

Submitted May 14, 2025

Approved May 14, 2025

**MINUTES OF THE ROCKVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING NO. 2-2025
Wednesday, February 26, 2025**

The City of Rockville Planning Commission convened in regular session at City Hall and virtually via WebEx at 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, February 26, 2025

PRESENT

Jaime Espinosa - Chair

Eric Fulton Suzan Pitman
Shayan Salahuddin Meng Sun

Present: Nicholas Dumais, Senior Assistant City Attorney
Jim Wasilak, Chief of Zoning
Jenny Snapp, Deputy Director of Community Planning and Development Services
John Foreman, Development Review Manager
Nelson Ortiz, Principal Planner

Chair Espinosa opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and introduced the members of the Planning Commission. He outlined the agenda for the meeting.

1. REVIEW AND ACTION

A. Level 2 Site Plan Application STP2022-00436, Twinbrook Hines, to Permit Construction of 437 Multi-Family Units, 5,075 Square Feet of Retail or Restaurant Use, and Stormwater Management Facilities, on a Portion of 1700 Chapman Avenue and 1800 and 1818 Chapman Avenue in the PD-TC (Planned Development - Twinbrook Commons) and MXTD (Mixed-Use Transit District) Zones; Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and Hines, Applicant

Mr. Wasilak swore in Nelson Ortiz, who made the staff presentation and recommendation on the application, which is for approval based on the staff findings and conditions.

Mr. Wasilak swore in Heather Dlhopsky of Wire Gill, who testified on behalf of the applicant. She outlined the history of the application and noted that the applicant agrees to all proposed conditions of approval.

Mr. Wasilak swore in Moira Dhaliwal of Hines, the applicant for the project. She presented an overview of Hines and local development projects, as well as the subject project and development team.

Mr. Wasilak swore in Kacey Huntington of Hord Coplan Macht, architects for the project, who presented an overview of the design of the project. She described the changes to the plan since the Commission had seen it at the project plan stage.

Mr. Wasilak swore in Benjamin Boyd, landscape architect for the project with Design Workshop. He presented the public use space and landscaping proposed for the project.

Mr. Wasilak swore in Laurent Mounaud of VIKA, civil engineer for the project. He presented the stormwater management plan for the project.

Commissioner Pitman noted that she was glad to see the project moving forward, and that she appreciated that the applicant had taken the Commission's recommendations from the project plan.

Commissioner Fulton echoed Commissioner Pitman's comments and asked if all buses enter and exit the Kiss-and-Ride from Chapman Avenue. Ms. Dlhopsky answered that they did. Ms. Dhaliwal added that the design will continue to be coordinated with WMATA. Commissioner Fulton asked how a pedestrian would exit the Twinbrook Metro station and proceed to the front entrance of the project, and Ms. Dhaliwal showed the pedestrian path on a slide. Commissioner Fulton asked if the Bus Rapid Transit would stop at the Metro station or remain on Rockville Pike, to which there was no answer given. He further asked if there was on-street parking at the site, and Ms. Dhaliwal stated that there will be parking on Thompson and Chapman Avenues. Commissioner Fulton also asked if dropoff and delivery spaces will be accommodated, and Ms. Dhaliwal responded that there will be spaces within the garage

Commissioner Salahuddin asked how long the Kiss-and-Ride lot operations will not be operational, and Ms. Dhaliwal answered that they are continuing to discuss it with WMATA.

Commissioner Sun asked how many EV (electric vehicle) spaces are in the project and where are they located, and Ms. Dhaliwal responded that ten percent of the garage spaces are EV compatible, and that they will decide when to bring them online based on customer demand.

Chair Espinosa outlined procedures for public testimony and called for anyone who wished to testify to come forward.

Susie Tartarian, co-owner of 1830 Chapman Avenue, testified that they are pleased that the project is moving forward. She is concerned that the new building is to be built against her building and that the new building should be supported on both sides so as to not disrupt their auto repair business. She is also concerned about where water coming off the ten-story building will go since it will be adjacent to her building. She would like to see the transformers shown close to the property line to be relocated. She is concerned about the drop-off space on the street will be lost since vehicles making deliveries to their property use it.

Kevork Tartarian, co-owner of 1830 Chapman Avenue, wants to see how the public parking will be configured, and is concerned about the potential loss of the drop-off space and balconies that may be located on the new building.

Chair Espinosa asked if anyone online wished to speak, and no one spoke up.

Chair Espinosa pointed out that Chapman Avenue had previously been a quiet street but that now it will become much busier as more development occurs. He stated that the city and the commission should consider potential calming measures on the street as new businesses open.

Commissioner Salahuddin stated that he thought that a lot of the pedestrian improvements were a step in the right direction to address these concerns. Commissioner Pitman supported the comments, noting that there are long term implications for the Twinbrook Metro area.

Chair Espinosa pointed out that this area will become an attraction with Wegman's and Go Fresh coming, which is different from the live/work/play model that was previously considered.

Commissioner Sun asked if visitors can use the Metro station parking lots. Mr. Ortiz responded that the development is not intending to use any of those spaces, as all of its parking is proposed, and noted that the Mayor and Council granted a 28 percent parking criteria along with the project plan so it is not expected that the Metro station parking will be needed to meet the needs of this development.

