

2045 Comprehensive Plan Update Work Session Notes

May 9, 2023

Planning Commission Members: Mike Shepp, President; Wade Louthan, Secretary; Jack Hefestay, Donnie Fisher, and Aaron Howell, were present in person. A quorum of the Planning Commission was present for the Work Session.

Staff: Jennifer Brockman, Chief County Planner; Luke Seigfried, County Planner; Michelle Evers, Planning Clerk and Joe Guttmann, Comprehensive Plan Staffer were present in person.

Executive Summary

On 5/9/23 the Planning Commission held a work session to hear the presentation by representatives of Shepherdstown. Planning Commission also discussed the first Public Input Session and the Goals and Objectives survey.

Agenda

1. Municipality Presentations
 - a. Shepherdstown
2. Community Outreach Preparation
 - a. Staff Presentation of Public Input Session Outlines
 - b. Staff Presentation of Survey Questions

Item 1: Municipality Presentations

Andy Beall, Planning and Zoning Administrator, Phil Baker-Shenk, and Karene Motivans represented Shepherdstown's long term planning priorities. The Corporation of Shepherdstown is currently performing its own comprehensive plan update with a citizens committee. Mr. Beall discussed Shepherdstown's growth since 2014 which has included Shepherd Village property, The Bavarian, SU Potomac Place Residence Hall, Cool Green Auto Repair, and three parcels owned by George Kalathas. Future desired expansion includes an approximately 222 acre triangle to the west of town, the George Rushizky property, and the Maddex Square Shopping Centre. Two planning priorities were highlighted, to increase the town tax base and protect the historic district of Shepherdstown. Additional interests include walkability, protecting the Town Run water source, and to not create a town center outside of Shepherdstown. Andy Beall also mentioned an interest in collaborating with the County on design standards. Ms. Brockman explained the past complications in allowing for public comment on future development within Shepherdstown's GMB and suggested sending over an updated Memorandum of Understanding. Mr. Beall concluded with a concern in the housing prices in town and changes to state code barring local regulations to be placed on short term rentals.

Phil Baker-Shenk spoke as a member of the ADHOC committee reviewing the 2014 Comprehensive Plan and emphasized the committee's goal to focus on policies Shepherdstown can enact. Some of these goals could include new interconnectivity of town, county, and regional

trails and finding new solutions to food waste. Some of the top concerns among citizens is the importance of tourism to the economy, the Town Run watershed, and historic preservation in and around the town boundaries. Of particular note was the potential increased emergency response times created by trains utilizing railroad crossings on key roads. Karene Motivans also spoke to the importance of connections within the town grid. Ms. Motivans discussed the interest in design standards to be cohesive with Shepherdstown aesthetic. Mr. Shepp asked the number of people on the committee and how the review was announced. Mr. Beall responded that there are twelve members, one of which is ex officio, and that the meetings were announced online and the front of Town Hall.

Item 2: Community Outreach Preparation

Staff briefed the commissioners on the agenda and activity for the 1st Public Input Meeting. The input meeting will include a staff description of what a comprehensive plan does followed by a small group Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities activity and concluding with an individual survey. The commissioners discussed potentially providing door prizes in the future to boost participation. Staff also noted the importance of Planning Commissioners attending the public input meeting to help facilitate the small group activity.

Staff then presented the draft Goals and Objectives survey questions for Planning Commissioners to provide comments and edits. Commissioners suggested adding neutral answer responses to the demographic questions as well as changing the location question to a zip code response. Following the Work Session on 4/11/23 staff reached out to several local social media marketing firms to help promote public outreach. Staff mentioned they will prepare more information for Planning Commission at the 6/13/23 Work Session.

These notes were prepared by Luke Seigfried.