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Elizabeth Rosborg
Chair, Citizen Advisory Committee

Plan2040
Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)

Meeting Notes
June 3, 2020 - 5:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

CAC members present: Elizabeth Rosborg (Chair), Cate Bower, Anthony Brent, Bill Dodd, Thomas Fahs, Joel Greenwell, Melanie Hartwig-Davis, Patricia Huecker, Caren Karabani, Matthew Korbela, Patricia Lynch, Charles Mannion, Gary Mauler, William Moulden, Ellen Moyer, Kristin Pauly, Will Shorter

County staff present: Christina Pompa, Deputy Planning and Zoning Officer; Cindy Carrier, Long Range Planning Administrator; Patrick Hughes, Long Range Planner; Michael Stringer, Long Range Planner; Mark Wildonger, Long Range Planner; Holly Simmons, Long Range Planner; Matthew Johnston, Environmental Policy Director; Erik Michelsen, Administrator - Watershed Protection and Restoration Program

Attendees: Paul Christensen, Kate Fritz, Steve Miller, Joan Turek

Introduction:
Ms. Rosborg, Chair

Ms. Rosborg called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. She took a moment to emphasize the importance of the work the CAC is doing so it can benefit all County residents. She recognized Kate Fritz, the chairperson of the Citizens Environmental Commission (CEC), and Matt Johnston, the Anne Arundel County Environmental Director.

Discuss Refinements of Draft Natural Environment Goals, Policies, and Strategies:

Mr. Hughes, Ms. Simmons, Mr. Stringer; Office of Planning and Zoning (OPZ)
Ms. Fritz and Mr. Johnston; Citizens Environmental Commission

Mr. Hughes reviewed the overall framework of the plan that was presented at the last meeting. The Vision and Themes, Development Policy Area Map, Background reports, and the goals, policies, and strategies of the four sections of the plan – Natural Environment, Built Environment, Healthy Communities, and Healthy Economy have been reviewed. The focus for this evening are edits to the Natural Environment and Healthy Economy section. Progress is continuing on the implementation plan and performance measures. Staff has also been finalizing the Land Use Plan that will shared shortly.

Mr. Stringer explained that the CEC provided comments on the Natural Environment goals, policies, and strategies that the CAC reviewed earlier this year. OPZ staff then refined those recommendations to make sure they are clear, concise, and direct.

Ms. Fritz thanked the CAC for the opportunity to collaborate on the GDP. In addition to comments on the draft section, the CEC submitted a letter to OPZ and the County Executive's office identifying six core themes of the Natural Environment chapter. The first theme is to "Identify", which means mapping environmental resources in the County. This can help inform where the County should and should not grow. The second theme is to "Protect" the existing sensitive resources, especially those vulnerable to climate change and development. The third theme is "Preservation", preserving the County natural resources. The fourth theme is "Restoration" and the goal to identify areas where ecosystems can be repaired and reconnected. The fifth theme is to "Report". This will help the County track progress on identifying, protecting, preserving, and restoring the natural resources. This will help the public understand how well the County tracking these goals in a transparent manner. The sixth theme is called "Organize to Accomplish". The GDP has the opportunity to be an organizing construct for County staff, resources, and agencies. She emphasized the importance of having a natural resources map that can inform much of the work of the GDP.

Mr. Johnston repeated the CEC's thanks in the opportunity to work together on GDP. The County Executive was very receptive to the letter and agreed that a natural resources map is the first step of which the policies and reporting will follow. The County recently submitted their forest conservation reporting to the State. It was the lowest amount of forest lost on development sites in all the years of reporting.

Ms. Simmons explained that staff revised language and grammar to ensure terms were used consistently throughout the GDP and other plans. Intent was also clarified to ensure it is clear for future users. Text was also revised to ensure the goals, policies, and strategies are concise. Some goals, policies, and strategies were reorganized to better group ideas and intent. Staff grouped habitat wildlife items and surface water quality items. Lastly, staff emphasized and identified where social equity intersects with environmental recommendations.

Mr. Stringer provided an overview of the survey results. Only those goals and policies that had significant changes were included in the survey. The results in general indicated support for those goals and policies included in the survey. Goal NE1 is to preserve, enhance, and restore wildlife habitat and designated sensitive environmental features. A policy of Goal NE1 prohibits disturbance within 25 feet of ephemeral stream. Staff added clause to acknowledge that utilities do need to cross stream buffers. Policy NE1.1 focused on creating an environmental inventory and incorporating it into the review process. Policy 1.2 changed the wording to include the term "living shoreline" to create consistency throughout the document. Policy 1.3 discusses identifying and protecting unique environmental features of the County, such as the Magothy Bog Complex. Policy NE2.1 builds on the recent forest conservation bill by expanding the amount of forest and tree canopy cover.

