

Long Range Planning Committee

Minutes for October 24, 2011

Attendees: Pat Burda, Tina Coplan, Karen Depew, Charles Duffy, Leslie Hill, Mary Anne Hoffman, Mark Kopelman, John Midlen, John Murtagh, Jim Roy, Steve Seidel

Note taker: Jim Roy

The meeting began at 7:24 p.m.

Purple Line

The Purple Line light-rail project recently received the green light from the federal Department of Transportation to move forward with preliminary engineering. If the Project moves successfully through the remainder of the approval and funding process, current estimates are that construction could begin in 2015 with completion by 2020. Another Maryland transit project, Baltimore's Red Line, was fast-tracked by the Obama administration, but it is not clear what this means for the Purple Line.

In related news, County Executive Ike Leggett suggested private funding may need to be part of the total package for the Purple Line.

The MD Transit Administration will hold an open house on November 2 at the 4-H Conference Center to discuss what will happen during preliminary engineering. In addition, the County Planning Board will walk the trail on November 3 to look at options for the tunnel and trestle bridge.

The committee discussed the Town doing its own noise testing and possibly hiring a noise consultant. The committee recommended that the Mitigation Advisory Group look into the cost of hiring a noise consultant.

Chevy Chase Lake

The Chevy Chase Land Company requested six-month extension of the County's Sector Plan process for Chevy Chase Lake and was granted a nine-month extension by the County Council . The company has hired new staff and is in the process of revising its plans. The company originally proposed 4.3 million square feet of development at the site, in contrast to the Planning staff's recommendation of 1.2 million square feet.

Representatives of the Connecticut Avenue Corridor Committee have decided to hold meetings with the Land Company to see if there are areas of agreement between the communities and the Land Company.

The committee will invite Lisa Fadden of the Land Company to speak in January, when the company's plans may be formulated.

Bethesda Development

- The new Safeway opened.
- The condominium on Lot 31/31A will begin construction in January. The committee will prepare a Forecast story on this and its potential impact on parking and traffic congestion.

- We are waiting to see revised plans for the JGB proposal for Bethesda Avenue running from Wisconsin to Woodmont Avenues.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Study

A meeting on the same night as the committee meeting was scheduled at the Planning Board to discuss next steps in studying the costs and feasibility of an extensive network of BRT routes throughout the county.

Commercial Residential (CR) Zones

The County Council approved CR zone amendments very close to the draft legislation submitted by the Planning staff and approved by the Planning Board. The Council rejected recommendations from the majority of the County Council's committee that had reviewed the legislation. It had voted to narrow the list of benefits and more clearly define transit that allow for increased density. The Council also voted to apply the new zones only when specifically recommended in a master plan, a decision that is expected to be taken up again in the zoning code rewrite.

Strategic Plan

In December the committee will review a draft of the Town's revised strategic plan. Advance copies will be emailed to committee members. The plan will be announced in the Forecast in February for public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.