 589 at the northerly property line and that the water line is stubbed to the north end of Ocean Parkway. Mr. Metzner agreed that both lines were feasible to tie into to supply this project. Mr. Cropper noted that they have drafted an application for both, but have not yet filed it pending the rezoning request. Mr. Cropper stated that even if they don't get a Water and Sewerage Plan Amendment approved, they may be able to find space for an on-site septic system and reserve area because the soils are well drained.

In summary, Mr. Cropper stated that the request to rezoning the front 10 acres is reasonable, and he is willing to give up the rear forested area to leave as agricultural zoning.

The Planning Commission then discussed each one of the findings to determine whether they had a consensus. They were as follows:

1. With respect to the definition of the neighborhood, Mr. Knerr disagreed with the applicant's definition. He described it as a much smaller section, extending from MD Route 90 north along MD Route 589 to Beauchamp Road, which consists of a much more of a rural area. The Planning Commission agreed by consensus with this revised definition.
2. With respect to the Planning Commission's concurrence with the definition of the neighborhood, they modified the neighborhood as described in Item 1 above.
3. Relating to population change (which Mrs. Wimbrow noted refers to much more than just residential changes), the Planning Commission finds that there has been a change, namely an increase in commercial uses and activities.
4. Relating to the availability of public facilities, the Planning Commission finds that this property is within the W-6/S-6 area with limited chances for public facilities. Mr. Mitchell stated that he did not find compatibility with the Comprehensive Plan since it is mapped within the Agricultural Land Use category on the Land Use Plan. Mr. Cropper stated again that they could always seek on-site septic.
5. Relating to present and future transportation pattems, the Planning Commission finds that the roundabout is still proposed, and it is not a guaranteed road improvement. Mr. Barbierri said that until such time as it is a certainty, this requested amendment is speculative, and that it may be a premature rezoning application. While Mr. Cropper could potentially request something more definitive from SHA, it still isn't guaranteed.
6. Relating to compatibility with existing and proposed development, and environmental conditions in the area, the Planning Commission finds that it is compatible with the surrounding commercial uses such as the Shore Stop gas station and the Ocean Pines Medical facility.
7. Relating to compatibility with the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission finds that the commercial center category is close to, if not partially on the subject property. Even with the revised definition of the neighborhood, Mr. Cropper stated that there is a lot of commercial uses within the defined area. Mrs. Wimbrow said that land use categories as defined by the Land Use Map and the actual zoning districts as defined by the Zoning Maps are confused on a regular basis. She stated that the land use categories are not site specific, and need to be thought of as broad brush, more fluid.
8. Relative to the consideration of whether there has been a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood since the last Comprehensive Rezoning, the Planning Commission determined that there has been a change.
9. Relative to whether the change would be more desirable in terms of the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission found that it would be more desirable - but only if the roundabout is installed.

Mr. Clayville said that during his tenure on this board, Pennington Commons was supposed to be the final big development on MD Route 589 until road improvements were made. He also said that he would have liked to see the Ocean Pines Association comment on this proposal. Mrs. Wimbrow reminded the Planning Commission that a request for comment on the rezoning was sent to the Ocean Pines Association but no response was received. Mr. Clayville doesn't think that it is time to rezone this parcel and that the Planning Commission needs to save some area for future development. Mr. Tudor referenced Page 80 of Comprehensive Plan, which states that there shall be no additional development/ intensification on MD Route 589 without road improvements.

Following the discussion, a motion was made by Ms . It, seconded by Mr. Clayville and carried unanimously to find the map amendment inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and forward provide an unfavorable recommendation to the Worcester County Commissioners based on the findings as previously outlined.
VIII. Adjourn - The Planning Commission adjourned at 3:33 P.M.


Betty Smith, Secretary
 DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND PERMITTING

## Worcester County

GOVERNMENT CENTER
ONE WEST MARKET STREET, ROOM 1201

## MEMORANDUM

To: Worcester County Planning Commission
From: Matthew Laick, GISP, Deputy Director
Date: $\quad$ August 21, 2023
Re: $\quad$ Text Amendment Application - Text Change §ZS 1-210(c)(5) - Detached singlefamily and multi-family dwelling units in the C-2 General Commercial District

Hugh Cropper, IV, Esquire has submitted a text amendment application seeking to allow detached single-family and multi-family dwelling units in the C-2 General Commercial District by special exception under §ZS 1-210(c)(5). The amendment seeks to revise an existing provision that allows similar dwelling units as a special exception, provided they are attached to the primary commercial structure.

