



Town of Sykesville

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Town House

Stacy Link, Mayor

Joseph Cosentini, Town Manager

Jennifer Livesay, Town Treasurer

Kerry G. Kavaloski, Town Clerk

The Planning Commission held a special workshop on Tuesday, June 17, to discuss House Bill 538: Housing Expansion and Affordability Act.

OFFICIAL MINUTES JULY 7, 2025 REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

The Sykesville Planning Commission meeting was held on Monday, July 7, 2025. Commissioner Singleton called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in the Town House Conference Room.

PRESENT: Commissioners Phil Singleton, Ken Johnson, Ted Ludvigsen, Daniel Mican, and Michael Scheiner. Council Member Jeremiah Schofield.

ABSENT: Commissioner Brandon Smith

STAFF: Joe Cosentini, Town Manager
Kevin Rubenstein, Town Planner
Elissa Levan, Town Attorney
Karen Ruff, Town Attorney

MINUTES:

- **June 2, 2025**

MOTION: Commissioner Singleton motioned to approve the minutes from June 2, 2025. Commissioner Ludvigsen seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

COUNTY UPDATES

The County Updates were provided via staff report.

BUSINESS AGENDA

- **Consider/Discuss/Act on an Updated Concept Plan for the Warfield Development**

Kevin Rubenstein, Town Planner, explained that the developers have submitted an updated concept plan for a total of 47.2 acres located in the Planned Employment Center (PEC) zone. He explained that the proposed plan met the minimum of office/research/institutional/hotel/light industrial required use at 20%; however, the other categories, Retail/Service, Residential, and Open Space, did not meet the required percentage of usage. He also explained that some of the bulk standard and area regulations are inconsistent, including minimum lot sizes for townhomes, minimum lot widths

for townhomes, maximum number of dwelling units for a group of townhomes, and setbacks for front loaded townhomes.

Mr. Rubenstein explained that staff are concerned with parcel D-2 being the only location for retail/service uses, and they are curious why Carrie Dorsey Park was removed from the Open Space calculation. He also explained that land use percentages on parcel E/F were changed to include Open Space, which is not a permissible change.

Steve McCleaf, Roger Conley, David Bowersox, and Sean Davis were in attendance for the developers. Mr. McCleaf explained that the developers have not had the benefit of meeting with staff prior to the Planning Commission meeting, so they have not had a chance to address some of the comments and concerns. Town Manager Joe Cosentini explained that meetings with staff did not hold face-to-face meetings with the applicant, as there is ongoing litigation, but questions and conversations in writing are more than welcome. Mr. McCleaf noted that the applicant is more than willing to have legal counsel present in the meetings.

Commissioner Singleton and Town Attorney Karen Ruff explained that the Planning Commission believes that this is not the second meeting and this is a continuation of the first meeting. The developers noted that they do not necessarily agree with the Commission and Ms. Ruff on this point.

Mr. Davis explained that they removed Carried Dorsey Park and some other areas because they were under the impression from the May meeting that they could not include any property that they did not own and could not develop on for the land use percentages. He further explained that parcel E/F was included for the Open Space percentages because that is what is in existence from the subdivision. He agreed that the proposed percentages do not meet the requirements for land use percentages.

Commissioner Singleton explained that the letter was not received prior to the deadline for submissions for the Planning Commission. Town Attorney Elissa Levan objected to the presentation of the letter as Town Counsel has not been able to review it prior to the meeting. The Planning Commission will not address the legality of the workaround presented in the letter at this meeting.

Mr. Bowersox explained that the letter was submitted as a courtesy to help address questions and comments from the May 5 meeting and the June 17 workshop. He explained that the developers provided information on how the Housing Expansions and Affordability Act (HEAA) in comment 5 on the plan, as requested by the May 5 staff report. He further explained that he agreed with the comment about the PEC zone being at odds with the Town's Comprehensive Plan and with the HEAA.

Commissioner Singleton explained that the HEAA was deeply vague, but he explained that the Planning Commission cannot change the land use percentages or the language in the PEC zone in the Town Code. The Town Council is the only body that can change those. The Planning Commission

can recommend to the Town Council after a petition to change the land use standards or the text has been submitted by the developers.

Mr. Bowersox noted that the developers think the step of a zoning text amendment may be an unreasonable step in the process. They believe that a second path forward would be through a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals. The developers asked if a conditional approval could be granted subject to receiving a Board of Zoning Appeals variance.

Commissioner Singleton explained that the plan could come back forward after a denial, but conditional approval cannot be granted, as the plan does not meet the existing requirements in the PEC zone. Ms. Levan further explained that denial would be about the merits of the plan, not about anything presented in the letter.

The developers requested the denial include the following:

- The Commission is denying the plan presented at this meeting.
- The Commission is denying the possibility of alternative land use percentages that were discussed at this meeting.
- The definition of height, 50 feet versus six stories, is an aspect of the denial.
- The open space as it is shown on the plan presented at this meeting being different from the 2016 plan is an aspect of the denial.
- The process for land use percentage modifications is strictly available through the Town Council.
- The developers believe that the May meeting is a meeting that is separate and distinct from tonight's meeting.

Commissioner Singleton explained that they are on the record for those requests; however, the Planning Commission has every right to not include any of the requested information in their denial. The developers are not barred for resubmitting different plans in the future.

MOTION: Commissioner Singleton motioned to deny the submitted concept plan for the Warfield site, as presented, due to inconsistencies between the plan and the Town of Sykesville Zoning Code regarding land use percentages and the application of multiple development parcel sizes. Furthermore, he moved that the Commission request that future concept plan submittals exclude changes to the use percentage on parcel E/F, indicates how the recreational space requirement in the PEC zone will be met, and explores alternative locations for retail/service uses. A new concept plan may be submitted for consideration at any future Planning Commission meeting. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

- **Consider/Discuss/Act on the draft Water Resource Element to be sent to the Maryland Department of the Environment for 60-day review**

Mr. Rubenstein explained that the Water Resource Element is a state-required element of the Comprehensive Plan. The update is a collaborative effort by

Carroll County and all eight municipalities to develop one document. If approved and adopted, the Water Resource Element will replace the 2010 version in the current Comprehensive Plan.

There are no town specific action items regarding water and sewer in the Water Resource Element, as the Town does not have separate water and sewer facilities from Carroll County. Current projects for the Freedom Area show a deficit of 87,601 gallons of wastewater per day. Some stormwater management action items are identified, but they were pulled from the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

There was discussion about the deficit in wastewater and its potential impact on the Town.

MOTION: Commissioner Singleton motioned to approve the draft Water Resource Element document so it can be sent to the Maryland Department of the Environment for a 60-day review period. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

TOWN UPDATES:

- The Historic District Commission approved the addition on the French Twist building with no changes from what was presented to the Planning Commission. They also approved the demolition of the warehouse building at 7452 Springfield Avenue.
- The final plans for the Enclave subdivision have been submitted and sent to the Town Engineers and the County for review.
- The South End Streetscape is progressing. The parking lot is mostly finished.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, Commissioner Singleton motioned, and Commissioner Ludvigsen seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 P.M.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted
Town Clerk Kerry Kavaloski