

Submitted April 8, 2025

Approved April 9, 2025

**MINUTES OF THE ROCKVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING NO. 3-2025
Wednesday, March 12, 2025**

The City of Rockville Planning Commission convened in regular session at City Hall and virtually via WebEx at 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, March 12, 2025

PRESENT

Jaime Espinosa - Chair

Eric Fulton

Suzan Pitman
Meng Sun

Absent: Shayan Salahuddin

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
Christopher Davis, Senior 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.

I. BRIEFING

A. Briefing on Project Plan PJT2025-00020, to Amend the Planned Development for Rockville Center, Inc. to Permit a Residential Conversion of 13,011 Square Feet of Previously Approved Street-Level Commercial Retail Space into 13 Dwelling Units at 198 East Montgomery Avenue in the PD-RCI (Planned Development - Rockville Center, Inc.) Zone; Comstock 33 Monroe, LC, Applicants

Mr. Wasilak reminded the Commission that a briefing is an opportunity for the Commission to become familiar with the proposal and ask questions as needed. Approval of a project plan is required to amend a Planned Development.

Christopher Davis made a brief staff presentation, describing the project and review process. He noted that 13,01 square feet of retail are proposed to be converted to residential units along Monroe Street, Middle Lane and Helen Heneghan Way, while 6,000 square feet along East Montgomery Avenue will remain designated for retail use.

Nancy Regelin of Shulman Rogers representing applicant Comstock, presented the project on behalf of the applicant. She outlined the history of the development and described the application. She

noted that the parking spaces within the building will be reallocated based on the uses in the building. She explained that both property owners have been actively marketing the retail space, but with no success. She noted that a Urban Land Institute (ULI) study had shown that the Town Center has too much retail space, and recommended that retail be focused along the retail spine of Maryland and East Montgomery avenues. In addition, the space is at a disadvantage by not having been previously occupied and built out, so more tenant fit-out is required when compared to other spaces.

Ms. Regelin noted that the unit design has been refined to include 1 1-bedroom unit, 1 3-bedroom unit and 11 2-bedroom units. She noted that the building provides for storefront and amenity zones along the building frontages, allowing that the unit entrances will not be directly on the public sidewalk.

Ms. Regelin outlined the approval process, expecting that the application will be back in front of the Commission for a recommendation in the Spring, with site plan approval following later.

Chair Espinosa asked what the site was missing in terms of a “walk score”, and Ms. Regelin responded that it is over 95 on a scale of 100, although she is not sure what is missing.

Commissioner Sun appreciated the creative solutions in designing the residential lofts, but questioned how noise would be mitigated. Ms. Regelin answered that the units would meet the interior noise standard required by Montgomery County. Commissioner Sun asked is a buffer could be applied along East Middle Lane, as there will be no privacy for the unit entrances. Ms. Regelin answered that each doorway will be inset to increase separation from pedestrian traffic. There could be a discussion of this detail at site plan.

Commissioner Pitman agreed and stated that there should be landscaping that makes the unit entrances appear more residential rather than like storefronts.

Commissioner Fulton also agreed, expressing appreciation for the stoops to be provided. He expressed concern that converting these building frontages to residential will provide less of a pleasant pedestrian experience in this area. He then asked why there is now only one three-bedroom unit. Ms. Regelin responded that the 2-bedroom units fit best into the space available.

II. REVIEW AND ACTION

- A. Final Record Plats PLT2025-00627, PLT2025-00628, PLT2025-00629 and PLT2025-00630**, for the creation of Record Lots, HOA Parcels, and Dedication of Public Rights-of-Way in conformance with Project Plan PJT2023-00015 and Level 2 Site Plan STP2024-00473, Tower Preserve, in the PD-TO (Planned Development-Tower Oaks) Zone at 2200 Tower Oaks Boulevard; Streetscape Partners/Michael Harris Development, Applicant

Mr. Wasilak swore in Nelson Ortiz, who presented the staff report for the plats, which implement the 82 townhouses previously approved as part of the Tower Preserve project.

Commissioner Fulton moved, seconded by Commissioner Pitman, to approve Final Record Plat applications PLT2025-00627, PLT2025-00628, PLT2025-00629 and PLT2025-00630, subject to recommended conditions in the staff report. The motion passed unanimously.

III. RECOMMENDATION TO THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL

A. Zoning Text Amendment TXT2025-00269, to Implement Certain Zoning Recommendations of the Town Center Master Plan, Including Implementation of Floating Zones; Mayor and Council of Rockville, Applicant

Mr. Wasilak presented the staff report, outlining the content of the amendment and the staff recommendation of approval of the ZTA as written.

Commissioner Sun asked what kind of public benefits could be offered or accepted, and Mr. Wasilak answered that it could be additional open space or other site features that exceed code requirements.

Commissioner Fulton moved, seconded by Commission Sun, to recommend approval of Zoning Text Amendment TXT2025-00269, for implementation of certain zoning recommendations of the Town Center Master Plan. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. COMMISSION ITEMS

A. Staff Liaison Report – Mr. Wasilak noted that the next Planning Commission meeting would be on March 26, with two items scheduled, including the public hearing on the Shady Grove Metro Station annexation plan and a parking waiver at 1251 West Montgomery Avenue.

The next meeting will be on April 9 and will include a briefing on the Planned Development amendment for the building at 255 Rockville Pike. The applicant is proposing residential use on top of the existing garage.

Mr. Wasilak informed the Commission about Veronica Mitchell, who is the Board and Commission coordinator. She has formalized the reporting requirements for all boards, and the Commission has been scheduled for a June meeting to present the annual report. He also noted that it has been clarified that communication to the Mayor and Council from all boards and commissions should go the staff liaison, and then to the Department Head and the City Manager for communication to the Mayor and Council.

Chair Espinosa confirmed that he is available to present the report on June 16. He further noted that he will be remote at the next meeting and would like a member that is in person to conduct the public hearing. Commissioner Pitman said she may not be at the next meeting, but Commissioners Sun and Fulton will be. The chair will designate a member to conduct the public hearing at the next meeting.

B. Old Business – None.

C. New Business – None.

D. Minutes Approval – None.

E. FYI/Correspondence – None.

V. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, Commissioner Pitman moved, seconded by Commissioner Sun, that the meeting be adjourned at 7:49 p.m. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Commission Liaison