

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION
LEXINGTON PARK-TULAGI MASTER PLAN
LEXINGTON PARK LIBRARY MEETING ROOM
Thursday, July 18, 1996, 7:00 p.m.**

All County Commissioners were present. Also present was John Kachmar Jr., County Administrator; and Sue Wilkinson, Assistant County Administrator. DPZ staff present were Jon Grimm, Director; Jeffrey Jackman, Senior Planner; and Peggy Childs, Recording Secretary. Also present were Joe Anderson, representing the Planning Commission; Valentino Johnson, Ruth Proffitt, Dan Simpson and Don Megby, of the Lexington Park Planning Task Force; Martin Fairclough, Director, SMCo DED; John Chamberlin, owner of Lexington Manor; Ray Hanbury and Mark Buhl, Bay District Fire Department; Doug Ritchie and John Cummings, of St. Mary's Electronic News Service.

Commissioner Thompson opened the work session and turned it over to Mr. Grimm, who announced that this was a continuation of the June 18th work session held at Frank Knox Training Center. At that time, the Commissioners endorsed the intent of the Plan and the overall objectives, and agreed to set a second work session to talk about specific goals and objectives within The Town Center, The Wedge, and the Commercial Corridor.

The Commissioners discussed the policy recommendations for the three areas. The Commissioners' consensus is in bold text immediately following each recommendation.

THE WEDGE

A. Land Use

PUDs should be encouraged within The Wedge. **Yes.**

PUDs provide a developer with greater flexibility through a mix of uses, design layout, and increased density through the public hearing process, but gives the county more control and protection through design requirements. PUD approval is the sole discretion of the County Commissioners. The overflight restrictions of the AICUZ would generally prohibit PUDs; however, property which straddles the AICUZ could use clustering to avoid the AICUZ and still achieve increased density. Public facilities available within the Wedge direct higher density to this area; i.e., 4-5 units per acre.

Large commercial and employment uses should be discouraged outside of the Town Center. **Encourage instead of require in enlarged Town Center.**

This policy seeks to refocus commercial/employment activity back to the downtown area, including Lexington Manor, Millison Plaza, and down to St. Mary's Square. Ray Hanbury and Mark Buhl, of the Bay District Volunteer Fire Department, asked how the Plan will impact the \$500,000 reconstruction of their firehouse at the current site? Commissioner Thompson said the Plan does not dictate relocation of the firehouse; however, *possible* relocations could be the Traffic Circle on Willows Road or the Skipjack property.

Commissioner Eagan stated she felt we should not *discourage* businesses from locating outside the Town Center, because their needs might be better met there. She doesn't think we will ever be able to avoid having to get in a car because you can't walk from O'Brien Realty up to Appleby's or down to Kentucky Fried Chicken and asked where, in the Town Center area, there is for businesses to locate unless we redevelop an old business. As for crossing Great Mills Road, the traffic is mainly people coming on and off the Base, and

we will be having much more traffic there. Commissioner Thompson replied we want to make the Town Center visible as a little town and, as we enhance this area, we will make it more desirable for businesses to locate here. Sooner or later there will be redevelopment in Lexington Park and we need to plan for it so it won't happen again without our making it a more desirable place than it is today; that's the whole premise of the Plan.

Mr. Grimm stated perhaps we need to turn this into a positive statement by providing *incentives* for businesses to locate here. Commissioner Eagan reiterated she doesn't think we should discourage the location of businesses anywhere in St. Mary's County. Commissioner Brugman pointed out the Wildewood Shopping Center, a lot of which is vacant. He said he sees people drive from Leggett's to SuperFresh every day. People don't want to walk in inclement weather and, in today's world, there are other factors that discourage people from walking. Commissioner Chesser replied crossing Great Mills Road is a real design problem but it can be alleviated with crosswalks, and if you develop more small businesses and restaurants you will have more clearly defined crosswalks and stoplights. Mr. Grimm added that providing continuous sidewalks along commercial corridors and crosswalks at all signalized intersections are major policies of the Plan.

Mr. Anderson stated no city is completely accessible, and he thinks the key is the development of smaller sub-districts, or neighborhoods, within the Town Center.

The consensus was to provide incentives to *encourage* for large commercial and employment uses within an *enlarged* Town Center, but smaller than The Wedge. Staff will check with the consultant regarding market demand and land availability inventoried within the Plan and for a reality check on the policy itself.

