



Town of Sykesville

7547 Main Street, Sykesville, MD 21784

p: 410.795.8959 f: 410.795.3818

townofsykesville.org

Town House

Stacy Link, Mayor

Joseph Cosentini, Town Manager

Jennifer Livesay, Town Treasurer

Kerry G. Kavaloski, Town Clerk

OFFICIAL MINUTES MAY 5, 2025 REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

The Sykesville Planning Commission meeting was held on Monday, May 5, 2025. Commissioner Singleton called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in the Town House Conference Room.

PRESENT: Commissioners Phil Singleton, Ken Johnson, Ted Ludvigsen, Daniel Mican, Michael Scheiner, and Brandon Smith. Council Member Jeremiah Schofield.

STAFF: Joe Cosentini, Town Manager
Kevin Rubenstein, Town Planner
Karen Ruff, Town Attorney

MINUTES:

- April 7, 2025

MOTION: Commissioner Singleton motioned to approve the minutes from March 3, 2025. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

BUSINESS AGENDA

- **Consider/Discuss/Act on an Updated Concept Plan for the Warfield Development**

Joe Cosentini, Town Manager, explained the submission and the breakdown of land uses proposed in the plan. He explained that the submitted plan proposes utilizing 9.82 acres of existing public rights-of-way for retail and service-oriented land uses and 2.39 acres of rights-of-way for office/retail/institutional/hotel and light industrial. Staff recommended postponing consideration of the proposed concept plan as currently presented and recommends that the Commission request the applicant to revise the plan to exclude all right-of-way areas and to provide a written explanation regarding the implementation of HB538 in relation to the Warfield site and the PEC district.

Dave Bowersox, Warfield Developers, presented the concept submitted to the Planning Commission. He explained that the concept plan was created due to changes in the market, HB538, and the approval of an assisted living facility use on Parcel B.

Sean Davis, MRA, explained that HB538 allows for up to 6 housing units per acre. The concept plan was revised accordingly. He explained that the PEC

ordinance does not limit the required land use percentages to only developable land. It is the developers' opinion that the proposed concept plan meets the requirements as set out in the PEC ordinance.

Tom Cole offered information relating to HB538. He explained that the state delegated land use power to cities and counties. HB538 is specifically aimed at affordable housing and is specific to qualified projects. The Warfield Development is a qualified property. The Warfield project was discussed by the legislature during their review of this bill. Mr. Cole further explained that due to HB538, the project receives a density increase in residential units and a prohibition on unreasonable limitations or requirements on the project.

There was a discussion about what would be an unreasonable limitation or requirement and if the determination of the rights-of-way not being developable would impose such a limitation. Mr. Cole explained that that in and of itself would not be an unreasonable limitation, however the land use requirements may constitute such a limitation. The law does not address or change the adequate public facilities ordinance in any way. Adequate public facilities include public safety, water and sewer, and schools.

Commissioner Singleton asked how retail can be built on public rights-of-way. Mr. Davis explained that it can't physically be built, but the plan does follow the letter of the law and allows for HB538 to be implemented on the property. The dining hall has been identified as possible retail and office space. He further explained that there is no retail market, as seen in the last seven years of marketing the property. He explained that the original plan showed the rights-of-way as open space.

The developers will submit impact studies for the Planning Commission to review. Karen Ruff, Town Attorney, cannot attend the June Planning Commission meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Singleton motioned that the Planning Commission postpones until the July 2025 meeting, approval of the submitted concept plan for the Warfield Site, as presented, due to the inappropriate inclusion of approximately 12.21 acres of public right-of-way in the calculation of required land use percentages. The use of right-of-way for this purpose is inconsistent with the provisions of the Planned Employment Center (PEC) district and does not constitute developable land under the Town's zoning ordinance.

Furthermore, I move that the Commission request the applicant revise the concept plan to exclude all right-of-way areas from the land use percentage calculations and resubmit updated figures based solely on net developable acreage. The applicant shall also provide a written explanation of the relevance and proposed application of the 2024 Housing Expansion and Affordability Act (HB538) to the Warfield site and demonstrate how its implementation aligns with the purpose of the PEC zoning district and other applicable requirements of the Town Code. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

TOWN UPDATES:

- Mr. Rubenstein announced that the Historic Station building received approval from the Historic District Commission. A site plan has been submitted both to the Town and the County for review.
- The South End Streetscape project has begun and will hopefully be finished before the Farmers' Markets. The Town does have plans to discuss with the contractors and with the Downtown Sykesville Connection in case a backup location needs to be determined.
- The Town election is May 6. Voting is from 8 A.M. to 8 P.M.
- Parcel B developers have asked for a pre-submittal meeting with the County. They need an approved concept and preliminary plan from the Town's Planning Commission before they can begin work.

Dan Andersen, Sykesville resident, thanked the Planning Commission for their hard work reviewing the Warfield plan and questioned why the Town would even consider a change as the developers have not done anything to save the buildings. Commissioner Singleton explained that the owners of the property have a right to submit development plans, and the Planning Commission has to give them their due process.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, Commissioner Singleton motioned, and Commissioner Smith seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 P.M.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted
Town Clerk Kerry Kavaloski