## BACKGROUND

Currently single-family and multi-family dwelling units are allowed in the C-2 General Commercial District by special exception, but they must be contained in, attached to, or part of the principal commercial structure. Structures will still have to meet minimum lot requirements and would be subject to §ZS 1-325 Site plan review and any necessary approvals by the Board of Zoning Appeals. Individual site plan concerns would and could be addressed at that time.

## DISCUSSION

As with any text amendment that is granted it would apply to any C-2 zoned property in Worcester County. Currently there are approximately 985 properties that are zoned C-2. Not all these parcels are served by public water and sewer. This may be a limiting factor to the number of C-2 properties that could support this use. As you will see from the attached map, the C-2 District zoning is mainly found in northern and southern Worcester County with a few scattered parcels throughout the county.

This amendment includes both single-family and multi-family dwelling units. There would be no gain in residential square footage by detaching the uses as outlined in the example provided in the attached memo from Ms. Keener, Director. However, the residential component is specifically excluded from the Design Guidelines and Standards for Commercial Uses. This
provision has no open space requirements. Open space requirements could be added under §ZS 1-210(c)(5) if the Planning Commission so desired. Alternatively, site specific concerns can be addressed during the Board of Zoning Appeals review and site plan review processes as explained in the attached memo from Ms. Tremblay, Zoning Administrator.

In closing, this text amendment would move the mixed use in the C-2 district from a vertical mixed use to more of a horizontal mixed use. If done correctly it would allow the sharing of amenities and utilities while providing a walkable community for those to enjoy where they work and live.

## Worcester County C-2 Zoned Properties

 DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND PERMITTING

## Worcesiter County

GOVERNMENT CENTER
ONE WEST MARKET STREET, ROOM 1201

SNOW HILL, MARYLAND 21863
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www.co.worcester.md.us/drp/drpindex.htm

## MEMORANDUM

To: Matthew Laick, GISP, Deputy Director
From: Jennifer Keener, AICP, Director
Date: $\quad$ August 15, 2023
Re: $\quad$ Text Amendment Application - Detached single-family and multi-family dwelling units in the C-2 General Commercial District

This memorandum is in response to your request for comments on the text amendment submitted by Hugh Cropper, IV, Esquire seeking to permit detached single-family and multi-family dwelling units in the C-2 General Commercial District by special exception. The amendment seeks to revise an existing provision that allows similar dwelling units, provided they are attached to the primary commercial structure.

I would stress that if changed, the text amendment would apply to any C-2 zoned property in Worcester County. The justification for the amendment as provided in Mr. Cropper's application is more consistent with the special exception request regarding a specific property that would be required should the amendment be approved.

## BACKGROUND

Currently single-family and multi-family dwelling units are allowed in the C-2 General Commercial District, but they must be contained in, attached to, or part of the principal commercial structure. There are also percentage limitations on the total amount of square footage that may be permitted for residential units based upon the amount of square footage provided in each respective commercial building on the property. Therefore, the number of residential units is dependent upon the size of the proposed units as determined by the developer. The proposed amendment would allow the residential component to be detached from the commercial component in a horizontal mixed-use development.

## DISCUSSION

Unlike the recent C-3 District amendment to allow detached multi-family uses, the C-2 District comprises more of the existing commercial zoning and can be found in more locations throughout the county. Most, but not all, C-2 zoned parcels are located on or near to collector or
arterial highways, such as Routes $50,589,611$ and 13 . Some of these areas are not currently served by public water and sewer, which may be a limiting factor to support both the commercial and residential uses on a given parcel. In addition, this amendment includes both single-family or multi-family dwelling units.

Based on the current verbiage, the overall amount of residential square footage allowed would be dependent upon the square footage of the commercial structure(s) on the property, rather than the gross square footage of all structures on the property. For example:

- Commercial Property 1 has one commercial building consisting of 18,000 square feet.

