Planning Commission
MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, June 15, 2023 - 1:00 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Approval of Minutes.**

   a. Approval of the Draft Decision Summary from the May 18, 2023 meeting.

3. **Old Business**

   a.

Applicant:	Brett Ewing - Lane Engineering, LLC
Owner:	5001 SHR, L.C.
Location:	Oxford Road - Poplar Hill
Nature of Request:	**The Applicant is requesting a continuance of the application to address all topics discussed at the May 18, 2023 Planning Commission meeting.**

4. **Discussion Item**

   a. Annual Report.

   b. Zoning Requirements for Adult-Use Cannabis Dispensaries.

5. **Adjournment.**

Town of Easton Planning Commission
Draft Decision Summary
Thursday, May 18, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.
Town Hall Chamber 2
14 S. Harrison Street, Easton

Archived video of the meeting is available at:
Town of Easton Agendas and Minutes (eastonmd.gov)

Attendance:

Commission Members:
Jennifer Dindinger, Chairperson
Philip Toussaint, Vice Chairperson
Victoria McAndrews
William Ryall
Paul Weber
Tom Klein, Alternate

Staff:
Miguel Salinas, Planning and Zoning Director
Lynn B. Thomas, Town Planner
Joseph Mayer, Plan Reviewer
Sharon Van Emburgh Esq, Town Attorney
Rick Van Emburgh, Town Engineer
Samantha Smith, Administrative Specialist

Absent:

Staff:
Nicholas Johnson, Planner

1. **Call to Order**—Chairperson Dindinger called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

2. **Decision Summary Review**—
   a. April 20, 2023- The Commission noted the following correction to the draft decision summary:

      i. Item 3a.: Review for accuracy of motions made.
      ii. Item 4e.: Correction to Applicant Presentation.
      iii. Item 5d.: Rephrasing for clarity and corrected date.

Commissioner Weber moved to approve the April 20, 2023 Decision Summary with amendments. Vice Chairperson Toussaint seconded the motion.

Vote	5-0
FOR:	5- Dindinger, Toussaint, McAndrews, Ryall, Weber
AGAINST:	0
ABSTAIN:	0
ABSENT:	0

3. Old Business

a. Applicant: **Lane Engineering, LLC**
File No.: **21-561**
Agent: Ryan D. Showalter, Esq.
Location: Oxford Road - Poplar Hill
Tax Map 042, Grid 0004, Parcel 0057
Zoning: R-10A
Request: The applicant is seeking a Planning Commission (Commission) recommendation to the Town Council (Council) for the granting of Supplemental Growth Allocation for the purpose of reclassifying approximately 65.977 acres of land located in the Critical Area, designated as Resource Conservation Area (RCA) to be reclassified as Intensely Developed Area (IDA).

Staff supports a Planning Commission recommendation to the Council with the following conditions:

1. The Conceptual Site Plan submitted with the Supplemental Growth Allocation application is conceptual in nature and was assessed by staff for conformance to § 28-401.8.E and § 28-401.8.F of the Town Code. Approval of the supplemental growth allocation shall not infer Town of Easton Sketch Plan or PUD approval. Prior to any approval, the proposed development will be evaluated by the applicable reviewing agencies for conformance to all applicable Zoning; Subdivision; Forest Conservation; Stormwater Management; Erosion and Sediment Control; and other applicable regulations. Such review may result in modifications to the conceptual site plan.

2. The Commission may wish to discuss the merits of the type of park proposed for Poplar Hill prior to a recommendation.

Staff Presentation:
Miguel Salinas, Director of Planning and Zoning

Applicant Presentation:
Ryan D. Showalter, Esq.
Brett Ewing, Lane Engineering
Jarret Byer, Lane Engineering

Public Comment:
Matt Pluta, ShoreRivers
Alan Girard
Tom Hughes
Tom Alspach, Talbot Preservation Alliance
Reed Fallwell
Bette Kenzie

Kathy Dawkins
Tom Ledvina, Papermill Crossing HOA
Brad Hill
Tony Newell
Jan Greer
Michael Roe

Commissioner McAndrews moved for a negative Planning Commission recommendation to the Town Council for the granting of Supplemental Growth Allocation based on findings consistent with public feedback in regard to the project's conformance to the current Comprehensive Plan, environmental reviewing agency feedback, traffic hazards, and forthcoming revisions to the current Comprehensive Plan. The motion was not seconded.

Vice Chairperson Toussaint moved to continue the Planning Commission recommendation to the Town Council for the granting of Supplemental Growth Allocation to the June 15, 2023 Planning Commission meeting, and for the applicant to respond to all considered findings including:

1. **Water quality calculations and standards.**
2. **An improved design or redesign addressing all environmental and economic viability concerns.**
3. **A pollution study of the Tred Avon considering all current Critical Area criteria and any forthcoming expansions to those requirements.**
4. **Alternative park locations to mitigate pollution and runoff.**
5. **An improved design that extends the distance of the waterfront setback.**
6. **An improved design to address density within the Critical Area, and a positive recommendation from the Park Advisory Board.**

Commissioner Weber seconded the motion.

Vote	5-0-1
FOR:	5 - Dindinger, Toussaint, Klein, McAndrews, Weber
AGAINST:	0
ABSTAIN:	1 - Ryall
ABSENT:	0

4. New Business

a. Applicant: **Town of Easton**
File No.: **23-958**
Location: Easton Point Park- 801 Port Street, Easton, MD 21601
Tax Map 034, Grid 0009, Parcel 0215
Zoning: LI (Talbot County)

Request: The applicant is seeking a Planning Commission (Commission) recommendation to the Town Council (Council) for the Annexation of the property located at Easton Point into Town limits.

Staff supports a Commission recommendation to the Council for approval with the following recommendations:

1. The Commission shall find the proposed Annexation request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

2. Reassignment of the Mixed Use Waterfront (MXW) Zoning Classification to the property.

Staff Presentation:
Lynn Thomas, Town Planner
Miguel Salinas, Director of Planning and Zoning

Public Comment— None

Commissioner Weber moved to make a positive recommendation to the Council for the Annexation of the Easton Point property and its reassignment of the MXW Zoning Classification as it is found to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Vice Chairperson Toussaint seconded the motion.

Vote	5-0
FOR:	5- Dindinger, Toussaint, McAndrews, Ryall, Weber
AGAINST:	0
ABSTAIN:	0
ABSENT:	0

b. Applicant: **Pro Wellness Group LLC**
File No.: **2023-933**
Agent: Lane Engineering, LLC
Location: Mistletoe Hall Commerce - Business Park, Easton, MD 21601
Tax Map 025, Grid 0016, Parcel 0138, Lot 1
Zoning: I
Request: The applicant is seeking Site Plan and Architectural approval for a proposed 16,000 square foot warehouse building and a 10,000 square foot one-story office building with associated stormwater management, parking and landscaping.

Staff recommend the following condition:

1. The applicant is required to receive Town of Easton approval of the Master Plan, Site Plan, Architectural Plans and Construction Drawings for conformance to the November 5, 2021 Declaration of Covenants for

Mistletoe Hall Commerce -Business Park, Book: 2916, Page: 104.

Staff Presentation:
Joseph Mayer, Plan Reviewer
Miguel Salinas, Director of Planning and Zoning

Applicant Presentation:
Brett Ewing, Lane Engineering LLC
Eric Catellier AIA, AWB Engineers

Public Comment — None

Commissioner Ryall moved to approve the Site Plan subject to the condition that the applicant shall return with improved architectural renderings that is consistent with the overall look of Mistletoe Hall Commerce Park. Vice Chairperson Toussaint seconded the motion.

Vote	5-0
FOR:	5- Dindinger, Toussaint, McAndrews, Ryall, Weber
AGAINST:	0
ABSTAIN:	0
ABSENT:	0

c. Applicant: **C Estates LLC**
File No.: **2023-934**
Agent: Lane Engineering, LLC
Location: 28857 Fausley Wood Court, Easton, MD 21601
Tax Map 025, Grid 0016, Parcel 0138, Lot 7A
Zoning: I
Request: The applicant is seeking Site Plan and Architectural approval for a proposed two-story office building and storage building A, and a one-story office building and storage building B with associated stormwater management, parking and landscaping.

Staff recommends the following conditions:

1. The applicant is required to receive Town of Easton approval of the Master Plan, Site Plan and Architectural Plans and Construction Drawings of Phase I (to include Building A) for conformance to the November 5, 2021 Declaration of Covenants for Mistletoe Hall Commerce - Business Park, Book: 2916, Page: 104.

2. The applicant shall submit the Master Plan, Site Plan, Architectural Plans and Construction Drawings of Phase II for a review of conformance to the November 5, 2021 Declaration of Covenants for Mistletoe Hall Commerce- Business Park, Book: 2916, Page: 104 prior to or concurrent

with Sketch Plan submission.

Staff Presentation:
Joseph Mayer, Plan Reviewer
Miguel Salinas, Director of Planning and Zoning

Applicant Presentation:
Brett Ewing, Lane Engineering LLC
Daniel Koplan, Titan Buildings

Public Comment — None

Commissioner Ryall moved to approve the Site Plan and Architectural Plan as submitted. Commissioner Weber seconded the motion.

Vote	5-0
FOR:	5- Dindinger, Toussaint, McAndrews, Ryall, Weber
AGAINST:	0
ABSTAIN:	0
ABSENT:	0

5. **Discussion Items —** None

6. **Adjournment**– Commissioner Weber moved to adjourn. Commissioner Ryall seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 4:32 pm.

Samantha Smith <ssmith@eastonmd.gov>

Poplar Hill Development: Transfer of 65 Additional Acres of Critical Growth Allocation

1 message

Cheryl Kramer <cherylfree49@gmail.com> Sun, May 21, 2023 at 3:57 PM
To: ssmith@eastonmd.gov
Cc: David Montgomery <wdavid3@goeaston.net>, Lois Small <lsmall@comcast.net>, Cheryl Kramer <cherylfree49@gmail.com>

To Whom It May Concern,

The developer is asking for too much now. Is this something that has already been agreed upon as part of the long standing negotiations? I would hate to think this type of " back room deal" is part of the modus operandi of our county and town governmental leaders.

NO to additional acreage of critical growth allocation land for apartments. Let the developer work within the parameters of land he already has and help minimize the traffic congestion, infrastructure, educational and healthcare gaps which we already face with the developer's original plan.

