



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

**APPROVED
MINUTES**

The Montgomery County Planning Board met in regular session on Thursday, March 17, 2016, at 9:06 a.m. in the Montgomery Regional Office in Silver Spring, Maryland, and adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

Present were Chair Casey Anderson, Vice Chair Marye Wells-Harley, and Commissioners Norman Dreyfuss and Natali Fani-González. Commissioner Amy Presley joined the meeting at 9:22 a.m. during discussion of Item 2.

Items 1 through 4 are reported on the attached agenda.

Commissioner Dreyfuss left the meeting at 9:30 a.m. during the discussion of Item 2 and returned at 11:27 a.m. during discussion of Item 4.

The Board recessed for lunch at 11:46 a.m. and convened in Closed Session at 12:12 p.m. to take up Items 9 and 10, Closed Session Items.

In compliance with State Government Article §3-305(b), Annotated Code of Maryland, the following is a report of the Board's Closed Session:

The Board convened in Closed Session at 12:12 p.m. in the 3rd floor conference room on motion of Commissioner Dreyfuss, seconded by Commissioner Fani-González, with Chair Anderson, Vice Chair Wells-Harley, and Commissioners Dreyfuss, Presley, and Fani-González voting in favor of the motion. The meeting was closed under authority of Annotated Code of Maryland, General Provisions Article, §3-305(b)(7), to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

Also present for the meeting were Director Gwen Wright, Deputy Director Rose Krasnow, and Mark Pfefferle of the Planning Department; Senior Counsel David Lieb, and Associate General Counsels Elizabeth Adams, Nick Dumais, and Christina Sorrento of the Legal Department; and James Parsons of the Commissioners' Office.

In Closed Session the Board received briefing and legal advice regarding a Forest Conservation Plan violation and pending litigation.

The Closed Session meeting was adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

The Board reconvened in the auditorium at 1:33 p.m.

MCPB, 3-17-16, APPROVED

Items 5 through 7 are reported on the attached agenda.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:51 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Planning Board will be held on Thursday, March 24, 2016, in the Montgomery Regional Office in Silver Spring, Maryland.

M. Clara Moise
Sr. Technical Writer/Editor

James J. Parsons
Technical Writer

Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting
Thursday, March 17, 2016
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760
301-495-4600

1. Consent Agenda

***A. Adoption of Resolutions**

Silver Spring Center Site Plan Amendment 81982069A – MCPB No. 16-019

BOARD ACTION

Motion: DREYFUSS/WELLS-HARLEY

Vote:

Yea: 4-0

Nay:

Other: PRESLEY ABSENT

Action: Adopted the Resolution cited above, as submitted.

***B. Record Plats**

Subdivision Plat No. 220151370 Cabin Branch

RMX-1/TDR zone; 16 lots and 17 parcels; located at the intersection of Broadway Avenue and Little Seneca Parkway; Clarksburg Master Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

Subdivision Plat No. 220160440 Glenmont Metrocenter

TS-R zone; 1 parcel; located in the northern quadrant of the intersection of Layhill Road (MD 182) and Glenallan Avenue; Glenmont Sector Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

BOARD ACTION

Motion: WELLS-HARLEY/FANI-GONZÁLEZ

Vote:

Yea: 4-0

Nay:

Other: PRESLEYABSENT

Action: Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Record Plats cited above, as submitted.

***C. Other Consent Items**

1. 6111 Executive Boulevard Adequate Public Facilities Test No. APF 201601 --- Request for Transportation Adequate Public Facilities determination for the proposed 8,000-square-foot temporary addition for lab/medical office/general office use on Parcel “F”, under County Code Section 8-32, Article IV for future building permits on 4.0 acres of recorded parcel, zoned EOF 0.75 H-100; Located at 6111 Executive Boulevard Old Georgetown Road, Rockville, within the 1992 North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan area.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions and Adoption of Resolutions

2. Artery Plaza

A. Extension of Sketch Plan No. 320150050 for 73 days to May 31, 2016, CR-3.0 C 0.75 R 3.0, H 145T Zone, 3.02 acres, located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Bethesda Avenue, Bethesda Purple Line Station Minor Master Plan Amendment.

