

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: David J. Deutsch
City Manager

SUBJECT: *Status Report*

DATE: November 20, 2014

1. Green Team November Events

The Green Team recently hosted two well-attended events. On Saturday, November 15th, two speakers from the University of Maryland Extension, Nicolas Tardif and Donna Koczaja, presented at City Hall about ways to preserve freshly grown food by using freezing, canning, and drying methods. There were 23 attendees. On Sunday, November 16th, the third Weed Warrior event of this fiscal year was held at Whitemarsh Park. There were 20 volunteers that participated in cutting English ivy that afternoon, and for FY15, a total of 33 volunteers that have participated.

2. Planning Board Results - Melford Conceptual Site Plan

On Thursday, November 13th the Prince George's County Planning Board voted unanimously to approve the revision to Conceptual Site Plan CSP-06002 for Melford Village. The Mayor, City Manager and Planning Director spoke on behalf of the City in favor of the proposal. The President of the Greater Bowie Chamber of Commerce and four others also spoke in support. Several people spoke against the proposal, including representatives of Sherwood Manor and the Patuxent Riverkeeper. The City Council's conditions were addressed in the M-NCPPC staff report; two of the five City recommended conditions were adopted by the Planning Board, and two others were incorporated into the Board's findings. The Planning Board agreed with their staff that the development agreement to provide workforce and affordable senior housing, recommended by the City, is a matter between St. John Properties and the City, and no Planning Board condition was necessary. Commissioner Washington moved approval of CSP-06002/01, with the revised conditions proposed by the applicant and recommended by M-NCPPC staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Geraldo and passed unanimously, 4-0. (Chair Betty Hewlett left the hearing room and did not participate because she was previously employed by the law firm representing St. John Properties.)

3. Prince George's County Municipal Association Meeting

Last Thursday, the City's Lobbyist and Planning Director were invited to attend the monthly meeting of the Prince George's County Municipal Association (PGCMA) to discuss proposed land use legislation. The PGCMA agenda included presentation of

Smart Energy Community awards to several municipalities by the Maryland Energy Administration, an overview of the benefits resulting from the PEPSCO/Exelon merger (a partnership already exists with PGCMA), and a vote on legislative priorities for the coming year. The PGCMA voted to support the following priorities: (1) Tax Differential; (2) Increased Land Use and Zoning Authority; and (3) WSSC Coordination.

The City's Lobbyist and Planning Director were asked to make a brief presentation on specific land use legislation now being considered. Planning Director Joe Meinert explained that the City had recommended a new concept during the County's hearings on Plan Prince George's 2035. The recommendation was that the governing bodies of municipalities in Prince George's County should be given the option of performing the planning and zoning functions of the County Planning Board within their jurisdictions. The District Council would continue to have oversight of the process, and municipalities could decide on their own how much of the responsibility they would want to accept. The main principle is that municipalities are an integral part of the County and would function in partnership with the County in a new era of cooperation relative to development decisions. He noted that two bills are being drafted, one that adds Detailed Site Plans, Specific Design Plans and Conceptual Site Plans to the current list of delegated items, but then removes the delegation requirement, and one that establishes formal provisions for the governing body of a municipality to assume the planning and zoning responsibilities of the Planning Board, while retaining the current delegated functions as a continuing option.

Following the briefing, concerns were expressed by two PGCMA members. The first was a concern about a neighboring municipality making development decisions that were not supported by their municipality. (It was pointed out that the District Council still has oversight, so there is recourse, as there is today, under the proposed process.) A second concern was that some smaller municipalities might not be able to afford to take on the responsibility and hire their own staff. (It was pointed out that the enabling statute could be written in such a way that the Park and Planning Commission staff would provide this service, which would be paid for by taxes currently assessed by the Commission.) The City's Lobbyist announced the upcoming Delegation Hearing on December 16th and asked for PGCMA's support for the bills that are being drafted.