Commissioner Fulton asked if this project had submitted a review of parking utilization during the project plan phased, and Ms. Dhlopolsky noted that they had. Commissioner Sun noted that the spaces could be utilized at night or on weekends.

Ms. Dlohpolsky responded to the public testimony, noting that there will be no public parking spaces along Thompson Avenue and only short-term spaces on Chapman Avenue, once the development is complete. She also stated that water runoff from the project will be handled on-site. No part of the building will overhang the property line on the project.

Mr. Wasilak swore in Faramarz Mokhtari, Transportation Engineer, with the city, who added that weekend parking at the Metro station is free.

Commissioner Salahuddin moved, seconded by Commissioner Pitman, to approve Site Plan STP2022-00436, subject to the findings and conditions in the staff report. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Annexation Petition ANX2023-00147 – For review of the preliminary annexation plan for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Agency (WMATA)-owned Shady Grove Metro station properties and a portion of the CSX Transportation, Inc. property; and to set the Planning Commission Public Hearing Date

Mr. Wasilak introduced Research Manager Manisha Tewari, who presented the proposed Annexation Plan, which outlines how the property will be served by public utilities and what zoning is proposed for the property. She noted that the Municipal Growth Element of the Rockville 2040 Plan identified certain areas where the city would be proactive in considering annexations. The

Mayor and Council introduced the annexation of the WMATA and CSX properties at Shady Grove in October 2023. Municipalities may initiate an annexation for properties that are tax exempt, without obtaining the consent of the owners, which applies to WMATA. The CSX property is not tax exempt, and the city has obtained the consent of the owners.

The Planning Commission's role is to prepare the annexation plan that is required by the state, finding that the annexation may be served adequately by public facilities and including a recommendation for zoning. The annexation plan recommends that the property be located in the MXTD Zone, which is intended for high-density, transit-oriented development. Staff recommends that the Commission hold a public hearing on the annexation on March 26.

Chair Espinosa asked if the annexation had come before the current Mayor and Council, and Ms. Tewari answered that it was the previous Mayor and Council that initiated the annexation. He asked what is possible to happen in this area, and Ms. Tewari answered that the location is very oriented toward transit, which provides opportunities for housing and intense mixed-use development. The city's interest would be to work with WMATA to facilitate such development on the property.

Commissioner Fulton asked about water and sewer capacity, and would upgrades need to occur if new development would be approved. Jim Lapping, engineering supervisor, answered that WSSC, who is the provider for the property, would require the developer to improve the sewer and water systems to accommodate new development.

Commissioner Pitman asked if there is enough revenue from what exists now to sustain the facilities. Ms. Tewari responded that the Mayor and Council have asked that a Fiscal Impact Analysis occur. She noted the city of Gaithersburg could annex the property, and the city would lose out on the revenue. Commissioner Salahuddin confirmed with Ms. Tewari that the property will involve all costs and no revenue

Commissioner Sun asked how the Metro station parking will be provided, and Ms. Tewari answered that typically it would be provided in structures as new development occurs. Mr. Wasilak added that WMATA requires that there be no net loss of parking spaces serving the station itself, and likely would require that dedicated parking garages be built as development occurs on their property. Commissioner Sun stated that she hoped that the new parking garages would be integrated into the future development on the property, and that building heights may need to be increased to accommodate this.

Commissioner Pitman noted that annexation would provide a bus link to Baltimore Washington Thurgood Marshall International Airport (BWI) within the city.

Commissioner Pitman moved, seconded by Commissioner Fulton, to recommend approval of the proposed annexation plan for the Shady Grove Metro station, and that the public hearing date be set. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Espinosa noted that he will probably be remote for the March 26 meeting, and that it might make sense for someone else to chair the public hearing. Commissioner Pitman stated that she might

have a conflict on March 26. With a quorum to be present, the Commission agreed to set the hearing for March 26.

II. COMMISSION ITEMS

- A. Staff Liaison Report** – Mr. Wasilak noted that the next Planning Commission meeting would be on March 12, and that a zoning text amendment that implements the recently adopted Town Center Master Plan via floating zones was authorized by the Mayor and Council and would be on the March 12 agenda for recommendation. There will also be a project plan briefing on the proposal to convert ground floor retail at the Boulevard Ansel building to residential and possibly several record plats. Looking ahead to the March 26 meeting, there is a parking waiver application for the Best Western Hotel on West Montgomery Avenue. Mr. Wasilak also noted that there will be work sessions on the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite at upcoming meetings, as the first work session with the Mayor and Council on rezonings was held on January 27, and there will be another covering the development review process (FAST 2) on March 3.
- B. Old Business** – Commissioner Pitman asked if the recommendation memo from the last meeting had been transmitted, and Mr. Wasilak responded that he would be sending it to the Chair the next day.
- C. New Business** – None.
- D. Minutes Approval** – None.
- E. FYI/Correspondence** – None.

III. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, Commissioner Salahuddin moved, seconded by Commissioner Fulton, that the meeting be adjourned at 8:40 p.m. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Commission Liaison