Limit commercial rezoning along Three Notch Road and Great Mills Road. **Yes, but limit it to the *expanded* Town Center.**

This policy would encourage *not* opening up large new areas for commercial activity that would compete with the downtown area. In the analysis done by the consultant team, there is shown to be enough commercially zoned land available now to accommodate the projected market demand for commercial development over the study period. Commissioner Eagan felt to limit this to the Town Center would be too restrictive. Commissioner Thompson suggested limiting to an expanded, enlarged Town Center.

B. **Transportation**

Connect Hermanville Road to Great Mills Road through Bradley Road.
Yes.

This is a policy under which, when a development comes through, we will require it to make these connections; Dan Ichniowski will look at programming through the CIP with design, engineering and construction funded through a combination of sources - either Impact Fees or the developer's action as they come through the development process.

Commissioner Eagan stated this is a question of funding, and the Commissioners have to set some priorities; these things may happen or may not happen, and the citizens need to be aware of that, because the money just hasn't been there. Mr. Grimm stated if the Commissioners endorse the policies and adopt the Plan it doesn't mean they are necessarily expected to fund them over the next 6 years without other considerations coming into

play. One of the important things about the transportation component is, specifically, when the Planning Commission reviews a project and a road extension can be accommodated through a developer's plan, we will protect that alignment and perhaps require the developer to dedicate the land or build the road, depending on the size and scope of the development.

Provide a traffic signal at the Three Notch Road/Hermanville Road intersection. **Definitely; in fact, the Governor has said he will do that.**

Do not provide a direct communication from Bay Ridge Road through the Essex Community. **Agree with this recommendation.**

The Plan recommends this connection not be done because it would dump a lot of traffic into a residential community. Mark Buhl of the BVFD said it is always nice to have alternate routes, but you do not want to have a connection through a residential neighborhood like Essex or Spring Valley. The Plan does provide an alternate route through Essex via an access to Pacific Drive. Mr. Hanbury asked about the connection from Pegg Road through Chancellors Run Road to connect to Routes 245/5, which was once talked about. Mr. Grimm replied there wetlands involved and too many environmental constraints in that area to allow that to happen.

Do not extend Bradley Road to Three Notch Road through Southampton. **Agree with this recommendation.**

Instead, the Plan recommends Bradley Road be diverted more to the east and connect with Hermanville Road, providing a more direct link with the new South Gate, which will be increasingly important in the future. Bradley will connect to Route 5 via Bay Ridge Road.

Consider extending FDR Boulevard south of Shangri-La Drive. **No.**

This would provide a direct connection between FDR Boulevard and Willows Road. This specific segment will not go through Rose's Place but the FDR extension from Millison Plaza to Shangri-La Drive will go through that property and would go through all the considerations that any taking of property would entail. Rose's Place lies within the platted right-of-way which goes back to the old subdivision plat. In the 1986 Lexington Park Transportation Plan the extension of FDR was called for, and this brings it forward.

Commissioner Eagan was concerned that the extension would go through the Cedar Point Village PUD and what it would do to that subdivision. Mr. Grimm said, as with other PUDs, when the development comes forward, the County would seek to protect the FDR alignment and require the developer to build the portion of the road that would serve his development.

Increase public awareness about existing transit options. **Yes.**

C. Recreation and Open Space

Develop a greenway that encircles much of the Wedge. **Yes, depending upon implementation.**

Provides an opportunity for people to walk where they choose to, for kids to ride bikes, and people not have to get into a car unless they want to. Mr. Grimm asked the consultant to show the greenway connection between Nicolet Park and the stream valley system, back down the road into Patuxent Park and back to the stream, rather than through Mr. Simpson's property; this is the route it would take. The greenway would serve the Library, Chancellors Run Regional Park, Nicolet Park, the Lexington Park Elementary School, and the Navy property which would be converted to a park at Willows Road. Mr. Jarboe pointed a lot of the greenway areas are areas that can't be developed anyway, so to make it available for people to enjoy is a good idea which he wishes we had used for "the great swamp swap" on Great Mills Road.

Mr. Grimm said, working through the Planning Commission process, if a developer had property to develop along the greenway route, we would ask him to designate a portion of the property to make that connection.

