



DRAFT

31 South Summit Avenue  
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877  
Telephone: 301-258-6330

## MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION JANUARY 21, 2009

---

Chair John Bauer called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Present at the meeting were Vice-Chair Lenny Levy, Commissioners Matthew Hopkins, Lloyd Kaufman, and Danny Winborne, Alternate Commissioner Geri Lanier, Planning and Code Administration Director Greg Ossont, Community Planning Director Trudy Schwarz, Planner Rob Robinson, and Recording Secretary Myriam Gonzalez. Chair Bauer noted Alternate Commissioner Lanier would sit at the dais but would not actively participate this evening, since all Commissioners were present.

### I. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Vice-Chair Levy moved, seconded by Commissioner Kaufman, to nominate John Bauer as Planning Commission Chair. There were no more nominations

Vote: 4-0-1 to elect John Bauer as Chair (Abstained: Bauer)

Vice-Chair Levy voiced his support for rotating the vice-chairmanship. Commissioner Kaufman endorsed the suggestion adding that it would cultivate leadership. The consensus of the Commission was for rotation of the vice-chairmanship.

Commissioner Hopkins moved, seconded by Commissioner Levy, to nominate Danny Winborne as Planning Commission Vice-Chair. There were no more nominations.

Vote: 4-0-1 to elect Danny Winborne as Vice-Chair (Abstained: Winborne)

### II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 7, 2009, Planning Commission Meeting

Commissioner Levy moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Winborne to APPROVE the Minutes of the January 7, 2009, Planning Commission Meeting as submitted.

Vote: 5-0

### III. RECORD PLATS

R-1251 -- Observatory Heights - Lot 93  
St. Martin's Convent

Commissioner Levy moved, seconded by Commissioner Kaufman, to APPROVE the Record Plat Agenda.

Vote: 5-0

#### IV. CONSENT ITEMS

- |               |  |          |
|---------------|--|----------|
| AFP-07-045 -- | Seneca Creek Community Church<br>13 Firstfield Road<br>Reuse from Office to Church<br>EXTENSION OF FINAL PLAN APPROVAL                                 | E-1 Zone |
| SP-08-0001 -- | Archstone at Olde Towne Gaithersburg<br>320-408 East Diamond Avenue<br>Redevelopment of 7 Parcels and Public Alley<br>EXTENSION OF FINAL PLAN APPROVAL | CBD Zone |

Vice-Chair Winborne moved, seconded by Commissioner Kaufman, to APPROVE the Consent Agenda.

Vote: 5-0

#### V. DISCUSSION

##### Draft Olde Towne Guidelines

Planner Robinson provided a brief background, noting the current design guidelines for Olde Towne were based on the Downtown Plan, revised in 1996. He added that the draft guidelines that are the subject of the review this evening are being developed in response to the 2005 Olde Towne District Master Plan (MP-1-05), which called for the formulation of new guidelines for the five Planning Sectors in MP-1-05. He presented and compared the overall 1996 and 2005 Olde Towne Plans, noting the latter called for a larger scale redevelopment to mixed multi-story uses, whereas the earlier plan had much smaller uses that were more residential in character.

Chair Bauer recommended separating site plan-related guidelines from those that are architectural in nature, as well as those dealing with preservation. Commissioner Hopkins stressed the importance that at the start, the proposed document tell a story that evidences the uniqueness of Olde Towne, giving examples, e.g., the Train Station with its quality overhang, so as to provide a context within which an energized vision of the quality of features and signature structures is given. Commissioner Hopkins also emphasized the need for utilizing drawings, diagrams, and photographs to best exemplify the details of buildings, sidewalks, etc., that would fit within the context of the area, and, particularly, when stipulating dimensions might be too limiting to show the appropriate scale.

The Commission provided guidance as to the siting of buildings, identification of transition areas, and streetscape. Commissioner Levy suggested the use of alleys for retail uses. Regarding architectural design-making strategies, Commissioner Hopkins encouraged the use of solar panels on the south and west sides of buildings. Chair Bauer called for care to preclude the impact of equipment on the streetscape. Commissioner Kaufman pointed out the importance of the functionality of the backs of buildings for access. Guidance was also given regarding storefronts, roofing, and materials, as well as signage, retaining walls, parking, landscaping, and lighting. Regarding the latter, Commissioner Hopkins recommended using photographs to provide a vision of the pedestrian scale that is sought to provide a lively atmosphere.

In terms of exterior elements, Commissioner Hopkins called for attention to recycling of non-toxic materials and durability and green building issues. He additionally suggested language relating to native, non-invasive planting species. Commissioner Levy also suggested language regarding Public Art.

Mr. Robinson indicated the revised draft would also be reviewed by the Olde Towne Advisory Committee and the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC) before bringing it back to the Planning Commission for recommendation to the City Council.

## VI. FROM THE COMMISSION

### Vice-Chair Winborne

1. Voiced the Commission's well wishes for HPAC Chair Richard Arkin's and former Planning Commission Chair Blanche Keller's prompt recovery.
2. Thanked his fellow Commissioners for electing him as vice-chair to the Planning Commission, and John Bauer and Lenny Levy for their services to the City.

### Commissioner Hopkins

1. Voiced his excitement over the emphasis of the new Federal Administration on energy efficiency building practices, noting he would hope this would provide an opportunity to revisit building retrofits and energy efficiency upgrades within the City.
2. Congratulated John Bauer and Danny Winborne on their being elected Chair and Vice Chair to the Planning Commission. Commissioners Levy and Kaufman, and Alternate Commissioner Lanier echoed Commissioner Hopkins's congratulatory comments.

### Commissioner Kaufman

Echoed Commissioner Hopkins's comments relating to the new Federal Administration, adding that its emphasis on infrastructure might also provide the opportunity to encourage mass transit-related projects that would include parking structures rather than parking lots.

### Chair Bauer

1. Thanked the Commission for his re-election to the Commission Chair and echoed the wishes for the speedy recovery of Richard Arkin and Blanche Keller.
2. Announced the City Council would begin the process for the City's new Strategic Plan with a public hearing on Monday, January 26, and encouraged the individual Commissioners to provide input.

## VII. FROM STAFF

### Planning and Code Administration Director Ossont

1. Suggested providing a Strategic Plan update at the Commission's next regular meeting.
2. Referenced his memorandum to the City Council and Planning Commission regarding the County's comments on the Municipal Growth Element, MP-2-08, of the Master Plan, noting that some of those issues would be discussed at the upcoming

joint work session on February 9, 2009, for guidance to staff from the Commission's zoning and planning perspectives as well as from the City Council's policy perspective.

*Community Planning Director Schwarz*

Listed upcoming joint public hearings, work session, and regular meetings of the Commission.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before this session, the meeting was duly adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Gonzalez  
Recording Secretary