

CITY OF ABERDEEN

PLANNING COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT 2010



Prepared by the Aberdeen Planning Commission and the Director of Planning and Community Development for the City of Aberdeen for the period of January 2010 through December 2010.

This report was submitted on June 10, 2011.

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INTRODUCTION

The Annual Report of the Planning Commission is the document by which the Commission reviews its accomplishments during the year. The report presents the zoning and development activities that occurred during the 2010 calendar year. It highlights the major planning projects and issues considered by the Commission and is used to give guidance and direction for future programs relevant to the planning and development of the City. This year's Annual Report also includes Development Code amendments, reflects changes in development patterns, provides calendar year 2010 building permit activity, provides an overview of the City's infrastructure initiatives in 2010, and a map of zoning map amendments and all approved subdivision plats. Each of the City's initiatives in 2010 worked towards implementing the State visions for sustainable communities that protects the natural environment, directs growth, maintains and improves infrastructure, and involves citizens in all stages of the process. During the period of this report, the City did not have any restrictions on development in the designated Priority Funding Area.

The City of Aberdeen had a population of 14,959 in 2010 and is the largest municipality in Harford County. The City is served by an excellent transportation system including one interstate highway (I-95), MARC commuter rail service and AMTRAK passenger service, one federal highway (US 40) and five state highways (MD 22, MD 132, MD 462, MD 715, and MD 7). The City of Aberdeen functions as an independent municipality, supplying many services for its citizens. The City has its own zoning and planning authority, water and sewer services, fire, police and public works departments, senior activities, and recreation programs. Harford County provides schools, courts, additional police protection, health, recreation, and other community services.

PLANNING IN ABERDEEN

Legal Authority

The authority to plan for the City's development and to enact and enforce laws relating to land planning and zoning is derived from Article 66B – Land Use of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

Article 66B, §3.09 requires the Planning Commission to prepare, adopt, and file an annual report, on or before July 1 of each year for the previous calendar year, with the local legislative body.

Land use planning in Aberdeen is the responsibility of five official bodies: the City Council, the Department of Planning and Community Development, the Planning Commission, the Board of Appeals, and the Architectural Review Committee. The City

Council adopts the Comprehensive Plan, enacts legislation to ensure compliance with the Plan, adopts amendments to the Development Code and the Zoning Map, and funds capital improvements necessary to implement the Plan.

The Board of Appeals is comprised of 4 members and 1 alternate appointed by the City Council. The Board considers applications for special exceptions, variances, and interpretations from the Development Code and appeals from administrative decisions related to planning and zoning.

The Architectural Review Committee (ARC) is comprised of 5 members appointed by the City Council. The ARC reviews site, signage, and landscaping plans for development projects located in the two established overlay districts.

PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission is made up of 7 members who are appointed by the City Council for staggered five-year terms. The Commission elects a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson from its membership for terms of one year with eligibility for reelection. The Planning Commission is directly involved with all phases of the planning process.

The Planning Commission typically meets once a month on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m., in the City Council Chambers, 60 North Parke Street, Aberdeen. All meetings are open to the public and their agenda is posted on the City's website.

Certain powers and duties of the Planning Commission are mandated by Article 66B. The Commission is required to prepare and approve a Comprehensive Plan and recommend the Plan to the Council. The Commission reviews and approves recommendations to the Council for all preliminary site plans, preliminary and final subdivision plats, text amendments to the Aberdeen Development Code, annexations and rezonings, changes or amendments to the Subdivision Regulations, and changes in land use or development arising from local, State, or Federal programs or policies. The Commission is required to file an Annual Report on its activities with the Mayor and Council and the Maryland Secretary of Planning. This report fulfills that requirement.

The Commission members have completed the required Maryland Department of Planning – Planning Commission/Planning Board Education Course. Several members also attended the annual meeting for the Maryland Citizens Planning Association.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

Zoning Map Amendments

The Commission reviewed the following Zoning Map amendments and recommended approval to the City Council. These amendments were subsequently approved by the City Council:

Property Location	Tax Map #	Parcel #	Prior Zoning	New Zoning	Ordinance #	Date Effective
Lot off MD 22 and Old Post Road	204	2280	B-1	B-3	09-O-05	1/3/10
910 Old Philadelphia Road	58	505	M-1	B-3	09-O-05	1/3/10
Lot off Beards Hill Road	202	2864	B-3 & R-2	B-3	10-O-01	3/28/10

Development Code Amendments

The Commission reviewed the following Development Code amendments and recommended approval to the City Council:

Amendment to the Parking Requirements for Multi-family apartments/condos – 1 bedroom: 1.5 parking spaces; 2 bedrooms: 2 spaces; for each bedroom over 2: 1 space per additional bedroom.

