

**WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – December 4, 2025**

Meeting Date: December 4, 2025

Time: 1:00 P.M.

Location: Worcester County Government Office Building, Room 1102

Attendance:

Planning Commission

Jerry Barbierri, Chair
Phyllis Wimbrow, Vice Chair
Marlene Ott
Kathy Drew
Mary Knight
Ken Church
Betty Smith

Staff

Jennifer Keener, Director, DRP
Matt Laick, Deputy Director, DRP
Kristen Tremblay, Zoning Administrator, DRP

I. Call to Order

II. Administrative Matters

A. Review and approval of minutes, November 6, 2025.

As the first item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the minutes of the November 6, 2025, meeting.

Following the review, a motion was made by Ms. Drew to approve the minutes as written. Ms. Ott seconded the motion, and the motion carried with no opposition. Ms. Wimbrow abstained from the vote.

B. Board of Appeals Agenda, December 11, 2025.

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the agenda for the Board of Zoning Appeals meeting scheduled for December 11, 2025. Ms. Tremblay was present for the review to answer questions and address concerns of the Planning Commission.

No comments were forwarded to the Board.

C. Technical Review Committee Agenda, December 10, 2025.

As the next item of business, the Planning Commission reviewed the agenda for the Technical Review Committee meeting scheduled for December 10, 2025. Ms. Tremblay was present for the review to answer questions and address concerns of the Planning Commission.

No comments were forwarded to the Committee.

III. Site Plan Review

A. Coastal Community Church – Major Site Plan Review

**WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – December 4, 2025**

Mr. Robert Palmer, Ms. Teresa Vickers, and Mr. Bryan Pugner approached the table. Mr. Palmer provided an overview of the history of the site, and the proposed site plan and building. Mr. Palmer provided an overview of the waivers that he was requesting from the *Design Guidelines and Standards for Commercial Uses*. Mr. Palmer also provided an overview of the waiver he was requesting from §ZS 1-320(f)(1) that requires all parking and vehicular travelways to be constructed of materials that provide a hard and durable surface that precludes or limits particulate air pollution.

Following a discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Knight to approve the site plan as submitted, and to grant a waiver to §ZS 1-320(f)(1) for the proposed gravel parking areas. Ms. Ott seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Following a discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Wimbrow to grant a waiver to the Section 8(b)(1) and 8(b)(2) of the *Design Guidelines and Standards for Commercial Uses*. Ms. Ott seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Following a discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Church to grant a waiver to the Section 10(b)(1)(C) of the *Design Guidelines and Standards for Commercial Uses*. Ms. Knight seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Racetrack Village Residential Planned Community – Step I Concept Plan

Mr. Hugh Cropper, IV, Mr. Steve Engel, Mr. Carl Wilson, and Mr. Wayne Getman approached the table. Mr. Cropper provided an overview of the site plan, as well as an overview of the recent rezoning case of this property.

Mr. Engel provided more details on the site plan, and Mr. Wilson provided more details on the traffic light at the intersection, as well as the applicant's traffic study and the RPC's impact on traffic.

Mr. Barbierrri inquired about the lack of a commercial component within the applicant's traffic impact study. Mr. Wilson stated that even with the commercial component, the analysis and study still showed the development would have a negligible impact on traffic in the area. Mr. Wilson also stated that an all-commercial development (as had been previously intended) would generate significantly more traffic than the current proposed development.

Ms. Ott inquired about the lack of parking shown on the commercial component on the site plan. Mr. Engel clarified that the area does include parking spaces and that future plans will show the commercial parking.

Ms. Ott also inquired about the one (1) proposed single-family dwelling. Mr. Engel and Mr. Cropper confirmed that the single-family unit will be a townhouse and that it will not be separate from the rest of the units.

Following a discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Wimbrow to forward a favorable recommendation of the Racetrack Village RPC to the County Commissioners and to accept

**WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – December 4, 2025**

the Technical Review Committee’s Findings of Fact. Mr. Church seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

IV. Map Amendment

A. Rezoning Case No. 452 – 1.66 acres from A-2 Agricultural District to C-2 General Commercial District. Located between MD Route 611 (Stephen Decatur Highway) and Sinepuxent Road, Ocean City, MD across from Airport Road. Tax Map 26, Parcel 340, Tax District 10. KASA Holdings, LLC, Property Owner, and Hugh Cropper IV, attorney.

Applicants: Hugh Cropper, IV, attorney; Aaron Finney, managing member, KASA Holdings, LLC; and Steve Engel, Vista Design, Inc.

Mr. Cropper explained that the parcel is approximately 1.66 acres in size and has been zoned agricultural since the inception of zoning. In 1987, Rezoning Case No. 239 was denied for a requested change in zoning to B-2 General Business District. The petitioned area is located between MD Route 611 and Sinepuxent Road. In his application, Mr. Cropper argued both a change in the character of the neighborhood and a mistake was made during the 2009 Comprehensive Rezoning.