Thank you,

Cheryl Kramer

Joe Mayer <jmayer@eastonmd.gov>

Poplar Hill Farm

1 message

Russ Breckenridge <breckenridge.russell@gmail.com> Sat, May 20, 2023 at 10:49 AM
To: PlanningCommission@eastonmd.gov

Good Morning,
My wife and I live at 5600 Oxford Road. We've grown very concerned the more we learn about the Poplar Hill development. Not only is this destroying a natural area, its also too massive in scale. This large-scale development in this area of town would have a significantly negative impact. We would like this area to remain in its natural environment to preserve the Chesapeake environment.

Thank You

Russ

Russ and Anita Breckenridge
5600 Oxford Rd
Oxford, Rd 21654

To The Spy and the Easton Planning Commission Members–

First, let me publicly thank the Planning Commission members for their voluntary service dedicated to safeguarding our community and environment. There is no question as to the significant amount of time that is devoted to the matters put before the Commission.

Having observed the town Planning Commission's May 18 hearing regarding the Poplar Hill project I am truly confused. Why are the Planning Commission's overly conciliatory interactions with this Northern Virginia developer and its enabler, Mr. Showalter (referred to by PC staff in the public hearing as "Ryan"), allowing for such a time-consuming, ill-advised proposal to dominate your attention and valuable time?

The resolution of this matter seems to quickly boil down to two primary points. As Mr. Pluta of Shore Rivers noted, the Critical Areas buffer (which is widely believed to be inadequate) is 1,000 feet from tidal waters. Why should there be such time-consuming back-and-forths regarding what the developer would like to do at the 100- or 200- or 300-foot lines, ballfields vs. passive meadows, sediment catchment and filtering basins, etc.? What is the basis for the Town or County giving consideration to compromising on the existing regulations? The town is not getting anything it needs or wants to support compromising on important standards.

There continues to be community discussion as to the need for 'affordable housing', but as Mr. Showalter candidly admitted, there is no portion of this project that is dedicated to low-income or affordable housing or subsidized housing. As he indicated, it is a pure for-profit "market rate" housing investment proposal. Is there some other benefit to the town of which I am not aware that might form the basis for compromising our (inadequate) resource protection standards in an effort to be conciliatory to this out-of-town profit-based business proposal?

The second primary point that would lead to an obvious and quick resolution to this proposal was noted by Mr. Hughes, formerly the Chair of the County Planning Commission. Under certain circumstances, some growth or development is permitted within the Critical Areas, although the permitted Supplemental Growth allocated for Easton's use has long since been used up. As a clear provision of Maryland law regarding development within the critical areas, (Title 27, sect 01.02.03, I believe), it is stated that this is only permitted "provided that water quality is not impaired". The upper reaches of the Tred Avon is deemed to be one of the most impaired sectors in the entire far-reaching Choptank River. This is scientific fact. Per NOAA. Per Md DNR. Per local environmental groups. By law, this portion of the developer's proposal (ANY development or changes within 1,000 feet), should not be under discussion. Not various considerations of 100 vs 200 vs 300 feet. End of discussion. Five minutes. Next agenda item. How was this developer and his attorney able to steer the discussion so off track?

Lastly, it should be noted that after so many, many years and community meetings, the Town is well on the way to actually moving forward with the public-access waterfront park development and more commercial development of the under-utilized Easton Point area. The area under consideration for these happens to be the very same upper reaches of the Tred Avon River just

around the corner from the Poplar Hill development with its proposed compromises of the Maryland water quality regulations.

I encourage the Planning Commission to look beyond the fog of engineering discussions, boil the project down to its simplicities and let the developer know that he is invited to submit proposals that are in compliance with applicable regulations, but that compromising those standards to the permanent detriment of the town and county is not something to be entertained.

- Bob Wenneson, Easton

Joe Mayer <jmayer@eastonmd.gov>

Poplar Hill Development

1 message

'Sue Ellen Thompson' via Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@eastonmd.gov> Mon, May 22, 2023 at 12:59 PM

Reply-To: Sue Ellen Thompson <iambic@aol.com>
To: "PlanningCommission@eastonmd.gov" <PlanningCommission@eastonmd.gov>

Dear Planning Commission Members:

I am writing to urge you to put a stop to the plan for developing the land at the corner of Oxford Road and the Bypass. As someone who left southeastern CT to escape the traffic and rampant development that had come to the area, it sickens me to think that the same thing might now happen here. A development of this size will be larger than all of Oxford, population-wise, and will (in the words of someone I heard speak at the Avalon meeting) create a "town within a town" that not only draws energy away from downtown Easton but that will also snarl traffic at the Peachblossom/Oxford Rd. intersection of Oxford Rd. The impact that all of those flushing toilets and draining sinks will have on the nearby creek cannot be overlooked, either.

I have lived here for 17 years and have never before felt compelled to write a letter like this before. Basically, I trusted our leaders in Easton to do whatever is necessary to maintain the rural character of Talbot County. But now I am seriously worried that a decision will be made that runs counter to the wishes of the vast majority of area residents. Whenever the subject comes up in conversation, everyone is against the idea. Please consider the long-term negative impact this development will have on the environment, the traffic patterns, and the overall appeal of Easton as a place to live.

Sue Ellen Thompson
111 Tilghman St.
Oxford, MD 21654

Samantha Smith <ssmith@eastonmd.gov>

(no subject)

1 message

Kimberly Baldwin <kbbaldwin30@gmail.com> Mon, May 22, 2023 at 2:20 PM
To: PlanningCommission@eastonmd.gov, ssmith@eastonmd.gov

Good afternoon,

I am writing this email to all of you to ask for you all to refuse the proposal of Poplar Hill Development at the location on the Easton Bypass and Oxford Road. There are many reasons why this development is a terrible idea, and will only add stress to our economy, our roads, our waterways, our children, our traffic and the list goes on and on. Right now Oxford is starting to be saturated with bicycles, nature lovers, and tourists galore.Our little town is an oasis for many people, the people who moved away from the congestion, the crime and traffic that the western shore is known for. By allowing this project to continue, you are especially pushing us down the slippery slope of becoming overpopulated (more than we already are) overwhelming our schools, hospitals,and emergency services. We already are facing a severe lack of personnel in all of these areas, and by creating this new "development" you will only be adding to this decline. Please, please before you allow this to happen, you actually take the constituents of this area into consideration and protect our precious remaining acreage and say no to the money and say yes to protecting this beautiful place we all chose as our home and the place for our children to grow.

I thank you for your time and consideration in this matter,

Kimberly Baldwin

Samantha Smith <ssmith@eastonmd.gov>

Poplar Hill

1 message

Linda Laramy <lslaramy@gmail.com> Wed, May 24, 2023 at 2:14 PM
To: planningcommission@eastonmd.gov

Hello,
I am writing to express my opposition to the Poplar Hill Development. I do not think the Easton schools and hospital can handle the many more people this development would bring. I would like to see Easton keep its rural nature.
Linda Laramy

Samantha Smith <ssmith@eastonmd.gov>

Poplar Hill Farm Development

1 message

Dick Deerin <ddeerin@gmail.com> Wed, May 24, 2023 at 1:04 PM
To: PlanningCommission@eastonmd.gov
Cc: ssmith@eastonmd.gov

To: Town of Easton Planning Commission

Re: Proposed Poplar Hill Farm Development

Date: May 24, 2023

I am a resident of Oxford and Talbot County. I have lived here part-time since 1977 and full-time since 2006.

I am writing in opposition to the application for Talbot County to transfer to the Town of Easton approximately 65 acres of the county's Maryland Critical Growth Allocation to facilitate the proposed 120 acre Poplar Hill Farm development project. Although there has been some movement in the numbers, I understand that there are proposed construction of 108 single family homes, 138 townhouses, 210 apartments and 60,000+ square feet of commercial/retail space.

The Town of Easton has used up its Maryland Critical Growth Allocation. Rather than seeking a transfer of allocation from Talbot County, the Town of Easton should preserve the remaining critical areas within the town to protect the environment, waterways and rural character of the town. The sad fact is that the Tred Avon River is already polluted and this project will simply contribute to the degradation of that beautiful waterway.

There is no need for this massive development in the Town of Easton. The roads that abut this project (Oxford Road and the Easton Bypass) will be overwhelmed by the additional traffic. Talbot County schools are already at capacity and this type of development will put further and unnecessary stress on the school system. Although at some point in time there will be a new hospital serving Talbot County and surrounding areas, the fact is that the availability of medical care is stretched, forcing many citizens to seek medical care far from Easton.

The Maryland Critical Area Program is designed to (1) protect the natural resources of the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal shorelines and (2) preserve the County's existing rural character and quality of life. These are treasures that should not be cast aside to line the pockets of developers. We have already seen the tragedy of the Lakeside development in Trappe. Please don't let that happen here.

The public hearings on this project have seen virtually unanimous opposition. The only testimony in favor of the project comes from the developer's attorneys, engineers and consultants.

I urge you to reject the proposal to transfer Talbot County's Critical Growth Allocation to the Town of Easton and the current plansfor this Poplar Hill Farm development. Thank you.

James (Dick) Deerin
301 S. Morris Street
Oxford MD 21654

Samantha Smith <ssmith@eastonmd.gov>

Poplar Hill Application

1 message

Maureen Gittens <gittens2d@goeaston.net> Sat, May 27, 2023 at 3:39 PM
To: ssmith@eastonmd.gov

My husband and I have lived in Easton for over 19 years now.

In the past 12 months, the Gynecology practice I went to, closed their offices in Easton and Cambridge. Their nearest practice is now on Kent Island. Yesterday, I was advised by my Dermatologist that they received the biopsy results confirming that I have Squamous Cell skin cancer. However, the first available appointment for surgery is two months away; the end of July. These are typical difficulties in getting medical care experienced by many residents of Easton, and Talbot County. Whether we need an Internist, a Dermatologist, a Gynecologist or other doctor, we clearly already have a shortage of doctors in this area.

My question to the Town Planning Commission is this: why in the world would you give serious consideration to approving the application for the Poplar Hill “growth allocation” Development Project, knowing that we already have a serious shortage of health care providers in Talbot County? Adding at least 456 more residents to Easton, will only make it more difficult for **everyone** to get good health care.

Please recommend that the Town reject this application. Thank you for your consideration.

Maureen Gittens
7598 Easton Club Drive

Sent from my iPad

Joe Mayer <jmayer@eastonmd.gov>

Fwd: New request received

1 message

Public Works <publicworks@eastonmd.gov> Tue, May 30, 2023 at 3:27 PM
To: Planning and Zoning <planningandzoning@eastonmd.gov>

Hi,
Would this go to you?
Thanks,
Stacy

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: <do_not_reply@civicplus.com>
Date: Mon, May 29, 2023 at 9:36 AM
Subject: New request received
To: <publicworks@eastonmd.gov>

Category iPhone has received a new request.

