

PRESS RELEASE

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PLANNING BOARD ACCEPTS JOINT MOTION TO STAY CLARKSBURG HEARING, ALL PARTIES AGREE TO IMMEDIATE MEDIATION; HEARING TOMORROW CANCELLED

SILVER SPRING, MD - Residents, developers and builders involved in the Clarksburg Town Center case filed a joint motion with the Montgomery County Planning Board today and requested 60 days to mediate a resolution and forgo tomorrow's public hearing on violations.

Chairman Derick Berlage, on behalf of the Planning Board, accepted the motion. Therefore, both the public hearing and the closed session scheduled for tomorrow on Clarksburg have been cancelled.

"I believe this represents a positive step forward in this difficult case," said Acting Deputy Director Bill Mooney. "We are cautiously optimistic that all parties involved will begin to focus on solutions that will result in a Clarksburg community that reflects the original intent of its master plan."

The parties were granted 60 days to deliver a Community Improvement Plan to the Planning Board for its consideration during a public hearing currently scheduled for Thursday, February 9, 2006.

However, to prepare for possible impasses from any party, the agency's Community-Based Planning staff will be prepared to present a separate Community Improvement Plan that may be presented to the Board if the mediation fails.

As conditions for accepting the request, the Planning Board will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, December 20, 2005 to get input from other members of the community regarding what elements ought to be considered for inclusion in a Community Improvement Plan for Clarksburg Town Center. Preliminary ideas of what should be included in a Community Improvement Plan can be found in the staff report that was issued on the matter on November 25, 2005.

In 30 days, the Planning Board will require all parties to provide a status update on their progress during a public work session.

The Planning Board has the authority to approve, reject or amend any Community Improvement Plan presented by the parties involved or the staff. In addition, the Board will consider imposing monetary sanctions against the builders and developers at the close of the mediation period.

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