

**WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
WORK SESSION
MEETING MINUTES – August 8, 2024**

Meeting Date: August 8, 2024

Time: 1:00 P.M.

Location: Worcester County Government Office Building, Room 1102

Attendance:

Planning Commission

Jerry Barbierri, Chair

Phyllis Wimbrow, Vice Chair

Mary Knight, Secretary

Ken Church

Kathy Drew

Marlene Ott

Staff

Jennifer Keener, Director, DRP

Kristen Tremblay, Zoning Administrator, DRP

Roscoe Leslie, County Attorney

Bob Mitchell, Director, Dept. of Env. Programs

Lily Wagner, NR Planner, Dept. of Env. Programs

I. Call to Order

II. Comprehensive Plan Work Session

As the first item of business, the Planning Commission met with Michael Bayer and Nicole Wiley from Wallace Montgomery (attending virtually) to discuss the General Planning and Land Use Goals and Objectives of the current Worcester County Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Bayer explained that we are starting with the existing plan to identify goals and objectives that have been addressed or achieved, those that should be carried forward, and what needs to be added or modified for the future comprehensive plan. At the end of the document will be a final chapter with a matrix of all goals, objectives and action items from the plan that are going to be generated as the Planning Commission works through each of the subject matter areas.

Relative to the General County Planning Goals from the existing plan, the Planning Commission discussed the following items:

- Relating to improving the compatibility of new development with the existing built environment, there are areas where the Planning Commission acknowledged that they do not want compatibility, more specifically where they would want compliance with design elements.
- To change the term “prosperous” (in prosperous economy) to “thriving,” or perhaps eliminate it altogether.

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Relative to the General County Planning Objectives from the existing plan, the Planning Commission discussed the following items:

- The Planning Commission wanted to include fisheries in references to supporting the viability of the county's agricultural and forestry industries.
- Recommended adding language regarding education (public schools). Mr. Bayer noted that they will pull data from the Educational Facilities Master Plan to include in the Comprehensive Plan, however it is a stand-alone document.
- Recommended including a reference to tourism when referencing economic activity in the county.
- General discussion on future growth centers and patterns and its impacts on the environment, along with the need for an update to the Water and Sewerage Plan.
- New item on sea level rise impacts and how it will impact the county in the years to come, including the mitigation of environmental hazards. It was noted that this will need to be fleshed out as a goal, with specific objectives and action items.
- General discussion on Sussex County, Delaware's prolific expansion and its impacts on Worcester County.
- Recommended combining the historic and archeological asset references together.

Relative to the Land Use Goals from the existing plan, the Planning Commission discussed the following items:

- The Planning Commission wanted to better define new development to include both residential and commercial development, which should be in and around growth areas and population centers.

Relative to the Land Use Objectives from the existing plan, the Planning Commission discussed the following items:

- The Planning Commission discussed the current plan's population and residential unit targets, and overall felt that they were problematic given our economy. It was recommended that this item be eliminated from the plan.
- Discussion on Priority Funding Areas (PFAs) as a funding mechanism to achieve smart growth.
- The Planning Commission wanted to include fisheries in references to supporting the viability of the county's agricultural and forestry industries on the county's less developed regions.
- Discussion on the annexation history and procedures that likely led to the objective to work with municipalities to develop certain annexation policies. Decided to keep this item as an objective moving forward.

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- Desired to maintain language about high environmental standards, and the establishment of watershed plans and their implementation. This item will be flagged, as it may be more suitable for the Sensitive Areas chapter of the plan.
- Discussion on promoting mixed use development as a means of providing affordable housing (residential attached to commercial development) or for placemaking.
- Modifying the reference to “Black” communities to “minority”.
- Strike the vague objective about implementation of the plan, as it is a very general action item.

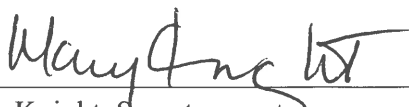
Relative to the additional goals for the Land Use from the existing plan, the Planning Commission discussed the following items:

- The Planning Commission recommended adding language about the coordination, cooperation or advisement of regional matters across county and state lines.
- Discussion on the expansion of the aerospace industry at Wallops Island, and the impacts that could have on the county, especially the Pocomoke City region.

Lastly, Mr. Bayer noted that they will likely “wordsmith” some of the items for clarity and simplicity as we move forward. In addition, the items will also be sorted into either a goal, objective or action category.

The next work session will be held on Thursday, September 12, 2024.

III. Adjourn



Mary Knight, Secretary



Jennifer Keener, Director