Here is what we have on file:

Mobile Device Concern/Request Form #114

View Request

Category:	iPhone
Priority:	2
Assigned To:	Slaughter Stacy
Submitted:	5/29/2023 9:36 AM
Source:	Website 10.2.9.110

SUBMITTER
Anne C Stalfort
28730 Springfield Dr
Easton, Md 21601
CONTACT
astalfort@yahoo.com
4103108591

28730 Springfield Dr
Easton, MD 21601

REQUEST DETAILS

Description
I want to comment on the preferred park type for the proposed Poplar Hill Development

I want to comment on the preferred park type for the proposed Poplar Hill Development

Springfield Dr

ZIP Code
21601

Your Information

Name

Anne C Stalfort

Springfield Dr

ZIP Code
21601

Email Address
astalfort@yahoo.com

Samantha Smith <ssmith@eastonmd.gov>

Critical Area Growth Allocation

1 message

gerard marconi <gerardmarconi2@gmail.com> Sun, Jun 4, 2023 at 8:35 PM
To: smoran@talbotcountymd.gov, planningcommission@eastonmd.gov

DATE: June 4, 2023

TO: Talbot County Planning Commission and Council

FROM: Gerard & Katherine Marconi

We are writing to oppose the Critical Area Growth Allocation request proposed for the Poplar Hill development for the following reasons.

1. There is no critical need for additional office or retail buildings in Easton at a time when more people are working at home and shopping online.
2. While there is currently a need for low-income housing in Easton, there is no critical need for 456 additional residential units of this type when there are new developments like it in Trappe and Bellevue.
3. Such a large development proposed at the intersection of Routes 322 and 333 would constitute a severe traffic problem at a busy intersection near schools, churches, and the YMCA.
4. Such development at that location would also change the rural nature along the Oxford Road in an irrevocable way.
5. This development would also have a negative effect on attracting more tourists and vacationers, which has seen significant growth in recent years.

Please consider these likely outcomes if the proposed Critical Area Growth Allocation request is approved. Many of our friends and neighbors agree that approval by the Planning Commission would have a serious and long-lasting effect on our lives and on future generations in Talbot County.

Sincerely,

Gerard & Katherine Marconi
301 Bonfield Avenue
Oxford, MD 21654

Samantha Smith <ssmith@eastonmd.gov>

Fwd: FW: Poplar Hill

1 message

Lynn Thomas <lthomas@eastonmd.gov> Mon, Jun 5, 2023 at 12:52 PM
To: Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@eastonmd.gov>

-------- Original message --------
From: Kathy Dawkins <dawkins.kk@gmail.com>
Date: 6/5/23 11:40 AM (GMT-05:00)
To: Tom Ledvina <ledstn@msn.com>
Subject: Poplar Hill

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To approve the Poplar Hill development as presented is to approve the continued erosion of the Chesapeake Bay and its many tributaries that we all enjoy. It seems unconscionable that 66 acres of Critical Areas acres would be sacrificed in such a cavalier manner. PH is yet another cookie cutter development that has no redeeming qualities for our current housing situation in Talbot County. The developers from VA have refused to state what these houses, apartments and townhouses will be sold for but most certainly they will not even be classified as workforce housing. So, it's inconceivable to me that a development geared to upper middle class people and certainly retirees would also include active sports fields. Additionally, please have them explain how they justify putting commercial property in CA? The long drive to downtown Easton or Waterside village is just too far to go for retail needs? Our northern neighbor Queen Anne County has shown the lure of the$$ to be more important than the health of our precious Chesapeake Bay let's not follow their lead but rather take the hard stand to truly act to preserve the Bay!

James Michener lived in Talbot County when he wrote his impressive tome Chesapeake. He shopped at my in-laws garden center "Hilly's" and spent countless hours on the bay with the waterman to truly understand the special place we call home. He commented on our land this way.

"The announced justification for the bridge was that it would provide an alternate route between Washington and New York," Michener wrote in Chesapeake, "but the real purpose was to enable Monday-to-Friday bureaucrats in Washington and Baltimore to get more speedily to their summer resorts along the Atlantic Ocean, and this meant the sleepy fields of the Eastern Shore, so long protected from outside influences, would be converted into snarling highways for pleasure seekers. Where gracious living had prevailed, gas stations and quick-food counters would clutter the landscape".

Seems to me Mr. Michener had it right so many years ago. I hope you will see fit to take a stand today.

Respectfully yours,
Kathy Dawkins
28568 Clubhouse Drive

Point of View

Letter to Editor: Resist Exploitation, Stop Poplar Hill, and Fix Lakeside

June 5, 2023 by Letter to Editor 5 Comments

Share / Save

It is apparent to all—most especially our elected officials—that citizens of Talbot County want action to rein in excessive, exploitive development, most especially projects dependent on special treatment, exceptions, waivers and, in the case of Lakeside, clearly identified improprieties.

Stop Poplar Hill Up Front

The outcry against Poplar Hill is deep and wide, and the reasons for opposition are rock solid. Attend the Planning Commission meeting at 9 am on Wednesday at the Bradley Room; send in your comments; follow up with the County Council if a Growth Allocation award gets that far. That is the County's one point of control; but for Growth Allocation, Poplar Hill is entirely in the hands of the Town of Easton.

And Fix Lakeside Now

Because of a May 9th letter from the Maryland Department of Environment (spurred, it's believed, by issues raised in TIP's lawsuit against MDE), the County Council suddenly has the opportunity to fix Lakeside—that is, to assure that, rather than already having greenlighted the entire 2501 home development**,** *each new phase of development beyond the first 120 houses must come back to the County for a new determination*, including two rounds of public hearings and a review by the Planning Commission and the County Council.

In the same way that "Growth Allocation" is the County's control point at Poplar Hill, at Lakeside the "Sewer Service Map" is the key. Both are wonky, in-the-weeds issues, but what you need to know is that each provides the lever whereby the *citizens of Talbot County,* acting through their elected Council, have some control over decisions inside of Towns…decisions that fundamentally affect the rural character and quality of life throughout the entire County!

The Council is already well aware of MDE's directive to provide a single, *proper* map correcting past errors and improprieties. Hopefully, the sewer map that the Staff comes up with initially will accomplish what is needed: assurance that *only* those first 120 lots are designated as "immediate priority" in the wonky nomenclature. (MDE has directed that an old inappropriate map (Map 24) be jettisoned.)

If the Council does this properly, the rest of Lakeside cannot then proceed without a new County review at each step; that was also the goal of Ms. Mielke's recent Resolution 338, thought it seems overtaken by MDE's letter.

The Fix Lakeside Initiative

To remind our County Council, and the world at large, that Talbot citizens are passionate in their desire that the Council fix Lakeside (resisting exploitation evident at Poplar Hill too), a committee of concerned citizens, working with and through the Talbot Integrity Project, intend to be very visible, simply encouraging the County Council to do the right thing in this situation. (This re-mapping issue is new, and at this point no Council Member has indicated any inclination *not* to correct the errors and improprieties of the past.)

It's important that citizen attention be visible, and you are encouraged to join us today!

Just go to this site— fixlakeside.com– -to have your voice heard. On the site you can…

- **GET A YARD SIGN**…though it's easier for everyone if you just pick up one or two at RiseUp Coffee on Dover Street—they're free! (We do need volunteers to help get out the yard signs…they're ready to go!)
- **SIGN THE FIX LAKESIDE PETITION**
- **EMAIL THE COUNCIL**
- **DONATE**…an organized effort, and those yard signs, come at a cost!
- **VOLUNTEER**…there may be more to do!

Again, that's fixlakeside.com.

What's at stake at Poplar Hill and at Lakeside and whatever project comes afterwards is simply the future of Talbot County…whether it remains the unique, rural environment most want, or morphs into just another sprawl community like every other.

The Committee to Fix Lakeside

Laura Claggett
Tim Cuerton
Clayton Fisher
Dan Watson, TIP
Mike McConnel

Letters to Editor

Ralph Walker says

June 5, 2023 at 1:21 PM

I have a question about Popular Hill as of this moment there appears to be preparations to plant the area with a crop. Is this a delay strategy to take the heat off this week's meeting and quite the comments until harvest time? Just Ole me!

Reply

Eva M. Smorzaniuk MD says

June 5, 2023 at 3:51 PM

Thank you to the committee for keeping these issues in the forefront. Agree wholeheartedly with your points and recommendations, and hope others will take action too!

Reply

Hugh (Jock) Beebe says

June 5, 2023 at 5:03 PM

Probably the a good idea to be a bit more specific rather than simply referring to "… the Planning Commission" to note that there are two separate such Commissions one for the city of Easton the other for Talbot County. Writing immediately to Easton Planing Commissioners this evening, June 5, would be helpful.

Easton Planning Commission Members
Jennifer Dindinger, Chairperson
Philip Toussaint, Vice Chairperson
William Ryall, Chair Pro Tem
Victoria McAndrews
Paul Weber
Thomas Klein – Alternate

Reply

Clara Kelly says

June 6, 2023 at 10:05 AM

The Talbot County Planning Commission meets on Wednesday, June 7, at 9 a.m. to discuss the Poplar Hill Farm growth allocation request:

PublicComment@talbotcountymd.gov

The Town of Easton Planning Commission meets on Thursday, June 15, at 1 p.m.:

file:///Users/clarakelly/Desktop/2023.06.15%20Planning%20Commission%20Agenda.pdf

I was advised you can still submit your comments to the County Planning Commission, and they well do their best to attach them to tomorrow's agenda.
Reply

Reed Fawell 3 says

June 6, 2023 at 10:56 AM

I find it remarkable that the Easton Planning Commission is considering seriously its approval of the Poplar Hill project. I say this because, for me, it is obvious that the Poplar Hill is precisely the kind of project that Easton's Comprehensive Plan is designed to prohibit and a prevent.

Here, to illustrate my point, I quote or paraphrase portions of the Easton Comprehensive plan.

The Plan's Introduction describes Easton as "a small town that offers to residents and visitors a quality of life difficult, if not impossible, to duplicate anywhere else in the United States." And notes that, recently ranked one of the ten best small towns in America, Easton derives its identity in considerable part from its rural character, its close proximity to the Chesapeake Bay, its historic Downtown area, and its historic and contemporary residential neighborhoods that are in easy walking distance of the Downtown. The plan makes clear that "Maintaining the character, the very essence of this place that makes it so unique and special, will be an enormous challenge," and that it lays the groundwork for insuring that happens here in Easton.