Design the Willows Road Park to meet a variety of community recreation needs

Yes, for uses compatible with AICUZ.

This is Navy property intended for the park. The policy is that not be a single user area but available for a multitude of activities. Mr. Schaddeg said they have already petitioned the Base to have soccer fields as the number one priority, because we have so few they are using the ballfields at the regional park and ruining them. A part of the Navy property could be leveled off and crowned and the initial cost would be minimal. Mr. Grimm said he has talked with Phil Rollins, of R&P, about developing a sketch for a series of uses. AICUZ would allow passive parks but no auditoriums, etc. AICUZ compatibility would be determined by the Planning Commission when reviewing the site plan.

Provide additional recreational facilities at Nicolet Park.

Yes.

The Plan proposes a new entrance to the Park and that the facilities for this under-used park in the heart of the population center be expanded.

Connect the town green and Sound of Freedom Park to the greenway.

Yes.

D. Utilities

Ensure that adequate water/sewer capacity is available to serve the Lexington Park Development District. **Yes.**

The Pine Hill Run Wastewater Treatment Plant is being upgraded from 4,500,000 to 6,000,000 gpd capacity over the next 18 months.

E. Environmental Features

Establish a greenway system.

Yes, depending upon implementation.

Reduce air pollution using a comprehensive traffic management study.

Yes.

Encourages pedestrian-friendly mixed use development through use of transit, ride-sharing, etc.

Encourage PUDs to protect sensitive areas.

Yes.

Determine the preferred alignment for Great Mills Road - Hermanville Road link. **Yes to the crossing of Pembroke Run.**

Bradley Boulevard - Bay Ridge Road. This policy would move some advanced planning/engineering analysis also with respect to extending FDR Boulevard to Route 4 by crossing Pembroke Run.

Commissioner Thompson asked whether we could look at public facilities to handle stormwater management? Mr. Grimm responded that Anne Arundel County has been unable to get large stormwater management facilities permitted because of their impacts on environmental features, but DNR has backed off that position somewhat.

Mr. Petty commented that regional planning would be a more efficient way to handle stormwater management but the up-front expense may be prohibitive and it's also difficult to find a place big enough. The ideal place would be a big swamp. Across from San Souci behind the Esperanza Middle School is a beaver pond that would be a classic spot; it could be dammed up and would be perfect.

Mr. Grimm will take this question to the consultant.

THE TOWN CENTER

1. Streetscape Guidelines

Utilities. **Yes.**

As new development/redevelopment occurs, try to find opportunities to place utilities underground.

Signage. **Qualified yes; provide incentives for *voluntary* compliance. Commissioners' approval required for ZO amendment to become law.**

Within the Town Center, business signage should be mounted on or in buildings to address citizens' concerns about appearance. The intent of this policy is to try to bring the scale of development to a level more compatible with pedestrian access and circulation. Existing signs which become nonconforming should be phased out through amortization. Commissioner Brugman stated he thought looking for signs on buildings would create a safety concern. Mr. Grimm replied monument signs would be acceptable and we could add language that freestanding signs should be discouraged and exchanged for monument signs.

Commissioner Eagan stated individual businesses who need to draw people into their businesses need signs; this policy would make the Eagan-McAllister sign illegal and it is not tacky. Where would the offices right outside the Main Gate, with 4 businesses in one building have their signs? These offices need signs for people to know where they are; that was the biggest concern of the Chamber of Commerce and a big concern of the Economic Development Commission. She said she is not saying we need to have some of the things we have out there, but this is too restrictive for businesses in Lexington Park. The Commissioners agreed with the use of incentives rather than force.

Mr. Kachmar stated this has not worked in other places; it does not stand the legal test and it is very, very difficult to implement. Most of the communities that tried it have backed off, largely because of the amount of money the owners have invested in their signs.

Mr. Grimm said you cannot identify and discriminate against a specific type of sign, but gave an example of one company who threatened to sue the county but found he couldn't because of the way the ordinance was written. Commissioner Chesser said unattractive signs *are* being enforced in other jurisdictions, and we should look at this very carefully.