Amendment to the Parking Requirements for Nightclubs, lounges, bars, and taverns – 1 per 3 persons permitted under the State Fire Code.

Amendment to the Parking Requirements for Shopping Center – under 400,000 square feet: 4 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet; 400,000 to 599,000 square feet: 4.5 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet; 600,000 square feet and above: 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet.

Amendment to the Definitions Section and Appendix A – Use Tables to provide for fortune telling uses in a certain zoning district as a special exception.

Amendment to the Definitions Section and Appendix A – Use Tables to provide for auction house uses in certain zoning districts as a special exception and principal permitted use.

Development Reviews and Actions by the Planning Commission

The Commission conducted its regular review of subdivision plats, site plans, and annexation requests. The Commission and staff reviewed these requests and insured that compliance with the Aberdeen Development Code, Comprehensive Plan, and Subdivision Regulations was achieved.

These reviews resulted in the following recommendations for approval:

1. Preliminary Site Plan for Normandy Woods and Variance request from the Subdivision Regulations. This project is located off Schofield Road on Tax Map 207; Parcels 578, 579, 582, and 2846; acreage of tract is 4.777 acres; 31 townhouses and 1 single family dwelling proposed. The preliminary site plan was withdrawn by the developers/owners of the property.
2. Final Subdivision Plat Three for North Gate Business Park. This project is located off Research Boulevard on Tax Map 59; Parcel 5; acreage of tract is 23.8914 acres; 3 commercial lots proposed. City Council approved the subdivision plat on 2/22/10.
3. Final Subdivision Plats for the Aberdeen Corporate Park. This project is located off McHenry Road on Tax Map 202; Parcel 620; acreage of tract is 35.633 acres; 1 commercial lot and 1 residential lot proposed. City Council approved the subdivision plat on 3/22/10.
4. Revised Final Subdivision Plats 1-7 for Eagles Rest. This project is located off Aldino-Stepney Road on Tax Map 51; Parcel 97; acreage of tract is 59.04 acres; 132 single family residential lots proposed. City Council approved the subdivision plat on 3/22/10.
5. Final Subdivision Plat for the Lands of CSX Transportation, Inc. This project is located off West Bel Air Avenue on Tax Map 205; Parcel 100; acreage of tract is 0.3214 acres; 1 commercial lot proposed. City Council approved the subdivision plat on 4/12/10.
6. Preliminary Site Plan for Winston's Choice Addition. This project is located off Taft Street on Tax Map 204; Parcel 2154; acreage of tract is 2.86 acres; 22 townhouse lots proposed. City Council approved the site plan on 4/26/10.
7. Preliminary Site Plan for Lots 2 and 2C, Bevoir Partnership. This project is located off US 40 on Tax Map 203; Parcel 2870; acreage of tract is 4.854 acres; 24,800 square feet of office space proposed. City Council approved the site plan on 5/10/10.
8. Preliminary Subdivision Plat for Mt. Royal Crossing. This project is located off Mt. Royal Avenue on Tax Map 202; Parcel 2765; acreage of tract is 0.6489 acres; 3 single family residential lots proposed. City Council approved the subdivision plat on 5/10/10.