The plan also makes clear it works to correct past mistakes, and "lays the groundwork repeated throughout the Plan to ensure that future growth is not in the form of auto-centric, isolated, suburban style subdivisions but instead is multi-use, integrated, and connected neighborhoods." See pg. 31

It also reminds us that directing growth is local governments' most critical task. And that, while many towns see growth as essential to economic health, unchecked, unmanaged growth can cause many problems. A town focused primarily on residential growth may become a bedroom community where the residents are forced to travel to other places for everything from work to shopping. A town with too much commercial development invites traffic congestion. Without adequate design standards, new development may not be aesthetically pleasing. Hence, The right balance of land uses is critical in avoiding these problems.

The Plan also makes clear that residential land uses tend to focus on the arrangement, appearance, and density. And that "We see things changing for this land use. We do not see the future of Easton as a series of disconnected, isolated, monotonous subdivisions. Rather we want a seamless, attractive, interesting, Smart Growth inspired Easton this is one Easton, not a collection of suburban residential enclaves."

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This Comprehensive Plan aims to achieve for the Easton's future of "A Return to our Roots." We want the same kind of density, mix of land uses, and general character of the earlier days and to move away from

homogenous uses, cookie-cutter, mass produced looking subdivisions, strip development along our highways, and the general "looks like anywhere Suburban America." We want to be urban, not suburban, although urban on an Eastern Shore of Maryland scale.

As to "2009 DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR EASTON

Principle #1 – Integrated Uses are Desirable – The 1997 Plan Design Principle stated, "Mixed Uses are Desirable." We've found it is not enough to simply mix uses within a development. A vast area of residential uses with a disconnected pod of commercial use is not the concept we are trying to promote. Unfortunately, it is often times presented. Too often, when commercial development was presented at all, it was improperly located, of an inappropriate scale, or both. What we are looking for is old-fashioned, neighborhood-style development that includes housing, with retail located at or near the center of the area, offices, civic space, open space, and possibly industrial development. Each subcomponent is of a size necessary to serve the residents of the proposed neighborhood, which, given the single-use developments of recent years, may also include surrounding and nearby developments. It does not mean a strip shopping center located along a State Road with the remainder of the site devoted to housing."

Principle # 3 – Automobiles should not Determine Design – Much of what is undesirable with contemporary development is directly related to the automobile. It begins with the location of uses that are separated and isolated, in part, because of the ready availability of automobiles.

Principle #5– Architecture Should Respect Easton's Historical Development. This is perhaps the most important Design Principle in the struggle to make Easton a unique place, rather than the latest version of "Anywhere USA." … New development in Easton, especially new commercial, should look to buildings constructed prior to the 1940's for an example of what to emulate."

In light of these provisions, please consider the following:

Poplar Hill proposes 456 housing units with its 758 car spaces stuffed into 61 acres all on the west side of its main road. That road's east side fronts all its 98,000 sq ft of strip commercial with another 406 car spaces and a 3 field sporting complex requiring more parking. All this is in a sock shaped 120 acre parcel surrounded and hemmed in almost entirely. On its east side by Tred Avon headwaters, Easton By-Pass, and small walled off residential subdivision. On its west /southwest side by park woodland and its snout road exit onto Easton By Pass. And on its north side by inter-regional Oxford Road that links the town of Oxford, Md to the Easton By-pass.

Hence all Popular Hills off-site access is via its single internal main road that dumps all its traffic onto the Oxford Rd and Easton By-pass intersections, among the most critical in the region. So you can be certain that much of this Poplar Hill traffic will be destined for the big box shopping area across Easton town to east of Route 50 and also headed north up the Bypass to the big box stores near the St. Michaels Road / Easton intersections there on By-pass.

In fact, and in practical effect, the Poplar Hill project as located and designed is a mass bedroom community across a main drag from its strip commercial within its suburban parcel that is outside of, and isolated from, the town of Easton. That is why it requires 1164 parking spaces for its 458 residential units. And why it violates and undermines Easton's Comprehensive Plan designed to prevent just this sort of project from ever happening again in Easton. That's how I see and read it.

Samantha Smith <ssmith@eastonmd.gov>

Please VOTE NO re: anything to do with Poplar Hill ... for all the reasons that have already been stated by others + Maryland Geological Survey's Drummond Report on Aquia aquifer for Q.A.'s and Talbot County Councils in 2001

1 message

Rebecca Ellison <rebecca@boundinghome.org> Tue, Jun 6, 2023 at 12:41 AM
To: PlanningCommission@eastonmd.gov, Samantha Smith <ssmith@eastonmd.gov>

Dear Easton Planning Commission Members [Jennifer Dindinger, Chairperson; Philip Toussaint, Vice Chairperson; William Ryall, Chair Pro Tem; Victoria McAndrews; Paul Weber; Thomas Klein - Alternate] and Samantha Smith, Administrative Specialist -

I am writing to ask that you vote NO to each and every aspect of the proposed Poplar Hill project to be located on the Oxford Rd. and bypass etc. ... not only to the growth allocation issue, but to the entire project in all its details.

There is no reason FOR this project and there is every reason AGAINST IT. As someone who has strongly opposed the Trappe East/Lakeside development for over 20 years, I am exhausted by the apparent acknowledgement of local governments and the County government that there are presently no ways to prevent or regulate the addition of entirely new municipalities to Talbot County's independent towns if the town undertakes such a thing ... as Trappe has been persuaded to do by billionaire investors.

And now there is Mr. Showalter bringing yet another 'northern Virginia developer' to slip an entirely developer designed and independent new MUNICIPALITY into the very outskirts of Easton ...

Yet, even without Mr. Showalter's Lakeside (2,501 homes and approx. 55k sq. ft. of retail) and Mr. Showalter's Poplar Hill (456 homes plus commercial, sports complex, fire department etc.) having even yet been constructed, the entire County is already increasingly being crippled by Gannon and Prager etc. growth which is clogging our roads, filling up our schools, making physician, dentist and even veterinary appointments difficult to come by, jeopardizing our volunteer fighter system, sucking our aquifers dry, polluting our air, streams and rivers, etc. etc. We are being overrun by tourists and short-term renters. The drivers on the Oxford Road (where I live) are more and more agressive ... just this afternoon I was being tailgated by a Delaware driver who continued to push too close to me, even as we approached cars slowing for a stopped school bus. As I came to a stop behind the line of cars behind the school bus, I saw that tailgater coming up behind me with no indication he had noticed that everyone ahead of him had STOPPED. In order to miss me hitting me from behind, he had to veer totally into the oncoming traffic's lane ... fortunately of course the oncoming traffic had already stopped for the school bus stopping ahead of us. I let him pass me and got a photo of his license plate ... but, like everything else about the increased growth around here, there is no one to complain to. Yesterday I was passed on the Oxford Rd. by two young girls who were driving into Oxford at speeds up to 80 miles an hour ... I followed them and they were simply going to take some beach chairs to the strand to watch the sunset.

Small things and small changes add up to be big annoyances and even big hazards ... yet there is no remedy and, with unrelenting growth from St. Michaels and Easton, there seems little recourse.

Easton DOES NOT NEED TO GROW. I have lived here since 1946, and, believe me there were much more interesting stores and activities back then and in the subsequent decades than there are now. I was part of the visioning for one of the County's Comprehensive plans ... we stressed that no national chains should be allowed to take the place of locally owned businesses ... and yet the first thing that happened was that Pizza Hut and other pizza stores arrived and put the squeeze on local pizza places.

Similarly, the Planet Fitness store is hurting the local fitness store next to the laundromat and the Aspen Dental doesn't seem to have the strength to even open. The local optometrist has become a national chain (My Eye Doctor) and I was amused to learn that they national rules require them to keep the background music at an intolerable level 'because of the HIPA rules' ... they said they are required to play the loud music because their waiting are is within hearing of those checking in.

We have lost many privately owned high quality stores to lesser quality national chains ... for example losing Shannahan and Wrightson's to nonsensical shops, losing Trader's Pharmacy to a rug store, losing Hill's downtown Drugstore to the Hills at Idlewilde, losing Atkinson's to an antique store, losing Southern States to Lowe's, Ben Franklins to Michaels, three pet stores (Breeders Best, Noah's Ark etc.) to PetSmart, Rowens Stationery to Staples, Nevius Hardware to the plastic

surgery place, and Lowes, etc. etc. etc. Remember when we had several fancy dress and lingerie stores, and the expensive jeweler and news stand at the Tidewater? When we had Sports and Specialties and The Children's Shop? It was impressive to get the New York Times delivered daily to the Tidewater ... and the Tidewater was somewhere you went for special occasions, weddings, Christmas dances, dancing class with Mrs. Ziegler, lunch with your grandmother etc..

What I am trying to say is that all this fussing about the need for growth and the need to improve the economy is not supported by anything. Certainly, the last thing we need is more housing ... and I'd go so far as to say that we need to get rid of the short term rentals. The County particularly abuses that by insisting that they are not commercial ... and yet the County reaps high profits ... and those of us who live next to them pay the price (tens of thousands of $ in road repairs for some driveways) ... , short term rentals are now an 'investment' ... my former family home was bringing in $7,000 a WEEK to the person who bought it ... it is now for sale for multiples of what we sold it for. The price of housing is driven sky high by the rental possibility .... and it is an abomination to the neighbors. And a risk to neighbors as well as, at least in the county, short term rentals are not required to carry liability insurance for their neighbors.

Short term rentals and tourism are fake ways of getting short term money ... the way to have a REAL community is to let it be what it wants to be. No one developer (Gannon or Prager and Showalter clients) should jerk around whole towns and the county itself.

Those of us who have built this place have the right to complain when the local governments conspire to dilute and degrade the quality of life here ... at the same time making costs go up and traffic etc. become unbearable.

Please vote NO. I think it's safe to say this might well end up being litigated until the end of time ... just as will be the case for Lakeside.

I am sure you have received similar comments which better address your concerns ... I'm sorry mine is so lengthy. It is hard to understand how these stupid projects get as far as they do when NO ONE wants them and there are such GOOD REASONS not to permit them.

I have done the best I can to help explain things to those in office ... but alas. The Showalters of the world never quit ... and there's something about this that causes the local governments to just cave in. It's a mystery ... but please, please vote NO ...

Sincerely,

Rebecca Ellison, Ph.D. (biology)

ALSO - There is factual evidence to support your constituents and the County residents who oppose the Poplar Hill project ... with regard to our aquifers, I wrote a reply to an article in Spy today in which I addressed the issue of depleted aquifers and a 2001 Report which (as I understand it) was jointly requested by the Queen Anne's and Talbot Councils. It describes, for example, the saltwater intrusion into the Aquia from the hydrologic communication with Chesapeake Bay near Kent Island ... the Report was prepared by D. Drummond of the Maryland Geological Survey ... see text of my 'reply' to the Spy letter below (also note that the link in my 'reply' is to the source of a paper copy, please click the link directly below which is to the digital version of the Drummond report).

