



Garrett County Government Department of Community Development Planning & Land Management Division

203 South Fourth Street, Room 208, Oakland, Maryland 21550

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Garrett County Planning Commission Minutes August 6, 2025

1. **Call to Order**- Tony Doerr called the regular meeting of the Garrett County Planning Commission to order at 1:30 pm on August 6, 2025, in the County Commissioners Meeting Room in the Garrett County Courthouse.
2. **Attendance**- Planning Commission members: Tony Doerr, Tim Schwinabart, Larry Tichnell, Jeff Conner, Julie Friend, Jeff Messenger and Bruce Swift. Planning staff: Chad Fike & Eli Helbig.
3. **Approval of Minutes**- The previous meeting minutes were approved as presented.
4. **Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Appeals Cases**-
 - **SE-517** - an application submitted by Steptoe & Johnson PLLC c/o PIVOT Energy Development LLC & Randall Harvey, for a Special Exception for a Community Solar Energy Generating System. The property is located at 136 Paradise Point Road, Oakland, MD 21550, tax map 66, parcel 58, Grid 9 and is zoned Lake Residential 2. The Commission discussed the potential negative impacts this solar system would have due to its high level of visibility. Mr. Fike explained that the State's Renewable Energy Certainty Act that became effective July 1, 2025, prohibits local jurisdictions from adopting zoning laws that prohibit the construction or operation of solar energy generating stations and requires such projects to be treated as a permitted use. Mr. Fike stated that he did not believe the Board of Appeals could deny the Special Exception and that their ability to place conditions on the use would be limited at best. He stated that he would discuss with the County Attorney to determine the Board's role and how to proceed with the hearing. After discussion, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend that the request be tabled by the Zoning Board of Appeals for 60 days contingent on receiving a legal opinion.
 - **VR-845** – an application submitted by Hugh Umbel for a Variance to allow the construction of a new single-family residence to within 1' 3" of the rear property line. The property is located at 964 Rock Lodge Road, McHenry, MD 21541, tax map 50, parcel 348, grid 21 and is zoned Lake Residential 1. The Planning Commission discussed but did not offer a formal opinion.
5. **Major Subdivisions**:
 - **McHenry Business Park Lot 3**- The Garrett County Commissioners submitted a Preliminary & Final Plat of one commercial lot on their property (Tax Map 42, Parcel 521) located along Business Park Drive in an Employment Center Land Classification. The Planning Commission voted unanimously to approve the application contingent on all proper approvals being added to the plat.
6. **Adjournment** – Chairman Tony Doerr adjourned the meeting at 2:17 pm.

Minutes submitted by Chad Fike, Assistant Director