Staff recommendation: Approval of the extension request

B. Extension of Site Plan Amendment No. 81984002B for 73 days to May 31, 2016, CR-3.0 C 0.75 R 3.0, H 145T Zone, 3.02 acres, located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Bethesda Avenue, Bethesda Purple Line Station Minor Master Plan Amendment.

Staff recommendation: Approval of the extension request

BOARD ACTION

Motion: 1. WELLS-HARLEY/FANI-GONZÁLEZ
2. FANI-GONZÁLEZ/DREYFUSS

Vote:

Yea: 1 & 2. 4-0

Nay:

Other: PRESLEY ABSENT

Action: 1. Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Adequate Public Facilities finding cited above, subject to conditions, and adopted the attached Resolution.

2. Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Sketch Plan and Site Plan Extensions cited above.

MCPB, 3-17-16, APPROVED

***D. Approval of Minutes**

Planning Board Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2016

BOARD ACTION

Motion: WELLS-HARLEY/DREYFUSS

Vote:

Yea: 4-0

Nay:

Other: PRESLEY ABSENT

Action: Approved Planning Board Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2016, as submitted.

2. Roundtable Discussion

A. Planning Director's Report

B1. Operating Funds Five-Month Financial Report Including Projections to June 30, 2016.

B2. Enterprise Funds Five-Month Financial Report Including Projections to June 30, 2016.

~~C. FY16 Budget Adjustment Request—Funding for Emerald Ash Borer~~

D. Update on Proposed FY17 Operating Budget - County Executive Recommendation

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Yea:

Nay:

Other:

Action: Received briefing.

A. Planning Department Director's Report – Planning Department Director Gwen Wright briefed the Board on the following ongoing and upcoming Planning Department events and activities: the third and final session of the Winter Speakers Series held on March 16, which featured speaker Jeff Tumlin and was attended by County Council Vice President Roger Berliner, Councilmembers Hans Riemer and Marc Elrich, and Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) Director Al Roshdi; the status of the Westbard Sector Plan, with the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee recommendations scheduled to be presented to the full County Council on Tuesday, March 22; the status of the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan, with the next worksession scheduled for April 7, which will focus on environmental issues, affordable housing, and density; the status of the Lyttonsville Sector Plan, with a worksession scheduled for March 24; the status of the MARC Rail Communities Plan and the recent community charrettes; the status of the White Flint 2 Sector Plan, Rock Spring Sector Plan, and the Bicycle Master Plan; the continued work on the Subdivision Staging Policy, with staff recommendations coming at future worksessions; the status of the Semi Annual Report, the revised format of the report, and its presentation to the County Council scheduled for April 5; the County Executive's recommendations regarding the FY17 Budget, which includes a reduction of \$132,000 to the proposed Planning Department budget and a proposed tax increase; the status of the ongoing Rental Housing Study; the status of the Subdivision Regulation update and continued discussions between a private roads working group and representatives from the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission; and the status of ongoing work with representatives from MCDOT regarding the Transportation Demand Management Program.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

2. Roundtable Discussion

A. Planning Department Director's Report

CONTINUED

Planning Department staff then briefed the Board regarding ongoing work to improve the development review process. Staff stated that the Planning Department is required to provide the County Council with statistics regarding development review process improvements every six months. Thus far, staff has submitted four reports to the Council, with the next report and a briefing scheduled for April 4. Staff stated that for the first six months of FY16, the Planning Department is on pace to receive more new Preliminary Plan applications than received within the same time period in the three previous years, especially in Area 3. In terms of Site Plans, the Planning Department is on target to exceed the number received within the same time period in the previous five years, especially in Areas 1 and 2. Staff noted that while the number of record plats received has remained consistent for the first six months of FY16, use of ePlan software has reduced the processing time to 207 calendar days. Prior to the use of ePlan, the average time to process a record plat was 389 days. Staff stated that the new Site Plan ordinance requires staff to bring plans to the Board for approval within 120 days of acceptance. In the first six months of this year, the average time plans have taken to get to the Board is 168 days, which staff noted is partially due to applicant delays. Though exceeding the required 120-day timeframe, it is a significant improvement over the previous average time of 389 days. Staff added that they have recently begun to work with representatives from the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) regarding possible methods of streamlining record plat approvals.

There followed extensive Board discussion with questions to staff.