Here is the link to the digital form of the original Maryland Geological Survey, Drummond Report - http://www.mgs.md.gov/publications/report_pages/RI_72.html

Please do especially look at Figure 24 in the Drummond report which shows a graph of the Aquia aquifer's drop relative to sea level on a monthly basis. The biggest drop over a one month period took place between July and August at the measuring site at Canterbury, off Bailey's Neck Rd. in the vicinity of the golf course there, presumably reflecting the extensive irrigation there (water is pumped to fill ponds, irrigation water is drawn from ponds according to the son of a former caretaker).

==========

- Rebecca Ellison says

  June 5, 2023 at 1:53 PM

  Golf courses also irrigate extensively. This not only depletes our drinking water aquifers and increases the total volume of water runoff from the golf course, it creates a vicious cycle in which the freshwater added by irrigation carries off the applied chemicals, and thus ‘necessitates’ additional fertilizer and pesticide application … and, ultimately, causes a disproportionate runoff of chemicals into the adjacent lands and water bodies as well as creating measurable aquifer depletion. A water level monitoring station near Bailey’s Neck Rd. (off the Oxford Rd.)

shows seasonal drops in the Aquia aquifer presumably from golf course pumping. A decade or so ago residential Aquia wells in that area have had to be drilled deeper, including my own.

That Aquia aquifer report was commissioned for the Talbot County area by the Talbot and Queen Anne's County Councils.

"Hydrogeology of the coastal plain aquifer system in Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties, Maryland, with emphasis on water-supply potential and brackish-water intrusion in the Aquia aquifer" … link is https://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/9910310844702121 .

One doubts that the present council members or even the Planning Commission member have read it.

We should ALL read it. And we should all protest further depletion of our aquifer. And we should remember that aquifer depletion is a known cause of land subsidence … it's not just that the sea level is rising … this area is also sinking.

NOTE – the Aquia aquifer is now so depleted by overuse that it is 'recharging' partly by drawing in water ('brackish water intrusion' mentioned in title) from a 'hydrologic communication' with the Chesapeake Bay water in the area of Kent Island.

We ignore and abuse (and allow our elected officials to ignore and abuse) our aquifers at our peril.

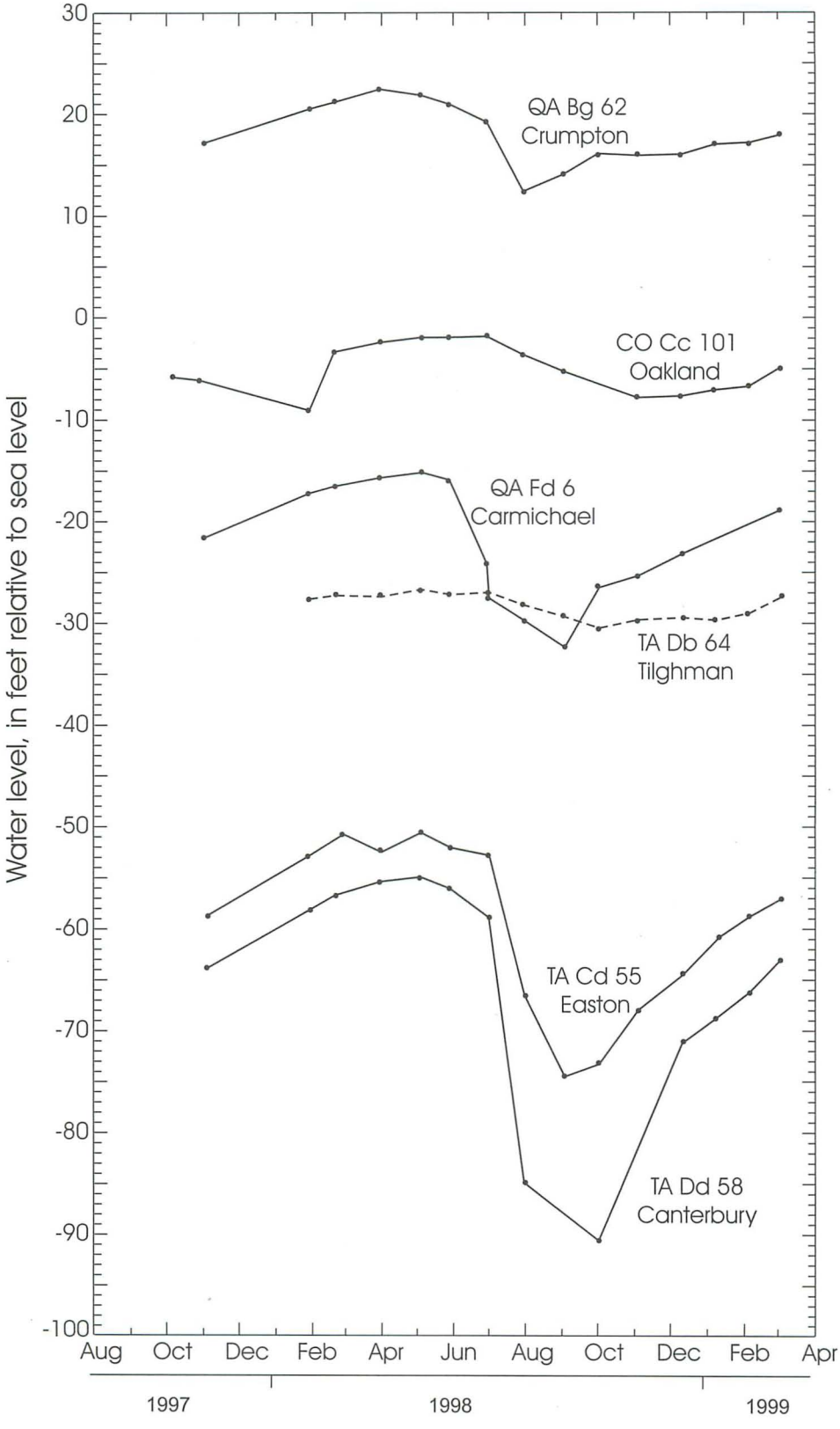

Figure 24. Hydrographs showing seasonal water-level trends in the Aquia aquifer, October 1997 to March, 1999.

Samantha Smith <ssmith@eastonmd.gov>

Poplar Hill

1 message

Reed Fawell <reedfawell@yahoo.com> Tue, Jun 6, 2023 at 12:07 PM
To: ssmith@eastonmd.gov

Reed Fawell
26783 Miles River Road
Easton, Maryland

Dear Planning Commission

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Here, to illustrate my point, I quote or paraphrase portions of the Easton Comprehensive plan.

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In light of these provisions, please consider the following:

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Reed Fawell

Jennifer Stanley
Maplehurst
PO Box 159
Oxford, MD 21654
jennstanley@verizon.net

June 2, 2023

Jennifer Dindinger, Chairperson
Philip Toussaint, Vice Chairperson
William Ryall, Chair Pro Tem
Victoria McAndrews
Paul Weber
Thomas Klein - Alternate
Planning Commission of Easton, MD
Town Office
14 S Harrison Street
Council Chambers
Easton, MD 21601

Dear Planning Commission members,

The two Planning Commission hearings I have attended on the Poplar Hill Supplemental Growth Allocation were very revealing. The citizen audiences of both meetings were fundamentally opposed to the development and the granting of Critical Area Growth Allocation to Easton.

The Popular Hill development is an example of the omission of Smart Growth Planning. Had citizen input been engaged at the onset, the proposed development might be more reflective of the City of Easton and the rural communities that would be adversely affected by the proposed metropolitan-esque project. As importantly, the impact of any development, much less one so large, would have on the tidal tributary of the Tred Avon River would have been flagged at the onset.

It is abundantly clear with a warming climate, we have entered an era where we have increased risk of heavy precipitation events and increased stream flows from runoff. Increases in non point source loading of nutrients, sediment, and potential pathogens are sure to increase with these climate change intensified events. The acres of impervious lot coverage of this development will certainly lead to further degradation of the Tred Avon. The importance of the Maryland Critical Area Program is our assurance that we put the health of our Creeks and Rivers first—not after development. With these factors in mind, I urge the Easton Planning Commission to reject its consideration of a Critical Area Growth Allocation for this development.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Stanley

RECEIVED
JUN 07 2023
TOWN OF EASTON

From: Karen Sahmel <karensahmel@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 5, 2023 4:14 PM
To: CompPlanComments <CompPlanComments@talbgov.org>
Subject: Poplar Hill Farm Development

Dear Town of Easton Planning Commissioners, Hello...I am writing to protest the Poplar Hill Farm Development. We live off the Oxford Road, and this proposed project will bring a lot of congestion to an already busy intersection. Please don't allow this to go forward. Sincerely, Karen Sahmel

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June 13, 2023

Town of Easton Planning Commission
Town Office
14 South Harrison Street
Easton, MD 21601

RE: Poplar Hill Supplemental Growth Allocation

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Thank you again for your service to the Town of Easton. On behalf of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) and our 1,239 members in Talbot County, we respectfully suggest that your review of the request to award supplemental growth allocation for the Poplar Hill development project take into consideration the following concerns:

1. **The Planning Commission should consider relevant Critical Area Program policy in its recommendation**, including:

- Within each jurisdiction, intense development should be directed outside the Critical Area. (COMAR 27.01.02.02(B))

- A local jurisdiction may accommodate additional development within the Critical Area "of the type and intensity designated by the local jurisdiction *provided that water quality is not impaired.*" (COMAR 27.01.02.03(C)(2), emphasis added) The Lower Choptank River Basin that includes the Tred Avon River is found by the Maryland Department of the Environment to be impaired.

- Growth within the Critical Area should minimize the adverse water quality and quantity impact of stormwater and encourage the use of retrofitting measures to address existing stormwater management problems. (COMAR 27.01.02.03(C)(9))

2. **The Planning Commission should consider the goals and objectives in the Town of Easton's 2010 Comprehensive Plan Sensitive Areas Element**. Relevant goals and objectives in the Plan include:

- Goal: To protect and, where possible, enhance the natural environment of the Town of Easton and its environs while recognizing the role of the Town as a regional growth center.

- Objective: Direct development, whenever possible, away from environmentally sensitive areas so that impacts are avoided to the greatest extent possible.
- Objective: Coordinate, and where necessary enhance, sensitive areas protection with other Town environmental programs such as the Critical Area Program, the Forest Conservation Ordinance, the Floodplain Ordinance, and the Stormwater Management Ordinance.
- Objective: Encourage the use of innovative and flexible development techniques as a means to protect environmentally sensitive areas.