0 The law currently allows 9,000 square feet of attached residential use under subsection B ( $50 \%$ of the building area).
o The proposed amendment would allow the 9,000 square feet of residential use to be detached from the commercial building.

- Commercial Property 2 has two commercial buildings consisting of 9,000 square feet each ( 18,000 square feet total).
o The law currently allows 9,000 square feet of residential use attached to each commercial building under subsection A (100\% of the building area, 18,000 square feet total).
o The proposed amendment would allow the 18,000 square feet of residential use to be combined and detached from the commercial building.

As you can see from this example, there would be no gain in residential square footage by detaching the uses. Both the commercial and residential development would be subject to § ZS 1-325 Site plan review and Planning Commission oversight, however the residential component is specifically excluded from the Design Guidelines and Standards for Commercial Uses. As discussed with the C-3 Highway Commercial District amendment, this current code provision has no open space requirements.

In summary, this amendment does not change the quantity of commercial or residential square footages allowed, but it would affect the project layout by allowing a horizontal mixed-use development. When making their decision, the Planning Commission should consider the need for additional housing, the proximity and effects of having housing near/ in employment areas and the general availability of existing infrastructure.

ZONING DIVISION
BUILDING DIVISION DATA RESEARCH DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND PERMITTING

## Worcester County

## MEMORANDUM

To: Jennifer K. Keener, AICP, Director; Matthew Laick, GISP, Deputy Director
From: Kristen M. Tremblay, AICP, Zoning Administrator
Date: $\quad$ August 3, 2023
Re: Zoning Ordinance Proposed Text Amendment - Text Change §ZS 1-210(c)(5) Singlefamily or Multi-family Dwelling Units in the C-2 General Commercial District

Thank you for providing me with an opportunity to comment on the proposed text amendment requested by Mr. Hugh Cropper, IV.

The proposed text amendment seeks to allow single-family and multi-family dwelling units in the C-2 General Commercial District.

While supportive of the proposed amendment, it is my belief that some additional conditions should be imposed including requirements for open space areas and landscaping or fencing between commercial and residential uses on each site. Site-specific concerns can be addressed during both the Board of Zoning Appeals review and subsequent Site Plan review.

Please let me know if you have any other questions.

This is the strike and replace of §ZS 1-210(c)(5) with the requested text change.
(5) Single-family or multi-family dwelling units contained in, as a part of or attached to located on the same lot or parcel as a principal commercial structure. Minimum lot requirements shall be as established for the principal commercial structure. Subject to the provisions of § ZS 1-325 hereof and to the following limitations:

## A.

Where the area devoted to commercial use is ten thousand square feet or less, the total gross square footage of all residential units shall not exceed one hundred percent of the total gross square footage of the building area devoted to commercial use.

## B.

Where the area devoted to commercial use is greater than ten thousand square feet but less than fifty thousand square feet, the total gross square footage of all residential units shall not exceed fifty percent of the total gross square footage of the building area devoted to commercial use.

## C.

Where the area devoted to commercial use exceeds fifty thousand square feet, the total gross square footage of all residential units shall not exceed twenty-five percent of the total gross square footage of the building area devoted to commercial use.

BILL 23-

## BY:

INTRODUCED:

## A BILL ENTITLED

## AN ACT Concerning

Zoning - Single-family or Multi-family Dwelling Units in the C-2 General Commercial District
For the purpose of amending the Zoning and Subdivision Control Article to allow as a special exception use single-family and multi-family dwelling units accessory to an established commercial structure.

Section 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND, that Subsection § ZS 1-210(c)(5) of the Zoning and Subdivision Control Article of the Code of Public Local Laws of Worcester County, Maryland be enacted to read as follows:
(5) Single-family or multi-family dwelling units located on the same lot or parcel as a principal commercial structure. Minimum lot requirements shall be as established for the principal commercial structure. Subject to the provisions of § ZS 1-325 hereof and to the following limitations:
A. Where the area devoted to commercial use is ten thousand square feet or less, the total gross square footage of all residential units shall not exceed one hundred percent of the total gross square footage of the building area devoted to commercial use.
B. Where the area devoted to commercial use is greater than ten thousand square feet but less than fifty thousand square feet, the total gross square footage of all residential units shall not exceed fifty percent of the total gross square footage of the building area devoted to commercial use.
C. Where the area devoted to commercial use exceeds fifty thousand square feet, the total gross square footage of all residential units shall not exceed twenty-five percent of the total gross square footage of the building area devoted to commercial use.