B1. Operating Funds Five-Month Financial Report Including Projections to June 30, 2016: Finance Department staff briefed the Board and discussed the status of the FY16 Administration Department and Parks Department operating funds. Staff stated that 96 percent of the expected yearly property tax has been collected, slightly ahead of the percentage collected in the corresponding FY15 time period. Staff expects to meet but not exceed the budgeted level for all funds. Both the Parks Department and Planning Department have met the FY16 savings plan at a total of \$1,529,329. The Administration Fund is expected to exceed \$5,111 in revenues, and staff projected savings of \$1,259,156 due to delays in filling vacant positions, filling positions at less than budgeted salaries, and filling some vacancies with contract employees. Staff noted that savings are currently less than the savings during the corresponding FY15 time period. Staff projects the Fund Balance for the Administration Fund to decrease by approximately \$700,000. The Park Fund is expected to exceed budget by \$28,520, with savings in expenditures projected at \$1,415,496. Staff noted that the blizzard in January accounts for the decrease in savings compared to FY15 savings. Staff noted the recent Federal Declaration of Emergency and plans to submit for the reimbursement of some of the funds spent during the blizzard. Staff added that the Parks Department is also constrained by the ongoing need to mitigate emerald ash borer damage.

There followed a brief Board discussion.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

2. Roundtable Discussion

CONTINUED

B2. Enterprise Funds Five-Month Financial Report Including Projections to June 30, 2016: Enterprise Division staff briefed the Board and discussed the status of FY16 Enterprise Division Operating Funds and Enterprise Division events and activities. Staff stated that while facilities revenues were affected by closures due to the blizzard, any lost revenue will hopefully be made up through facility rental, group lessons, and classes. Staff stated that the Pauline Betz Addie Tennis Center closed for six weeks due to the installation of a new environmental control system. An open house at the facility is scheduled for Saturday evening, March 19. Staff is currently in the process of booking the event centers in order to offset reduced rental of Rockwood Manor. Regarding park facilities, staff noted increased expenditures due to costs associated with the addition of three yurts, pedal carts, a jumping pillow, and proposed water features at Little Bennett Campground. Following major improvements to the Visitor Center parking lot, Brookside Gardens has re-opened. Staff noted the success of the most recent Garden of Lights event at the facility, which generated significant revenues. Staff added that the Wings of Fancy exhibit is scheduled to begin in late April. The train and carousel located at Wheaton Regional Park and the train at Cabin John Regional Park are scheduled to open Friday, March 25. Staff added that the scheduled Spring Break camps, located at South Germantown Driving Range, Pauline Betz Addie Tennis Center, Wheaton Indoor Tennis, Cabin John Ice Rink, and Wheaton Ice Arena, are nearly at capacity.

There followed a brief Board discussion with questions to staff.

D. Update on Proposed FY17 Operating Budget - County Executive Recommendation: Department of Human Resources and Management staff briefed the Board and discussed the County Executive's recommendations for the proposed FY17 Operating Budget. Staff stated that the Executive's recommended budget is predicated on a substantial tax increase that is above the charter limit, which will require a unanimous vote by the County Council in order to pass. The majority of the budget increase is for additional education funds. Staff plans to meet with members of the Office of Management and Budget for guidance regarding an approximately \$525,000 decrease to the Administration and Park Funds. Staff noted that 75 percent of the cuts are to the Administration Fund, with the remaining cuts to the Park Fund. Staff stated that the proposed sale of a bond by the Finance Department, coupled with savings from the debt service, should generate a budget savings of approximately \$590,000.

Following extensive Board discussion with questions to staff, Chair Anderson requested data from the previous five to ten years regarding the funding trends for the school system, the Park Fund, the Administration Fund, and the rest of the County government.

8. FY16 Budget Adjustment Request --- Funding for Emerald Ash Borer

Staff Recommendation: Approval

BOARD ACTION

Motion: PRESLEY/WELLS-HARLEY

Vote:

Yea: 4-0

Nay:

Other: DREYFUSS ABSENT

Action: Approved staff recommendation to approve the Budget Adjustment Request cited above.

Parks Department staff briefed the Board regarding a requested FY16 Operating Budget Adjustment of \$400,000. Staff noted that all budget adjustments exceeding \$50,000 require Planning Board approval. The funds will be transferred from the Park Fund Debt Service Budget to the Horticulture, Forestry, and Environmental Education division for tree removal services for damage caused by the emerald ash borer, a non-native invasive beetle.