- Goal: To minimize and mitigate adverse impacts to water quality.
  - Objective: Encourage the use of innovative alternative stormwater management techniques

Based on the environmental and other impacts posed by the project in its entirety, **the Planning Commission should find whether the growth allocation requested is consistent with the goals and objectives in the current Comprehensive Plan.** Further, the Town of Easton is in the process of updating its current Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2010. The Planning Commission may find that, given the long-term impact of the project as proposed, it may be prudent to consider the supplemental growth allocation request when that update is complete.

3. **The Planning Commission should consider recommending that the 300-foot buffer be fully forested.**

4. **The Planning Commission should consider the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association's (NOAA) Ecological Assessment of the Tred Avon River**, which finds that of the river's eight sub-watersheds, "[s]igns of degradation were particularly evident in the sub-watershed nearest Easton (TA1), the most highly developed location in the assessment, which was impacted by multiple stressors – low dissolved oxygen in bottom waters, the presence of chemical contaminants above low-level NOAA thresholds, high levels of nutrients, high chlorophyll a concentrations, high fecal bacterial counts, and poor water clarity."

   The Planning Commission should consider making a determination about whether, by awarding supplemental growth allocation, the project will or will not increase the risks of further water quality degradation. The Planning Commission should further consider recommending implementation of innovative and flexible development techniques that demonstrate significant and well-documented existing water quality stressors will not increase in severity.

5. To minimize flooding and stormwater pollution risks, **the Planning Commission should consider recommending that the project meet pending updated stormwater**

management standards before growth allocation is awarded.

Senate Bill 227, adopted in 2021, tasks MDE with developing plans to evaluate current flooding risks and updating regulations to improve urban stormwater flood management. The roadmap for advancing these plans anticipates:

- Including the most recent precipitation estimates in the Maryland Stormwater Design Manual.
- Redefining the 1-year rainfall event from 2.7 to 3.0 inches of rainfall.
- Increasing the implementation of "green infrastructure" known as environmental site design (ESD) to the maximum extent practicable (MEP) for the 1-year rainfall event.
- Updating stormwater regulations to require peak flow management for the 2-year and 10-year storms and the safe conveyance of the 100-year storm in certain watersheds.
- Investigating methods to implement additional stormwater management to address climate change.
- Requiring local jurisdictions to develop watershed studies in certain areas and use these plans to implement watershed-specific flood management plans.

The development of these plans is an ongoing process and, given the long-term impact of this large-scale development, it is prudent for the Planning Commission to be forward-looking and ensure the development will be consistent with the anticipated stormwater regulation update.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alan Girard
Eastern Shore Director

RECEIVED
JUN 13 2023
TOWN OF EASTON

June 13, 2023

Talbot County Planning Commission
Town of Easton Planning Commission

Re: 5001 SHR LLC Poplar Hill Farm Project

Dear Planning Commission Members:

The more our community has delved into the details, the more it has become apparent it's time to make a decision regarding the Poplar Hill Farm project. From the perspective of rural vs. urban, the Commission's only options are: (1) reject the plan outright, or, (2) ask 5001 SHR LLC to go back to the drawing board and design a plan that does not require a growth allocation and reclassification of 65.977 RCA acres.

Based on recent testimony and comments made at the May 18, 2023 Town of Easton Planning Commission and June 7, 2023 Talbot County Planning Commission meetings, scientific reports, and articles appearing in our local publications, this project is a bad idea. It's clear it will (1) increase traffic and decrease pedestrian and vehicular safety; (2) threaten our natural habitats; (3) stress our already challenged health, education, emergency services and other infrastructure; (4) diminish our water quality, (5) adversely affect property values; and (6) last, but certainly not least, lead us down a path toward imperiling/destroying our quality of life.

We don't need more tweaks, studies, or pro-and-con lists. The time for a decision is now, and the choice is obvious if you truly want to represent the interests of the citizens of Talbot County.

Sincerely,

Clara Kelly
Easton Club

RECEIVED
JUN 13 2023
TOWN OF EASTON

cc: Town of Easton Town Council
Talbot County Council
Mayor Megan Cook

Samantha Smith <ssmith@eastonmd.gov>

RE: 6.15.23 Meeting Agenda 3a.

1 message

KATE KNYSH <kateknysh@gmail.com> Wed, Jun 14, 2023 at 6:33 PM
To: PlanningCommission@eastonmd.gov
Cc: ssmith@eastonmd.gov

June 14, 2023

Town of Easton Planning Commission
Town Office
14 South Harrison Street
Easton, MD 21601

RE: Lane Engineering, LLC request to Planning Commission of recommendation to the Town Council (Council) of reclassifying approximately 65.977 acres of land located in the Critical Area, designated as Resource Conservation Area (RCA) to be reclassified as Intensely Developed Area (IDA)

Dear Planning Commissioners,

The Town of Easton's Comprehensive plan's goals of increasing density, building neighborhoods, improving design and managing the rate of growth **can be achieved within the Town of Easton's existing regulations.**

Reclassifying Critical Area land in Easton from Resource Conservation Area (RCA) to Intensly Developed Area (IDA) is not necessary to achieve the Town of Easton's Comprehensive plan's goals. There is no need for a recommendation to the Town Council to do so.

Proposed development plans should be adjusted to respect and adhere to the Town of Easton's regulations and existing Critical Area land assigned area classifications. Feasible alternatives exist.

Thank you for your time, consideration and service for the Town of Easton.
Sincerely,
Kate & Roman Knysh
Easton, MD

Samantha Smith <ssmith@eastonmd.gov>

Fwd: Opposition to Poplar Farm Hill

2 messages

Lynn Thomas <lthomas@eastonmd.gov> Thu, Jun 15, 2023 at 3:33 PM
To: Samantha Smith <ssmith@eastonmd.gov>

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Karen Sahmel** <karensahmel@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Jun 15, 2023 at 1:07 PM
Subject: Opposition to Poplar Farm Hill
To: lthomas@eastonmd.gov <lthomas@eastonmd.gov>

Dear Mr. Thomas, we are writing to protest the Poplar Farm Hill Development on the Oxford Road and Bypass. Please oppose this development, it concerns us for the environment and traffic that will be impacted.

Sincerely, Karen and Reinhardt Sahmel

MEMORANDUM

TO: EASTON PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

FROM: LYNN B. THOMAS, JR., AICP, TOWN PLANNER

DATE: JUNE 8, 2023

SUBJECT: PLANNING COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

Please find attached with this memorandum, a DRAFT Easton Planning Commission Annual Report. Annual Reports are actually "required" by the State Land Use Article and although we endeavor to complete them most years, we do not always do so. Thai is primarily due to the fact that we have had very little activity to report on in recent years, and the fact that the Maryland Department of Planning has suggested to me that we complete the Report, "if the Commission finds it useful."

Until the past few years, previous Annual Reports were prepared as a traditional business or academic report, often in the 10-15 page range depending on the level of growth and development activity in the given year. More recently, MDP has made the exercise easier by providing a template which simply requires us to fill in a couple of tables that will allow them to better track the information they are most concerned with, mainly the overall amount of growth occurring in the State and the percent that is inside vs outside of Priority Funding Areas.

Your required action on the Annual Report is to (1) formally approve the report and submit it to MDP, along with a cover letter; and (2) file a copy of the report with the Town Council.

Inasmuch as the DRAFT Report is simply in the form of reported data, I don't think there is anything that is subject to debate or change. However, you are certainly free to add to the Report if you think it appropriate to do so. One of the areas that used to be included in such reports was a section on "Planning Commission Recommendations for Improvements in the Development Process," and in fact, such recommendations are referenced in the template (although there is no block of space set aside for such recommendations in the provided template). If you have any such recommendations, or think it would be useful to describe upcoming projects or a work program, we can certainly add those elements.

Annual Report Worksheet
Reporting (Calendar) Year 2022

INSTRUCTIONS

Each Planning Commission/Board must approve an Annual Report for the reporting calendar year 2022 (January 1, 2022 - December 31,2022), as required under **§1-207(b)** of the Land Use Article. In addition, the Annual Report shall be filed with the local legislative body and the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP), via email to david.dahlstrom@maryland.gov and cc: to mdp.planreview@maryland.gov.

A jurisdiction may use the attached template form, or any of the previous Annual Report forms. The requirements have not changed for calendar year 2022, however, an optional survey is included in Section VII. We encourage all jurisdictions to respond.

Section I- **New Residential Permits**, and **Section II- Amendments and Growth-Related Changes**, are required by all local jurisdictions.

Section III- **Development Capacity Analysis**, is required every three years.

Section IV- Locally Funded Agriculture Preservation, is required for counties only.

Section V – Measures and Indicators, is required for jurisdictions reporting more than 50 new residential permits in Section I.

Section VI- Adequate Public Facility Ordinances, is required every two years for jurisdictions with adopted Adequate Public Facility Ordinances (APFOs).

Section VII – Planning Survey Questions is optional

Annual Report Worksheet
Reporting (Calendar) Year 2022

Section I: New Residential Permits Issued (Inside and Outside the PFA)
(§1-208(c)(1)(i) and (c)(3)(ii))

(A) In *Table 1*, *New Residential Permits Issued (Inside and Outside the PFA*) below, enter the number of new residential building permits issued in calendar year (2022). Enter 0 if no new residential building permits were issued in 2022.

Table 1: New Residential Permits Issued
Inside and Outside the Priority Funding Area (PFA)

Residential – Calendar Year 2022	PFA	Non - PFA	Total
New Residential Permits Issued	65 permits; 120 units	0	65 (120 du's)

Section II: Amendments and Growth Related Changes In Development Patterns
(§1-207(c)(1) through (c)(4))

Note: Growth related changes in development patterns are changes in land use, zoning, transportation capacity improvements, new subdivisions, new schools or school additions, or changes to water and sewer service areas.

(A) Were any new comprehensive plan or plan elements adopted? If yes, briefly summarize what was adopted. Y ☐ N X

(B) Were there any amendments to zoning regulations or zoning map? If yes, briefly summarize each amendment, include a map, or GIS shapefile, if available. Y ☐ N X

(C) Were there growth-related changes, including land use, annexations, zoning ordinance changes, new schools, changes in water or sewer service areas, municipal annexations that changed municipal or unincorporated area boundaries? If yes, describe or attach a map of the changes, and describe how they are consistent with internal, state, or adjoining jurisdiction plans. Y X N ☐

In December of 2021, the Easton Town Council adopted a Comprehensively revised Zoning Code. During 2022, a handful of changes were made to "tweak" aspects of the new Code to ensure that it would be implemented as intended. The most substantial update was the adoption of our Critical Area regulations, which when approved in the 2021 Update, still needed approval by the Critical Area Commission.