Section 2. BE IT FURTHER ENACTED BY THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND, that this Bill shall take effect forty-five (45) days from the date of its passage.

PASSED this $\qquad$ day of $\qquad$ , 2023.

DEPARTMENT OF
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND PERMITTING

ZONING DIVISION
BUILDING DIVISION

DATA RESEARCH DIVISION

# 䀦orcester County 

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## MEMORANDUM

To: Roscoe Leslie, County Attorney Jennifer Keener, AICP, Director Kristen Tremblay, AICP, Zoning Administrator<br>From: Matthew Laick, GISP, Deputy Director<br>Date: August 1, 2023<br>Re: $\quad$ Text Amendment Application - Text Change §ZS 1-210(c)(5) - Single-family or Multifamily Dwelling Units in the C-2 General Commercial District<br>**********************************************************************************

Hugh Cropper IV has submitted a text amendment application to change the text in C-2 General Commercial District to allow single-family and multi-family dwelling units not attached to the commercial structure on the same parcel or lot. A copy of the draft bill language is attached for your consideration.

Currently, single-family, and multi-family dwelling units are allowed in the C-2 General Commercial District, but they must be contained in, attached to, or part of the principal commercial structure. There are also restrictions on the total amount of square footage that may be permitted for residential units based upon the amount of commercial gross floor area provided, as further explained in § ZS 1-210(c)(5)A, B and C. As stated by Hugh Cropper, the proposed text amendment would allow the residential component to be detached from the commercial uses. The applicant believes that single-family or multi-family dwelling units located on the same lot or parcel as a principal commercial structure is consistent with the spirit and intent of both the C-2, General Commercial and R-3, Multifamily Residential Districts.

I intend to present this amendment at the September 7, 2023, Planning Commission meeting. Therefore, please send any comments you may have on the application by Wednesday, August 23, 2023, so that I may finalize the staff report.

If you have questions or need additional information, please let me know.

Worcester County Commissioners
Worcester County Government Center
One W. Market Street, Room 1103
Snow Hill, Maryland 21863

# PETITION FOR AMENDMENT TO THE OFFICAL TEXT <br> <br> OF THE ZONING AND SUBDIVISION CONTROL ARTICLE 

 <br> <br> OF THE ZONING AND SUBDIVISION CONTROL ARTICLE}
(For Office Use Only - Please Do Not Write in this Space)
Date Received by Office of the County Commissioners $\qquad$ 7/10/23
Date Received by Development Review and Permitting $\qquad$
Date Reviewed by the Planning Commission $\qquad$
I. Application: Proposals for amendments to the text of the Zoning and Subdivision Control Article may be made by any interested person who is a resident of Worcester County, a taxpayer therein, or by any governmental agency of the County. Check applicable status below:
a. Resident of Worcester County: $\qquad$
b. Taxpayer of Worcester County: $\qquad$
c. Governmental Agency:
(Name of Agency)
II. Proposed Change to Text of the Zoning and Subdivision Control Article
a. Section Number: $\qquad$
b. Page Number:

ZS1:11:55
c. Proposed revised text, addition or deletion: Please See Attached

## III. Reasons for Requesting Text Change:

a. Please list reasons or other information as to why the proposed text change is necessary and therefore requested: Please See Attached
IV. Signature of Applicant

Signature (s):


Printed Names): Todd Ferrate
Mailing Address: 12720 Ocean Gateway, Unit 8, Ocean City, Maryland 21842
Phone Number: (410) 430-6284
Email: todd@parkplacejewelers.com
Date: S|26/23
V. Signature of Attorney

Signature (s):