9. Revised Final Subdivision Plat for Lots 1A, 1B, and 7 of Beards Hill Park. This project is located off Beards Hill Road on Tax Map 200; Parcels 625, 2817, and 526; acreage of tract is 8.083 acres; 5 commercial lots proposed. City Council approved the subdivision plat on 6/14/10.
10. Preliminary Site Plan for the Holiday Inn Express. This project is located off Beards Hill Road on Tax Map 200; Parcel 625; acreage of tract is 1.123 acres; 80 room hotel proposed. City Council approved the site plan on 6/14/10.
11. Final Subdivision Plat for Mt. Royal Crossing. This project is located off Mt. Royal Avenue on Tax Map 202; Parcel 2765; acreage of tract is 0.6489 acres; 3 single family residential lots proposed. City Council approved the subdivision plat on 8/9/10.
12. Preliminary Subdivision Plat for Beards Hill Plaza, Lot 9. This project is located off Beards Hill Road on Tax Map 200; Parcel 2766; acreage of tract is 1.74 acres; 1 commercial lot proposed. City Council approved the subdivision plat on 9/27/10.
13. Petition for Annexation of Dumas LLC recommended for annexation with B-3 zoning. No further action has been taken on the annexation.
14. Petition for Annexation of Aberdeen Technology Campus LLC recommended for annexation with IBD zoning. City Council is reviewing conditions of an annexation agreement.
15. Preliminary Site Plan for Filling Station at Beards Hill Plaza, Lot 1. This project is located off Beards Hill Road on Tax Map 200; Parcel 2766; acreage of tract is 26.57 acres; proposed use is an 8 pump filling station. City Council approved the site plan on 9/27/10.
16. Preliminary Subdivision Plat for 471 Paradise Road. This project is located off Paradise Road on Tax Map 202; Parcels 361 and 362; acreage of tract is 2.1719 acres; 2 single family residential lots proposed. City Council approved the subdivision plat on 9/27/10.
17. Preliminary Site Plan for Cook Automotive, Lot 7, Hardees Industrial Park. This project is located off Hardee's Drive on Tax Map 58; Parcel 110; acreage of tract is 1.7239 acres; 18,000 square foot office building proposed. City Council approved the site plan on 1/31/11.
18. Final Subdivision Plat for Land of Harford Habitat for Humanity, Inc. at Baltimore Street extended. This project is located off Baltimore Street extended on Tax Map 206; Parcel 1169; acreage of tract is 0.337 acres; 2 residential lots proposed. City Council approved the subdivision plat on 2/28/11.
19. Petition for Annexation for Presbyterian Homes of Maryland, Inc. recommended for annexation with IBD zoning. No action has been taken on the annexation.
20. Final subdivision plat for the Land Exchange between City of Aberdeen and COPT Aberdeen LLC. This project is located off MD 22 on Tax Map 204; Parcel 2170; acreage of tract is 5.7132 acres; land exchange proposed. City Council approved the subdivision plat on 7/12/10.

OTHER WORK EFFORTS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

The Commission and Department of Planning and Community Development staff began drafting the update to the 2002 Comprehensive Plan in 2008. The Water Resource Element and Municipal Growth Element chapters of the Plan required additional review time to ensure that the information that was provided was adequate to meet the requirements of HB 1141. In October 2010, the Department forwarded the final draft Comprehensive Plan to the Maryland Department of Planning and Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning for the required 60-day review period. The comments from both agencies were considered and incorporated in the Plan. The Commission approved the 2011 Comprehensive Plan at their 4/13/11 meeting and forwarded it to the City Council. The City Council is scheduled to approve the 2011 Comprehensive Plan at their meeting on 6/13/11.

The Commission has reviewed and incorporated changes and sectional map amendments to the Zoning Map adopted in July 2005. The majority of zoning changes occurred in 2006, 2009, and 2010. Please refer to the specific zoning changes cited on Page 5 of this report. The 2011 Zoning Map will be approved by the City Council in the summer of 2011.

The Commission began reviewing proposed amendments to the 1977 Subdivision Regulations. The status of the 2011 Subdivision Regulations will be further discussed in the 2011 Annual Report of the Planning Commission.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN CHANGES IN 2010

City and Harford County officials worked together to provide a solution to the City's water capacity issues which had an impact on economic development and growth. In October 2009 the existing water purchase agreement was amended to provide a maximum of 0.9 million gallons per day (MGD) to the City to serve the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) related commercial and industrial development within the corporate limits. An additional 0.6 MGD is anticipated to be available for purchase from Harford County in the very near future, providing the City with a total of 1.5 MGD. With the added water capacity to its system, the City was able to approve new commercial development projects in 2009-2010.

The City has seen a change in development patterns due to the financial downturn in residential development and the increase in commercial activity. The BRAC growth at Aberdeen Proving Ground has increased the economic development activity in the City.

In calendar years 2009 and 2010, the City approved 1,791,000 square feet of office space and 33,066 square feet of retail space. Three notable commercial projects underway in 2010 were North Gate Business Park, Aberdeen Corporate Park, and Greenway Business Park.

ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES ORDINANCE (APFO)

New residential development projects in the City are subject to Chapter 302, Growth Management, in the Code of the City of Aberdeen. At this time, Chapter 302 only provides for adequate school capacity. Approvals for residential subdivision plans and site plans for development shall be subject to determination of adequate school capacity based on the current and projected use level described in the current Harford County Annual Growth Report.