(D) If yes to municipal annexations, have copies of each adopted resolution been submitted to: ☐☐Georgeanne Carter, Legislative Counsel Municipal Resolution Reposition Department of Legislative Services, 90 State Circle, Annapolis MD, 21401-1991? Y ☐ N ☐

(E) Did your jurisdiction recommend improvements to the local planning and development process? If yes, please describe. Y ☐ N X

Section III: Development Capacity Analysis (DCA)(§1-208(c)(1)(iii))

Note: MDP provides technical assistance to local governments in completing development capacity analyses. Please contact your MDP regional planner for more information.

(A) Has an updated DCA been submitted with your annual report or to MDP within the last three years? Y ☐ N X

1. If no, explain why not, such as, no substantial growth changes.

   There has been no substantial growth in the Town of Easton in (at least) the last three years. Also, we are in the process of updating our Comprehensive Plan, within which a new Development Capacity Analysis will be included. This is hoped to be accomplished this year.

2. If yes, when was the last DCA submitted? Identify month and year:

   Note: A DCA is not due if a comprehensive plan was updated in the past three years (2020-2022). MDP recommends that jurisdictions share DCAs with local school boards.

   Was the DCA shared with the local school board facilities planner? Y X N ☐

   The 2010 DCA was shared with the County School Board and the new one will be.

(B) Using the most current DCA available, provide the following data on capacity inside and outside the PFA in *Table 2, Residential Development Capacity (Inside and Outside the PFA)*:

Table 2: Residential Development Capacity (Inside and Outside the PFA)

Parcels & Lots w/ Residential Capacity	PFA	Non – PFA	Total
Residentially Zoned Acres w/ Capacity			
Residential Parcel & Lots w/Capacity			
Residential Capacity (Units)			

Annual Report Worksheet
Reporting (Calendar) Year 2022

Please see attachment from the current Town of Easton Comprehensive Plan, which analyzes the development capacity of the current Town plus our Future Growth Area. A DRAFT version from the ongoing Plan Update is also included.

Section IV: (Locally) Funded Agricultural Land Preservation & Local Land Use Goal (Counties Only) (§1-208(C)(1)(iv and v)

NOT APPLICABLE TO THE TOWN OF EASTON

(A) How many acres were preserved using **local** agricultural land preservation funding? Enter 0 if no land was preserved using **local** funds. Enter the value of local program funds, if available.

Table 3: Locally Funded Agricultural Land Preservation

Local Preservation Program Type	Acres	Value ($)
Example: Transfer of Development Rights		
Example: Building Lot Retirement		
Example: Land Purchase		
Example: Local Land Trust		
Example: Easement		
Example: Other		
Total		

*State funded agricultural land preservation acres and values are not required to be reported as state funding is documented.

(B) What is the county's established local land use percentage goal? This percentage should include land uses within PFAs, not including PFA comment areas %

(C) What is the timeframe for achieving the local land use percentage goal? Years.

(D) Has there been any progress in achieving the local land use percentage goal?

(E) What are the resources necessary (e.g. legislative actions (programs incentives), functional planning, and capital funding) for infrastructure inside the PFAs?

(F) What are the resources necessary (e.g. legislative actions (program incentives and zoning changes), preservation planning, and easement funding) for land preservation outside the PFAs?

Annual Report Worksheet
Reporting (Calendar) Year 2022

Section V: Measures and Indicators (§1-208(c)(1))

Note: Measures and Indicators, Section VII, is only required for jurisdictions issuing more than 50 new residential building permits in the reporting year, as reported in Table 1.

Table 4A: Amount of Residential Growth (Inside and Outside the PFA)

Residential – Calendar Year 2022	PFA	Non - PFA	Total
Total Minor Subdivisions Approved	0	0	0
Total Minor Subdivision Lots Approved	0	0	0
Total Residential Units Approved in Minor Subdivisions*	0	0	0
Gross Acres of All Approved Minor Subdivisions	0	0	0
Net Lot Area** in Acres of All Approved Minor Subdivisions	0	0	0
Total Major Subdivisions Approved	2	0	2
Total Major Subdivision Lots Approved	13	0	13
Total Residential Units Approved in Major Subdivisions	10	0	10
Gross Acres of All Approved Major Subdivisions	17.651	0	17.651
Net Lot Area** in Acres of All Approved Major Subdivisions	15.989	0	15.989
Total Residential Units Constructed	47	0	47
Total Residential Units Demolished***		0	
Total Residential Units Reconstructed/Replaced***		0	

* Residential units may be greater than lots if they include duplexes, triplexes. or multifamily

**Net lot area is the sum of all developed lots, minus open spaces and right-of-way, other publicly dedicated land.

****Not required*.

Table 4B: Net Density of Residential Growth (Inside and Outside PFAs)

Residential – Calendar Year 2022	PFA	Non – PFA	Total
Total Residential Units Approved (Major + Minor Subdivisions)	10	0	10
Total Approved Net Lot Area (Major + Minor Subdivisions)	15.989	0	15.989

Table 4C: Share of Residential Growth (Inside and Outside the PFA)

Annual Report Worksheet
Reporting (Calendar) Year 2022

Residential – Calendar Year 2022	PFA	Non – PFA	Total
Total Units Approved (Major + Minor Subdivisions)	10	0	10
% of Total Units (Approved Residential Units)	100%	0%	100%

Annual Report Worksheet
Reporting (Calendar) Year 2022

Table 4D: Amount of Commercial Growth (Inside and Outside the PFA)

Commercial – Calendar Year 2022	PFA	Non - PFA	Total
Site Plans			
Total # of Commercial Site Plans Approved	6	0	6
Gross Acres of All Approved Commercial Site Plans	57.86	0	57.86
Gross Building Area Approved in Square Feet for Commercial Site Plans	146,362	0	146,362
Building Permits			
Total Commercial Building Permits Issued	2	0	2
Gross Building Area Constructed in Square Feet for issued Building Permits	26,572	0	26,572

Annual Report Worksheet
Reporting (Calendar) Year 2022

Section VI: Adequate Public Facility Ordinance (APFO) Restrictions (§7-104)
(Section VI is only required by jurisdictions with adopted APFOs)

Note: Jurisdictions with adopted APFOs must submit a biennial APFO report. The APFO report is due by July 1 of each even year and covers the reporting period for the previous two calendar years. APFO reports for 2020 and 2021 are due July 1, 2022. However, jurisdictions are encouraged to submit an APFO report on an annual basis.

(A) What type of infrastructure is monitored and may trigger development approval restrictions or require a developer to address deficiencies? (List each for schools, roads, water, sewer, stormwater, health care, fire, police or solid waste.)

(B) Has APFO impacted development approvals? Y/N

(C) If APFO has delayed, limited, or denied development, defined here as a "restriction":

a. Are there infrastructure or service facility deficiencies that have triggered denials of development requests, or held up development approvals? Y/N

Note: This does not include APFO required developer-funded projects, , or phased development approvals due to APFO limitations, or APFO required study areas for approval.

b. Can the impact area of facility deficiencies/ development restrictions, which temporarily delay development approvals, be mapped? Y/N

(D) If yes for (C)(b), where is each restriction located? (Identify on a map, including PFA boundary.)

(E) Describe what is causing each restriction.

(F) If applicable, what is the proposed resolution of each restriction?

(G) If applicable, what is the estimated date to resolve each restriction?

(H) If a development restriction has been addressed, what was the resolution that lifted each restriction?

(I) If a development restriction has been addressed, when was each restriction lifted?

Annual Report Worksheet
Reporting (Calendar) Year 2022

Section VII: Planning Survey Questions (Optional)

This information can help MDP and MDOT staff to identify potential pedestrian/bicycle projects and their funding.

(A) Does your jurisdiction have a bicycle and pedestrian plan? Y ☐ N ☐

1. Plan name
2. Date Completed (MM/DD/YR)
3. Has the plan been adopted? Y ☐ N ☐
4. Is the plan available online? Y ☐ N ☐
5. How often do you intend to update it? (Every ____ years)
6. Are existing and planned bicycle and pedestrian facilities mapped? Y ☐ N ☐

(B) Does your jurisdiction have a transportation functional plan in addition to a comprehensive plan? Y ☐ N ☐

1. Plan name
2. Date completed (MM/DD/YY)
3. Has plan been adopted? Y ☐ N ☐
4. Is the plan available online? Y ☐ N ☐
5. How often do you intend to update it? (Every ____ years)

(C) Has your jurisdiction completed and submitted a five year mid-cycle comprehensive plan implementation review report this year? Y ☐ N ☐

Note: To find out if your jurisdiction is scheduled to submit this report, consult the Transition Schedule (Counties) section located at: https://planning.maryland.gov/pages/OurWork/compPlans/ten-year.aspx

If yes, please include the 5-Year Report as an attachment.

ATTACHMENT 1 - DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY ANALYSIS

FROM 2010 EASTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, MUNICIPAL GROWTH ELEMENT:

CAPACITY FOR DEVELOPMENT WITHIN EXISTING TOWN LIMITS

This subsection of the Plan delves into the more technical realm of Planning mentioned in the Introduction to the Element. One of the new requirements for Comprehensive Plans is to estimate the capacity for development within the existing Town boundaries. This requires that we look at undeveloped land, land suitable for infill development, and land with potential for redevelopment. In order to complete this exercise, certain assumptions have to be made concerning each of these types of development. For example, we are assuming that future development will occur at a more urban density than has occurred in recent years. At a minimum we will assume that we can achieve the Maryland Smart Growth minimum density of 3.5 dwelling units per acre (3.5 du/ac), the minimum density required to satisfy the requirements of being designated a Primary Funding Area (PFA). We have also used guidance provided by the MD Department of Planning in their Models and Guidelines Series publication "Estimating Residential Development Capacity." Finally, some assumptions are based on our past experience with development review in Easton. The following table walks through the development of our estimate for residential development capacity within the current Town limits:

Annual Report Worksheet
Reporting (Calendar) Year 2022

Estimating Residential Development Potential in Easton

A. Estimate Infill/Redevelopment/Build-out Potential (i.e. what we could get with *no* additional annexations)

Look back at the "Priority Development Areas" from current (2004) Comp Plan

Area 1 – ~~SSPP – non-residential (institutional)~~

Area 2 – Brooks Farm (in-Town portion)

Area 3 – Hospital-owned Oxford Road site (possible quasi-residential development on a portion of site)

Area 4 – Ashby Commons (89 du approved)

