

MINUTES

March 7, 2024

1:30 p.m.

Video recordings of the Kent County Planning Commission meeting are available online for viewing on the County's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@kentcountygovernment2757>.

The Kent County Planning Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, March 7, 2024, in the County Commissioners' Hearing Room at 400 High Street, Chestertown, Maryland. Members of the public were invited to attend in person or via conference call.

The following members were in attendance: Chair F. Joseph Hickman, James Saunders, Ray Strong, Sean Jones, and Paula Reeder. Vice Chair Paul Ruge and Bill Crowding were away. Cynthia L. McCann, Esquire, Planning Commission Attorney was present. Staff in attendance included William Mackey, AICP, Director; Carla Gerber, AICP, Deputy Director; Mark Carper, Associate Planner; and Rob Tracy, AICP, Associate Planner.

Chair Hickman called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

MINUTES

Ms. Reeder moved to approve the minutes from the February 1, 2024, meeting with several minor corrections. Mr. Jones seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW

24-7 Jill Gaumer and Lynn Winkler – Variance – Pier Length
24251 Drayton Landing Drive, Worton – Third Election District – Critical Area Residential (CAR)

Mr. Carper presented the staff report, explaining that the applicants were requesting a variance to install a 10 by 14-foot platform at the end of an existing nonconforming pier that extends 230 feet from the mean high-water line. The applicants received authorization from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) for the platform. However, under the County's Land Use Ordinance, a pier is not allowed to extend more than 150 feet, so a variance is required.

Lori Sample of Riptide Marine Construction, the project contractor, and the applicants were sworn in. Ms. Sample stated that the existing pier was unsafe and in need of repair. They repaired the pier last year and are now seeking the variance to construct the platform to provide sufficient depth, edge, and maneuverability to dock the applicants' sailboat.

Ms. Reeder made a motion to send a favorable recommendation to the Board of Appeals, citing the following findings:

- The variance is not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan or Critical Area Program.
- The applicants face practical difficulty due to the limited water depth at the end of the pier, making it challenging to dock their sailboat.
- The proposed platform is consistent with the surrounding area, as other property owners have created platforms on their properties, and the platform does not extend beyond the length of the existing pier.

Adopted on April 4, 2024

- The need for the variance was not caused by the applicants' own actions.
- Mr. Saunders seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Map Change Requests

Mr. Mackey and Ms. Gerber led a discussion on the process for reviewing property owner map change requests submitted as part of the comprehensive rezoning. The Commission agreed to hold a special meeting to review all the applications on the evening of April 11. Staff will prepare maps and notify applicants. Property owners who indicated they do not want a change will also receive email noting that no change will be made to their zoning.

MDOT Priority Letter

Mr. Mackey presented the draft 2024 MDOT Priority Letter, which is largely the same as the previous year, listing projects like the Chester River Bridge Crossing.

Planning Commissioner Saunders raised the need for sidewalk improvements to connect Kent County High School with Butlertown. The Commissioners discussed the need to emphasize safety concerns for pedestrians and bikers.

Mr. Mackey will make some modifications and follow up with the municipalities before submitting the final letter.

STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Mackey introduced Rob Tracy, AICP, who has rejoined the County's planning staff as an Associate Planner.

ADJOURN

Mr. Saunders made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Reeder seconded the motion, and the meeting adjourned at approximately 3:15 p.m.

/s/ Francis J. Hickman
Francis J. Hickman, Chair

/s/ Bill Mackey
William Mackey, AICP, Director

Please note that 95% of this document was created by Claude 3 from Anthropic utilizing a transcript created by Microsoft Teams. The DPHZ team then reviewed the document prior to its distribution to the Planning Commission.