There followed a brief Board discussion with questions to staff.

***3. Cabin Branch Toll Brothers Phase 1 – Pool House, Community Center and Community Green - Site Plan Amendment 82007014B** --- Request for approval of the Landscaping, Lighting, Architecture and Amenities for Toll Bros. Phase 1 Pool House, Community Center, and Community Green pursuant to Planning Board Resolution 13-55. Property is included within an approved 436 residential dwelling unit neighborhood on 80.73 acres in the MXPB and RMX-1/TDR-3 zone; located on the north side of West Old Baltimore Road between Clarksburg Road and I-270, in the Clarksburg Master Plan Area.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions

BOARD ACTION

Motion: PRESLEY/WELLS-HARLEY

Vote:

Yea: 4-0

Nay:

Other: DREYFUSS ABSENT

Action: Approved staff recommendation for approval of the Limited Site Plan Amendment cited above, subject to revised conditions discussed during the meeting, as stated in the attached adopted Resolution.

Planning Department staff offered a multi-media presentation and discussed a Limited Site Plan Amendment request to construct a community center and pool complex. The 80.73-acre site is located on the north side of Old West Baltimore Road, adjacent to its intersection with Broadway Avenue, just west of Interstate 270 (I-270), and zoned Mixed Use Planned Development, Residential Mixed Use Development, and Transfer Development Rights in the Clarksburg Master Plan and the future MARC Communities Plan areas. The proposed project area is comprised of three lots within the Residential Mixed Use Development and Transfer Development Rights zones: 61,294-square foot parcel B, 12,154-square foot parcel C, and 16,328-square foot parcel D. Staff noted that the application fulfills Condition 9 of the approved Site Plan that requires the applicant to submit an amendment application to address site and building design for the community center and pool complex.

The applicant proposes to construct a 6,738-square foot two-story community center building, two 210-square foot equipment sheds, three pools, and two surface parking areas with a total of 33 spaces. The upper-level parking area, which will serve the proposed community center, will be accessed from Fulmer Avenue, and the lower-level parking area, which will serve the proposed pool complex, will be accessed from a private alley. Staff stated that the applicant proposes a community center with two separate buildings, with the upper level of the building proposed as a clubhouse, and the lower level to be used solely as a check in, locker room, and bath house for the pool. The lower floor will have no environmental control system, and will not

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

***3. Cabin Branch Toll Brothers Phase 1 – Pool House, Community Center and Community Green - Site Plan Amendment 82007014B**

CONTINUED

be used in the offseason when the pool complex is not in use. Staff stated that the applicant has eliminated an elevator previously shown in the architectural design. Access between the two floors of the building is now provided via a staircase, with handicapped accessibility available via an exterior sidewalk along the south side of the community center building. Staff noted that new conditions to address this issue include requiring the applicant to provide two handicapped accessible parking spaces in the lower-level lot, and to verify the handicapped accessibility of the sidewalk along the south side of the building. Staff noted that the proposed design modifications are compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Other new conditions include providing six additional bicycle parking spaces for the community center building, providing signage for the lower-level parking lot that identifies all of the public parking spaces reserved for users of the community center and pools, assuring that the dimensions and elements within the building plans are consistent with the submitted elevations, and verifying that the fenestration placement and proportions, exterior stairs, and egress are consistent with the architectural floor plans.

Mr. Michael Conley, member of the applicant's team, offered comments and concurred with the staff recommendation.

Following extensive Board discussion with questions to staff and Mr. Conley, the Board requested the inclusion of language in the Resolution that clearly states that the proposed design is ADA compliant.

4. Cooperative Forecast and County Trends on Employment, Household, and Population Growth

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Yea:

Nay:

Other:

Action: Received briefing followed by discussion.

Planning Department staff offered a multi-media presentation and discussed the Round 9.0 Cooperative Forecast and County Trends on Employment, Household, and Population Growth. Staff stated that the Planning Department has been participating in the Cooperative Forecast process since 1976. The Cooperative Forecast, done in conjunction with other jurisdictions through the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG), is a long-range forecast of population, households, and employment extending from 2010 to 2045. Round 9.0 is a major forecast round that is intended to assess all the assumptions for the forecast. Although most local jurisdictions in the area cooperate with MWCOG in the forecast, the cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg produce their own independent forecast and coordinate with Planning Department staff for the larger County forecast.