Printed Names): Hugh Cropper IV and Kristina L. Watkowski
Mailing Address: 9927 Stephen Decatur Hwy., Ste F-12, Ocean City, MD 21842
Phone Number: (410) 213-2681
Email: $\qquad$ kwatkowski@bbcmlaw.com

Date: $\qquad$
VI. General Information Relating to the Text Change Process a. Applications for text amendments shall be addressed to and filed with the Office of the County Commissioners. The required filing fee must accompany the application.
b. Procedure for Text Amendments: Text amendments shall be passed by the County Commissioners of Worcester County as Public Local Laws according to legally required procedures, with the following additional requirements. Any proposed amendment shall first be referred to the Planning Commission for recommendation. The Planning Commission shall make a recommendation within a reasonable time after receipt of the proposed amendment. After receipt of the recommendation of the Planning Commission, the County Commissioners shall hold at least one public hearing in relation to the proposed amendment, at which parties and interested citizens shall have an opportunity to be heard. At least fifteen (15) days notice of the time and place of such hearing and the nature of the proposed amendment shall be published in an official paper or a paper of general circulation in Worcester County. In the event no County Commissioner is willing to introduce the proposed amendment as a bill, it will not be considered.

## REASONS FOR REQUESTING TEXT CHANGE

The applicant is the owner of a parcel of land zoned C-2, General Commercial District. The property is located on the south side of US Route 50 in West Ocean City and is currently improved by a shopping center at the north end of the property. The property abuts R-3, Multi-family Residential District, in the rear. Across a thin wood line of a neighboring property to the east, there are several R-3 zoned parcels situated on the west side of Elm Street. The property to the west is improved by a motel. The applicant believes that residential units on the south end of the property would be the highest and best use of the property.

West Ocean City has become a "walkable" community. The commercial infrastructure is in need of residential housing to support and staff the various commercial operations up and down the Route 50 corridor.

The applicant believes that single-family or multi-family dwelling units located on the same lot or parcel as a principal commercial structure is consistent with the spirit and intent of both the C-2, General Commercial and R-3, Multifamily Residential Districts. To maintain the requirements that the family dwelling units must be "contained in, as a part of or attached to a principal commercial structure" could result in a developed parcel or property not meeting or exceeding design standards or maintaining compatibility with the community and the County's character. If permitted by special exception, this would allow a more attractive, responsible, and suitable use for parcels that are unique whereby attaching residential units to a primary commercial structure could lend to the overdevelopment of US Route 50 as the gateway to the Town of Ocean City.

The applicant believes that if the Text Amendment is approved by the Worcester County Commissioners, the potential for a special exception would allow the County greater discretion in the development of parcels taking into
consideration unique circumstances, such as the applicant's parcel, to encourage growth that is consistent with County's character and objectives.

Generally, mixed-use developments, and live/work units should be encouraged. In some instances, it may not be possible to physically connect residential units to the commercial development, but the goal of a mixed-use development can still be achieved. The description of the applicant's property in the beginning of this section is one such example.

Additionally, there is a strong need for affordable housing in this County, located close to commercial developments, to provide employees. This text amendment will help satisfy that need.

Respectfully submitted,


Hugh Cropper IV, Attorney for Applicants

## ATTACHMENT TO PETITION FOR AMENDMENT OF OFFICIAL TEXT

ZONING AND SUBDIVISION CONTROL ARTICLE, SUBTITLE ZSI:11, Primary District Regulations, Section ZS1-210, C-2 General Commercial District, subsection (c)(5) be revised as follows:

Single-family or multi-family dwelling units contained in, as-a part of or attached to located on the same lot or parcel as a principal commercial structure. Minimum lot requirements shall be as established for the principal commercial structure. Subject to the provisions of § ZS 1-325 hereof and to the following:


[^0]:    Mary Knight, Secretary

[^1]:    Stuart White, DRP Specialist

[^2]:    
    
    

[^3]:    'As identified in Silver Fox's brief, the appellees are Walter and Parnela Stansell

[^4]:    ${ }^{2}$ The Casino did not open until January of 2011, some fourteen months after adoption of the Rezoning Plan. Although advertised as a "casino" (perhaps with an eye toward (continued...)