Goal NE4 focuses on improving surface water quality by reducing impacts from stormwater runoff, wastewater, and septic systems. Policy NE4.2 encourages the reduction of impervious surfaces and recommendations to measure and track that strategy. Policy NE4.3 recommends reducing nutrient

loads. Goal NE5 and Policies NE5.2 and NE5.3 focus on wastewater treatment and potable water and septic systems.

[The CAC broke out into two groups to discuss the goals, policies, and strategies of the Draft Natural Environment section of the GDP.]

Ms. Pauly reported her group agrees that mapping resources is a reasonable first step. The group also discussed establishing impervious surface limitations and ensuring those requirements are in the County Code. In regards to trading mechanisms for impervious surface, the group recommended a feasibility study to see what other municipalities have done. The acknowledged that although the County is meeting its wastewater requirements, that in 10-15 years some facilities may need to be relocated due to sea level rise. In addition, the County should strive to exceed State requirements, if economically feasible. In regards to tree canopy study, the group is satisfied with it being conducted periodically. The majority of the group agreed that pesticides should be prohibited on all County properties that are not used for agriculture.

Mr. Fahs said the group had a productive discussion. Regarding Policy NE1.1, the greatest concern was consistency in application for all developers. Ms. Bower added that the group would like to add the word “existing” before utility crossings. The group agreed that the trading mechanism in Policy NE4.2 was not the best tool. Instead, they recommended incentivizing redevelopment on existing or underutilized sites that already have impervious surface. For Policy NE4.4, the group discussed how to best encourage greywater re-use and encourage innovation to reduce stormwater runoff or off-site treatment. A couple ideas included reducing EDU fees for underground tanks or using greywater for cooling towers. The group agreed that pesticide restrictions should be encouraged and can model restrictions on Takoma Park’s regulations.

Mr. Stringer raised the distinction that one group did not want to establish a trading mechanism for impervious surface and the other group was satisfied in exploring the feasibility study. Ms. Rosborg was concerned that the credit of the “trade” would be given to another section of the County and does not necessarily help the immediate area. Ms. Pompa suggested that impervious limits should be added into the County Code if they are not there already and that a trading mechanism is administratively time intensive and challenging to implement. Ms. Lynch added that it may provide the developer flexibility. Ms. Pauly thought that a redevelopment zone would help create incentives or the credits could occur within that zone. Mr. Johnston said he understands the complexities of the trading mechanism and that he would be comfortable removing that policy. Ms. Hartwig-Davis said there are various innovative ways to mitigate stormwater and strategies to use greywater onsite. Mr. Fahs said the County can provide incentives. Mr. Dodd agrees that a carrot and stick approach would be easier to administer.

Review Refinements of Draft Healthy Economy Goals, Policies, and Strategies:

Mr. Stringer, Planner

Mr. Stringer reviewed the changes and refinements to the Healthy Economy goals, policies, and strategies. These refinements include a placeholder for a strategy for economic recovery, an emphasis on equity, the removal of an outdated reference to the BWI Airport Overlay Zoning District, and moving workforce housing items to the Built Environment section and consolidating Affordable Housing items.

The survey indicated strong support for these changes. Goal HE1 promotes economic development that supports Smart Growth. Policy HE1.1 focuses on the County having a strategy for economic development. Policy HE1.2 focuses on targeting economic development in those areas where the County is focusing land development. Goal HE2 focuses on economic development efforts to attract, retain, and expand businesses. The following policies expand upon Goal HE2. Policy HE2.3 focuses on maintaining an adequate supply of land for industrial and commercial uses. There was some concern from CAC members about how would the County maintain land it does not own. Ms. Carrier said the intent is to ensure when businesses are looking to grow or relocate to the County, there is adequate area for that to happen. Mr. Mauler suggested that density does not promote a “calming” lifestyle. Ms. Huecker said the more the County goes to mixed-use development the less it separates from commercial and residential land use. Ms. Pauly recommended that development should not be encouraged in areas of planned transit, only existing transit. Mr. Mauler recommended redevelopment should occur in Brooklyn Park.

Administrative items: Adopt May 21, 2020 meeting notes; Next steps

Ms. Rosborg, Chair

Ms. Lynch motioned to adopt the minutes. Ms. Hartwig-Davis seconded the motion and the minutes were adopted 17-0. Ms. Rosborg strongly encouraged the CAC to complete their homework prior to the due dates in order to give OPZ staff to synthesize the comments and data. Ms. Rosborg reviewed the upcoming schedule. The Built Environment and Healthy Communities will be reviewed at the June 17th meeting. A comprehensive review of the chapters and the land use change applications will be reviewed on July 1st and 15th. She requested the CAC hold July 29th as an alternate date. Mr. Shorter motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Bower seconded the motion and the motion was approved 19-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.