Staff then discussed the Cooperative Forecasts for Montgomery County population and households, stating that based on census data, demographic trends, and an age-cohort model that forecasts population by age and sex using five-year age groups, survival rates, fertility rates, and migration factors, the County population is expected to increase from approximately 1,036,700 in 2015 to 1,269,500 in 2045. The number of households is expected to increase from approximately 380,200 to 470,700 within the same time period. Staff noted that both of these projected increases are expected to be the third largest increases in population and households among the surrounding jurisdictions. Staff added that these projections are independent of the MWCOG forecast.

Staff stated that Montgomery County employment forecasts are made using a four-step process that includes calculating the 2010 employment base using data from the United States Bureau of Labor and Statistics and the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulations; forecasting jobs covered by unemployment insurance; forecasting jobs not covered by unemployment insurance, self-employment, and the military; and reconciling with the MWCOG econometric model. The results of this process show that the County is projected to have a 38 percent increase in jobs by 2045, the second highest increase among surrounding jurisdictions. Staff noted that the projected employment trends are an improvement following a drop in average growth from 2009 to 2014. Staff noted that both the County and MWCOG

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

4. Cooperative Forecast and County Trends on Employment, Household, and Population Growth

CONTINUED

forecasts project an increase in professional and business services jobs and a decrease in federal government jobs by 2045. However, the County forecast projects a decrease in information technology jobs, while the MWCOG forecast projects an increase in the same field.

The final step of the process is the allocation of households, population, and employment at the Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) level. Staff stated that the Planning Department is responsible for allocations for 321 County TAZs. Rockville and Gaithersburg perform their own allocations. Staff noted that the allocation process is currently in progress, but figures should be available within the next two weeks. The key assumptions and considerations made regarding allocations include the percent of housing units that are occupied and vacant; the average number of persons per occupied unit; and the percent of office, retail, and industrial space that is occupied and vacant. Staff added that all new households are allocated to new housing, and the self-employed are distributed among residential TAZs.

There followed extensive Board discussion with questions to staff.

9. CLOSED SESSION

According to MD ANN Code, General Provisions Article, §3-305(b)(7), to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Yea:

Nay:

Other:

Action: Discussed in Closed Session. See State citation and open session report in narrative minutes.

10. CLOSED SESSION

According to MD ANN Code, General Provisions Article, §3-305(b)(7), to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

The topic to be discussed is pending litigation.

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Yea:

Nay:

Other:

Action: Discussed in Closed Session. See State citation and open session report in narrative minutes.

5. Subdivision Staging Policy --- Briefing on update to School Test Methodology and Impact Tax Calculations

Staff Recommendation: Briefing

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Yea:

Nay:

Action: Received briefing followed by discussion.

Planning Department staff noted that the County Council is scheduled to adopt the 2015 Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP) update in November 2016. In support of this effort, staff has begun evaluating potential updates to the school adequacy component of the SSP. Staff will discuss potential new ideas regarding the methodology and administration of the Annual School Test and provide the Planning Board with a revision to the school impact tax calculation. At a January 12th community meeting, approximately 40 participants provided comments on four topics related to school facilities, i.e., school facility funding, options for new schools, calculation of the annual school test, and school adequacy policies. Some of the issues raised included concern with overcrowding at the elementary school level and calculation of the methodology for calculation of the school impact tax. Another meeting was held on February 18 as a follow-up, providing staff with an opportunity to hear in more detail concerns of the parent community regarding school enrollment growth and facility planning.

As part of the update, staff briefed the Board on various aspects of the school adequacy public facility ordinance and related concepts, including the Annual School Test and applicable thresholds, student generation rate calculations, school impact tax calculations, school facility payment calculations, recordation tax collections, and the use of CIP placeholder projects. Staff also highlighted comparisons to other jurisdictions in Maryland and across the country that have implemented similar adequate public facilities ordinances. Staff also discussed options for changes to the existing rules currently under consideration by staff and requested the Board comments and guidance.