Preliminary subdivision plans exceeding 5 lots and site plans for residential developments exceeding 5 dwelling units shall not be approved if: (1) the enrollment at the elementary school which serves the proposed development is greater than 115% of the rated capacity or is projected to be greater than 115% within 5 years or (2) the enrollment of either the middle school or high school which serves the site is greater than 115% of the rated capacity or is projected to be greater than 115% within 5 years. The approval of a plan shall be deferred and placed on a waiting list arranged by date of completion of the review by staff until such time as the enrollment of the affected school complies with the above requirements.

In 2010, the Commission reviewed 2 residential development projects that exceeded the 5 lot residential subdivision criteria. It was determined that the Normandy Woods townhouse development and the Eagles Rest single family development would have no impact on the school rated capacities in Aberdeen. In 2010 all of the schools in Aberdeen had adequate school capacity to accommodate new residential development within the corporate limits. No new schools or school additions were constructed within the corporate limits in 2010.

NEW BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED - 2010

Type of Construction	Number of Units or Square Footage (SF)	Acreage	Total Estimated Construction Costs
Residential – Single Family Dwellings	6	1.03	\$1,225,900
Residential – Duplex Dwellings	4	1.04	\$ 340,000
Residential – Townhouses	6	0.40	\$ 900,000
Commercial	313,311 SF (7)	60.32	\$24,645,000
Industrial	1,551 SF (3)	0.71	\$1,146,995

The City issued 10 residential Certificates of Use and Occupancy, 1 commercial Certificate of Use and Occupancy, and 2 industrial Certificates of Use and Occupancy. All building permits were issued within the corporate limits of Aberdeen which is a designated Priority Funding Area.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS – 2010

The City began infrastructure improvements to support the cleanup efforts of the Chesapeake Bay in the following areas:

- The City started construction on the Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR) project at the Aberdeen Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant in January 2010. The cost of the project is \$19,453,748. ENR is a requirement of the tributary strategy for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and aids in the cleanup efforts of the Bay. The ENR project is at a 43% completion stage and is a 24-month long project.
- The Aberdeen Department of Public Works (DPW) completed a street paving contract in 2010 which included the following streets and alleys: Baltimore Court, Grove Street, Emerson Streets, Botts Lane, Baldwin Lane, Morgan Alley, Post Road, L Alley between Norman and Smith, Mitchell Road, Smith Avenue, Williams Street, Ohio Court, and First Street. The total allocated to the street resurfacing project was \$373,325.44. In addition to the street paving project, our DPW completed 400 feet of sidewalk replacement.
- The City purchased land at the corner of Edmund Street and US 40 for the purpose of constructing a water booster station. The new water booster station will allow the City to increase its draw of Harford County water up to 1.1 MGD into the City's water system.
- The Swan Meadows Development is located in the southeast corner of the City between Aberdeen Proving Ground Road and East Bel Air Avenue. This development was constructed in the 1940s. Swan Meadows has various infrastructure problems, including a water system constructed primarily of transite pipe that experiences periodic breaks due to system pressures; a sanitary sewer system which has infiltration and inflow problems; a stormwater system with an aging piping network and swales that flood during storm events; and a road system that needs to be reconstructed due to deteriorating conditions. In July 2010, the City contracted with Arro Consulting, Inc. to prepare the Swan Meadows infrastructure improvement plans and a phasing plan for the proposed improvements. Anticipated improvements include water and sanitary sewer line replacement, curb and gutter replacement, storm sewer replacement, and road reconstruction. The estimated cost of this project is \$7,884,655. As funding becomes available, the City will begin the improvements to the infrastructure and correct the infiltration and inflow problems.
- The DPW contracted with S. Thomas Contracting to replace 1,000 ft. of 4-inch pipe with 8-inch pipe along Old Post Road.

All of the above referenced projects are located within a designated Priority Funding Area and several of the projects are located within the designated Aberdeen BRAC Enhancement and Revitalization Zone.

OTHER ORDINANCES IMPLEMENTED - 2010

The City Council adopted Ordinance No. 10-O-08, Stormwater Management, repealing Chapter 118 in the Code of the City of Aberdeen and replacing it with the most recent Maryland Department of the Environment model ordinance for new stormwater regulations.