On the argument of mistake, Mr. Cropper stated that there is limited to no on-site septic capacity in the petitioned area. In addition, Mr. Cropper filed a request for an EDU in the Mystic Harbour sanitary service area and was denied. Therefore, the owner needs to find a use that requires very little or no sewer at all. In his opinion, commercial zoning would be more appropriate. He argued that it was illogical that the petitioned area was not rezoned commercial at the same time the parcel to the north (Parcel 211, Rezoning Case No. 405) was rezoned to C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District in 2017. However, Mr. Cropper opines that it should have been C-2 General Commercial District, because the owner has been unable to develop the property under the current C-1 District regulations.

Mr. Cropper stated that the petitioned area is currently taxed as Residential on the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation Real Property sheet, despite the urban area. With respect to the proximity of the property to the municipal airport, the Town of Ocean City has provided a letter of no objection, subject to recording an avigation easement that limits the overall height of the development.

Regarding the change in the character of the neighborhood, Mr. Cropper stated that while he defined the neighborhood in Exhibit B, Mr. Engel suggests that the neighborhood is much larger, consistent with Rezoning Case No. 449 but inclusive of the petitioned area as shown on Exhibit B. The amended neighborhood was proffered for the Planning Commission’s consideration. Mr. Engel stated that there have been significant changes in the neighborhood, including rezoning cases that have expanded the residential development capacity of the area and the assignment of Mystic Harbour EDUs to the Sea Oaks property, allowing significant residential development, all of which were not contemplated in 2009. Additionally, on

WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – December 4, 2025

December 2, 2025, the Worcester County Commissioners approved a request to extend the West Ocean City sanitary service area to Parcel 274 north of Sea Oaks, which may allow additional EDUs to be allocated from the Mystic Harbor plant in the future.

Relative to consistency with the comprehensive plan and the current zoning, Mr. Engel finds a commercial district more consistent and has a poor opinion of the C-1 District in general due to the limited uses. Therefore, the C-2 District is more appropriate for the petitioned area. Mr. Cropper also stated that the 2006 comprehensive plan provided a broad brush approach to land use and that the petitioned area is in a transitional area, with Green Infrastructure to the west, and Existing Developed Area (EDA) to the northeast.

Relating to the argument of mistake, Mr. Cropper noted that if it is not a complete taking but it is a mistake, there must be consistency with the comprehensive plan. He argued that it was close to a complete taking because of the limited uses. Agricultural zoning requires five acres for agricultural structures; they could build a single-family dwelling. He stated that commercial use would be more consistent than a single-family dwelling. The zoning on Parcel 211 to the north was found to be a mistake, and if the Planning Commission agreed there, then this request is more desirable in terms of the comprehensive plan. It is an appropriate area to transition the zoning to commercial.

Relative to the Findings of Fact for Rezoning Case No. 239 (1988) when the prior rezoning to B-2 District was denied, Mr. Cropper noted that the neighborhood was more consistent with low density residential or agricultural, and it currently abuts commercial zoning on two sides. He contends that this area is nothing like what it was in 1988. Now, sewer service has been provided to the neighborhood, and recent amendments have expanded the West Ocean City sanitary service area closer to the petitioned area. In addition, the Town of Ocean City and the Worcester County Commissioners agreed to allocate an additional 170,000 gallons per day of sewer from the Town of Ocean City.

In summary, Mr. Cropper stated that the zoning of these parcels was not the subject of focus in 2009. The airport has expanded (a change in the neighborhood), the petitioned area is not appropriate for a single-family dwelling, and 95% of the A-1 District uses would be unable to be developed on the petitioned area. The expansion of sanitary service areas, the sewer allocation from the Town of Ocean City, and the multiple rezonings within the neighborhood resulting in hundreds of new residential dwelling units all support the argument for a change in the character of the neighborhood and mistake.


The Planning Commission discussed uses such as roadside stands that could be built on the petitioned area (40,000 square foot lot area) without requiring a significant building envelope. While a rezoning application cannot consider the desired use of the property, rather all potential uses that could be feasible, Mr. Finney is interested in building an office for his business. In summary, to zone a piece of property that could not be used for 95% of the permitted uses is a mistake and second, there have been extensive changes in the character of the neighborhood.

**WORCESTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – December 4, 2025**

The Planning Commission reviewed and commented upon each of the findings. **Following the discussion, a motion was made by Mrs. Knight, seconded by Mr. Church, and carried 5 to 2 with Mr. Barbierri and Mrs. Wimbrow opposed, to find the proposed amendment to rezone the petitioned area from A-2 Agricultural District to C-2 General Commercial District consistent with the Comprehensive Plan based on a change in the character of the neighborhood, but not a mistake, and forward a favorable recommendation to the Worcester County Commissioners.**

V. Adjourn

On a motion made by Ms. Knight and seconded by Ms. Ott, the Planning Commission adjourned.



Mary Knight, Secretary



Ben Zito, DRP Specialist