Sidewalks. **Important, but we need to encourage rather than require; i.e., the carrot versus the stick.**

Establish continuous sidewalks with 5 ft. width along all public streets. On non-commercial roads other than Three Notch Road and Great Mills Road, the sidewalk should edge the street with a 5 ft. landscaped buffer between the sidewalk and the building except for commercial streets such as Coral Place and Tulagi Place. Mr. Grimm said he had the opportunity to walk Great Mills Road with a group of people, including handicapped, before the sidewalks were put in and it is truly a crime that we did not have the sidewalks in place, in his opinion.

Commissioner Chesser said he has noticed the sidewalks at the St. Mary's Community College which are 1 ft. back from the curb, and he doesn't think that is far enough back. Mr. Grimm replied, if space allows when we work with project developers, we try to have a 3-5 ft. separation between the curb and sidewalk, for vegetation, greenspace, and for pedestrian safety, but when you have to retrofit it's not that easy.

Commissioner Eagan stated she has always liked sidewalks but the question is how are we going to implement it? We have to look at financing, we have to look at long-term expenditures, we have to look at all of this. Until we know that, how can the Commissioners say yes?

Regarding new construction, Mr. Grimm replied we will require the developer to put the sidewalks in. There are state funds available to do retrofitting along state roads and county roads under certain circumstances and we would pursue grant funding for retrofit projects. We would have to look at Capital Programs over a 6-year horizon to determine priorities. It would end a Planning Commission policy, which has been, where there wasn't a sidewalk on either end of the development site they didn't require them to be put in on the new development site. This policy would require developers in Lexington Park to make that connection. If, for example, the county were to extend Tulagi Place through the Skipjack property, the road plans would be required to include sidewalks and the site plan or subdivision plat would have to accommodate that through the Planning Commission's approval.

Unless a redevelopment proposal came through or the Commissioners programmed Shangri-La Drive for sidewalk retrofit, or unless we got grant funding through the sidewalk program the State has or ISTEAF funds, this would not happen along existing Shangri-La Drive. Regarding redevelopment projects, there is a cap on the amount you have to spend for ADA requirements, relative to what your renovation project is.

Question: When a developer builds the sidewalks, do they become county property, one of the issues being injuries incurred, for instance, from a fall on icy sidewalks. Mr. Grimm will pose that question to Dan Ichniowski, of DPW.

Lighting. **Yes.**

Provide street lights throughout the Town Center area; differentiate lighting for vehicles from sidewalk lighting, which should not be more than 15 ft. high. This is a response to concerns of citizens voiced early in the citizen-participation meetings held by DPZ in the Lexington Park area.

Mr. Grimm referred to Table B-9, noting that these items are not solely the result of this plan; many of the improvements listed are already accounted for in agencies' CIP requests, in adopted plans, or may already be shown in the Capital Budget. Projects associated directly with this Plan are the Tulagi Place Extension; Traffic Circle; Town Green with the Acquisition of Rose's Place. The Library Expansion and Nicolet Park improvements have been requested in the CIP for several years.

Commissioner Thompson noted that the \$1M required for the Willows Road Park would generally use Open Space dollars, and if we don't use them, they go elsewhere.

Trees. **Encourage rather than require, with more care taken as to what type of trees are planted.**

Plant shade trees continuously along public streets with 25-30 ft. spacing.

Commissioner Eagan reported that Linda Rivera, of Linda's Cafe on Tulagi Place, is very angry about many things, including the two dead trees in front of her business, especially at what they cost, which is \$350 per tree. Ms. Rivera warned that people would be parking across from her building and they are; and people are getting hit because they are parking in the road in front of the Library.

Mr. Grimm said there must be some kind of warranty under which the trees will be replaced. Commissioner Jarboe asked who will maintain the trees? Mr. Kachmar replied from the doorway to the alley is the public right-of-way; in front of a house or business it is the property's owner's responsibility. Mr. Grimm has been working with the state to get trees planted on Tulagi Place and around to O'Brien Realty. BVFD has not yet received final design approval from the State.

Street Furniture. **Yes; using recycled benches (that look like wood) as much as possible.**

Includes recommendation that contemporary style similar to the redevelopment effort at the Lexington Park library be maintained. The idea is to provide seating at intersections where there may be bus stops.

July 18, 1996
Page 278

This concluded the items discussed. A third work session is planned for October 13th in the Media Center of the Lexington Park Elementary School, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

The work session was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

**Minutes Approved by Board of
County Commissioners on 8/6/96**

Recording Secretary