On April 28, Planning staff will present its working draft of the 2016 SSP to the Planning Board, anticipating approval of a Public Hearing draft by mid-May. A public hearing will be scheduled for the end of May, followed by four to five worksessions on the Public Hearing draft. Approval of the Planning Board draft is currently scheduled for July 28, with transmission to the County Council by August 1. The County Council is required by resolution to adopt a new SSP by November 15, otherwise the current SSP will remain in place.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

5. Subdivision Staging Policy --- Briefing on update to School Test Methodology

CONTINUED

Ms. Melissa McKenna of Hidden Field Drive and representing the Montgomery County Cluster Parents/Teachers Association offered testimony.

Chair Anderson instructed staff to present at the next Planning Board meeting data related to school enrollment and student generation rates based on all types of housing owned and/or rented. Staff was also asked to talk to developers on a possible phase out of the Enterprise Zones and to compare recordation taxes and School Facility Payments in other jurisdictions.

There followed extensive Board discussion with questions to staff and Ms. McKenna.

6. Black Hill Regional Park --- Authorization to acquire 89.3155 acres, more or less, unimproved, from Trustees of the Vinnie M. Rable Revocable Trust, located west of Slidell Road, south of West Old Baltimore Road, Boyds, Maryland 20841.

Staff Recommendation: Approval and Adoption of Resolution

BOARD ACTION

Motion: FANI-GONZÁLEZ/WELLS-HARLEY

Vote:

Yea: 5-0

Nay:

Other:

Action: Approved staff recommendation to authorize the acquisition of 89.3155 acres of land located west of Slidell Road in Boyds, Maryland, as an addition to Black Hill Regional Park, and adopted the attached Resolution.

Parks Department staff offered a brief presentation regarding the proposed acquisition of 89.3155 acres of land from Trustees of the Vinnie M. Rable Revocable Trust, located west of Slidell Road and south of West Old Baltimore Road in Boyds, Maryland. Staff noted that the Planning Board was briefed in executive session last Thursday on the proposed acquisition.

7. Capital Crescent Trail and Little Falls Trail Connector Project --- Request for approval of the recommended trail connector alignment between the Capital Crescent Trail and the Little Falls Trail, including budgetary cost estimate.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

BOARD ACTION

Motion:

Vote:

Yea:

Nay:

Other:

Action: Received briefing followed by discussion and by consensus approved staff recommendation for approval.

Parks Department staff offered a multi-media presentation and discussed a request for approval of the recommended trail connector alignment between the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) and Little Falls Trail (LFT), including the budgetary cost estimate. Staff discussed the four options that have been reviewed by staff and presented to the public and civic associations that will be affected by the proposed project. Staff noted that the purpose of this project is to provide a safe, functional, and barrier-free trail connection between the CCT and LFT, within the designated study area near the Bethesda pool, which is located on Little Falls Parkway. The connector trail will be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The proposed connector between these two trail systems is on the Parks Trail Connector list based on a recommendation by the CCT Design and Implementation Study of July 1992. Presently, hikers, bikers, and trail users in this area use the existing parking lot of the Bethesda pool as a means of connectivity between the two trail systems. When evaluated as part of the trail connector analysis, this connector was rated fairly high because it connects two major hard surface trails, provides direct links to public facilities, parks, and metro stops, and the surrounding areas.

Staff noted that the Parks Department hired Site Resources Inc., a consulting firm to study four options for an ADA accessible trail connector along Hillandale Road. After review of the trail alignment studies and input from the general public and civic associations, staff recommends and requests Board approval of option D, as discussed during the meeting, because from a user's perspective, accessing the CCT or LFT through the Bethesda pool parking lot is not safe nor ADA compliant. A class 1 trail connector is needed at this location to provide critical linkage between these two major trails, which serve both transportation and recreation purposes for the surrounding communities. The proposed connector at this location has less environmental impact than the other three options, costs significantly less, and is easier to build.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

7. Capital Crescent Trail and Little Falls Trail Connector Project

CONTINUED

The following speakers offered testimony: Mr. Henry Lebard of Langdrum Lane; Mr. Lawrence Blaskopf of Hillandale Road and representing the Community Association of Kenwood Forest Condominium II; Ms. Sarah Morse of Dorset Avenue and representing the Little Falls Watershed Alliance; Mr. David Kathan of Dorset Avenue; Ms. Lynn Balzer-Martin of Hillandale Road; Ms. Barbara Butera of Willett Parkway; and Mr. Greg Drury, Vice-Chair of the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail.

There followed a brief Board discussion with questions to staff.