Area 5 – ~~Easton Commons Site (non-residential)~~

Area 6 – ~~Waterside Village (non-residential)~~

Area 7 – Alvin Lapides Property

Area 2 (100.187 ac x 3.5 du/ac x .75 (underbuild factor recommended by MDP)) = 262 units

Area 3 (using same factor as above for half of site and Londonderry density for half of site (4.0 du/ac)) = 404 units

Area 4 – 89 units already approved

Area 7 – (56 ac x 3.5 du/ac x .75) = 147 units

Total estimated possible units from Priority Development Areas in 2004 Plan = 902

B. Other Parcels with Infill Potential

Unimproved parcels ≥ 5 acres (using same build-out factors as above) = 455 units

Unimproved parcels ≥ 1 acre in the PR District (substituting the PR density of a max. 20 du/ac for 3.5 in the equation above) = 305 units

Total estimated possible "other" infill units = 760

C. Completion of Approved or Pending Project

Residential Projects Under Construction = 347 units

Residential Projects Under Review = 355 units (excludes Ashby Commons which is already counted above)

Total Units in Approved/Pending Projects = 702

D. Downtown Residential Development Potential (per AKRF study) = 100

E. Redevelopment Potential (Parcels w/ improvements assessed at ≤ $50,000; ≈ 47 acres x 3.5 du/ac x 0.75) = 123 – 95 existing units = 28 (net new units)

Total Infill/Redevelopment/Build-out Potential (A+B+C+D+E) = 2,492 units

The net result is that our best estimate is that we can accommodate 2,492 more dwelling units within the Town, without the need to add any additional land for residential development. Obviously it is not as simple as saying we do not need to add any land for growth until these units are built. There will be some parcels that have environmental constraints making it difficult to develop. There will also be the landowner who has no interest in developing, at least for the time being. Finally, simple supply and demand economics dictate that at some point some of the growth areas will need to be tapped or housing prices will escalate, thereby exacerbating an already serious problem in Easton. This is a problem we will have to grapple with when we ultimately reach the limits of the urban growth boundary, but while we have growth areas available, it would seem unwise to artificially inflate housing prices by restricting supply.

The point is simply that there should be an adequate supply of potential dwelling units within the existing Town limits to forestall the need to annex additional land for some time. In fact, 2,492 units should last approximately 10 years at the 3% annual growth rate that Easton has experienced in the recent past and approximately 30 years at the target rate of 1%. Furthermore this exceeds the growth in total units we have witnessed in the most recent 10 years (i.e. 1999 – 2008) during which Easton has added about 1,900 dwelling units, thus reinforcing the notion that the existing Town limits can accommodate growth for the next ten years. It should be noted also that the previous ten years would seem to be a very representative time period as there were both very high and very low growth periods throughout these last ten years. Thus it seems that it is not necessary to tap into the identified long range growth areas for the next planning period and possibly also for the one to follow (i.e. 2015 – 2021) for the purpose of providing land for residential development. Depending on how successful we are in achieving the targeted growth rate of 1%, it may not be necessary to develop

beyond the existing Town Boundaries plus Priority 1 growth areas for as much as 30 years.

On the other hand this is tempered by the fact that clearly not all land that is as yet undeveloped is suitable for development, or at least not at the theoretical maximum density. Likewise land identified as potential for redevelopment may be constrained from such activity by any number of economic or environmental factors. On balance though, it appears that there is no need for large-scale annexation of land beyond identified Priority 1 Growth Areas during the current planning period.

LAND AREA NEEDED TO SATISFY DEMAND

By enacting an Urban Growth Boundary in the 2004 Plan, this subsection essentially becomes unnecessary. Regardless of what the demand might be for development, we now only have a certain, fixed amount of land available. Nevertheless, this is a Plan with a 30 year time-frame and we can project out 30 years to determine whether or not we will likely be essentially built-out or still have available growth areas at that time. In order to do so, an exercise similar to that performed for estimating the development potential of land within the existing Town boundary will be conducted as follows:

Total acreage of Future Growth Area = 3,880 acres
Less acreage already developed and/or non-residential – 1,300
= 2,580 acres x 3.5 du/ac x 0.75 (underbuild factor) = 6,773 du's

This simple exercise indicates that the Growth Area has the potential to accommodate 6,773 new residential units. This information can be combined with other calculations already made to give us more useful information, such as:

A. Residential Build-out Potential of Existing Town = 2,492 units

B. Additional Residential Unit Potential in Growth Area = 6,773 units

C. Existing Units in Growth Area = 727 units

D. Potential Residential Capacity of Growth Area (B + C) = 7,500 units

E. Total Potential New Units in Easton (A + B) = 9,265

F. Existing Units in Easton = 7,350

G. Total Residential Build-out (E + F + C) = 17,342

H. Estimated Population at Build-out (17,342 x 2.22) = 38,499

Without the confinement of the Growth Boundary, assuming that we continue to grow at the 3% average annual compound rate that we have in recent years, then in 2040, Easton would, all other things being equal, have approximately 18,350 dwelling units. This exceeds the 17,342 units estimated as our Built-out capacity. Thus we would anticipate achieving effective build-out before 2040. In fact using these assumptions, we would achieve build-out sometime in the 30th year from 2009 (i.e. 2039). However, Easton does have an Urban Growth Boundary and this Plan seeks to achieve an annual future growth rate of no more than 1%. Given these policies, we should be nowhere near effective build-out in 2040. In fact build-out does not occur under this scenario until the decade of the 2090's (80 to 90 years in the future).

SAME SECTION FROM DRAFT 2023 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

CAPACITY FOR DEVELOPMENT WITHIN EXISTING TOWN LIMITS

This subsection of the Plan delves into the more technical realm of Planning mentioned in the Introduction to the Element. One of the more recent requirements for Comprehensive Plans is to estimate the capacity for development within the existing Town boundaries. This requires that we look at undeveloped land, land suitable for infill development, and land with potential for redevelopment. In order to complete this exercise, certain assumptions have to be made concerning each of these types of development. For example, we are assuming that future development will occur at a more urban density than has occurred in recent years. At a minimum we will assume that we can achieve the Maryland Smart Growth minimum density of 3.5 dwelling units per acre (3.5 du/ac), the minimum density required to satisfy the requirements of being designated a Primary Funding Area (PFA). We have also used guidance provided by the MD Department of Planning in their Models and Guidelines Series publication "Estimating Residential Development Capacity." Finally, some assumptions are based on our past experience with development review in Easton. The following table walks through the development of our estimate for residential development capacity within the current Town limits:

Annual Report Worksheet
Reporting (Calendar) Year 2022

Estimating Residential Development Potential in Easton

A. Estimate Infill/Redevelopment/Build-out Potential (i.e. what we could get with *no* additional annexations)

Look back at the "Priority Development Areas" from current (2010) Comp Plan

Area 1 – ~~SSPP – non-residential (institutional)~~

Area 2 – Brooks Farm (in-Town portion)

Area 3 – Hospital-owned Oxford Road site (possible quasi-residential development on a portion of site)

Area 4 – ~~Ashby Commons~~ ~~(89 du approved)~~ [Now Essentially Built-out]

Area 5 – ~~Easton Commons Site (non-residential)~~

Area 6 – ~~Waterside Village (non-residential)~~

Area 7 – Alvin Lapides Property

Area 8 - Easton Point

Area 2 - 252 du's approved in 2022.

Area 3 (456 du's proposed and under review as of April 2023)

Area 7 – (Approx. 20 ac zoned residential, assumed to be multi-family [assume Londonderry density of 4.0 du/ac] x 4.0 du/ac x .75) = 60 units

Area 8* - 332 units (Residential units reflected in the Port Street Small Area Plan. NOTE: This includes lands not within the Town of Easton. For the purpose of this projection, they are treated as being within Town LImits)

Total estimated possible units from Priority Development Areas in 2010 Plan, as Amended (to Include Easton Point as the 8th Priority Development Area) = 1,100

B. Other Parcels with Infill Potential

Unimproved parcels ≥ 1 acre zoned Residential (using same build-out factors as above) = (49.9 ac x 3.5 x.75) 131 units

Unimproved parcels ≥ 1 acre in the PR District (substituting the PR density of a max. 40 du/ac for 3.5 in the equation above) = (3.3 ac x 40 x .75) = 99 units

# of unimproved residentially-zoned parcels <1 ac (assume one triplex middle housing type per parcel) = 94 parcels x 3 units = 282 units

Total estimated possible "other" infill units = 512

C. Completion of Approved or Pending Project

Residential Projects Under Construction = 21 units

Residential Projects Under Review = 465 units (excludes Area 2 (Brooks Farm - Four Seasons) and Area 3 (Poplar Hill) which are already counted above)

Total Units in Approved/Pending Projects = 486

D. Downtown Residential Development Potential (per AKRF study) = 100

E. Redevelopment Potential (Parcels w/ improvements assessed at ≤ $50,000; ≈ 63.7 acres x 3.5 du/ac x 0.75) = 167 – 158 existing units = 9 (net new units) +Special Redevelopment Target Areas (See Table on Following Page) 875 = 885

Total Infill/Redevelopment/Build-out Potential (A+B+C+D+E) = 3,083 units

Table _____ Redevelopment Target Areas		
Project/Area	Acres	Potential Residential Units (acres x 30 du/ac x 0.75)
Hospital	14.84	334
Easton Plaza (Parking lot)	12.456	280
Perdue - Brookletts	6.548	147
Brookletts Building	1.787	40
Perdue - Maryland Ave	2.36	53
Safeway	1.46	21 (net, after deducting 12 units already included in the AKRF Study)

The net result is that our best estimate is that we can accommodate 3,083 more dwelling units within the Town, without the need to add any additional land for residential development (other than the portions of Easton Point per item A 8 that are currently beyond Town Limits). Obviously it is not as simple as saying we do not need to add any land for growth until these units are built. There will be some parcels that have environmental constraints making it difficult to develop. We have accounted for the more obvious such lands, but there are undoubtedly more that will not be as evident until we are actually reviewing a development proposal for such sites. There will also be the landowner who has no interest in developing, at least for the time being. Finally, simple supply and demand economics dictate that at some point some of the growth areas will need to be tapped or housing prices will escalate, thereby exacerbating an already serious problem in Easton. This is a problem we will have to grapple with when we ultimately reach the limits of the urban growth boundary, but while we have

growth areas available, it would seem unwise to artificially inflate housing prices by restricting supply.

The 3,083 represents a significant increase from the 2,492 units projected in the 2010 Plan. The increase is primarily the result of the addition of Area 8 (Easton Point) as a "Priority Development Area" and a more detailed analysis of redevelopment potential through the inclusion of specific properties believed to possess significant opportunities for redevelopment (Table ___ above).

The point is simply that there should be an adequate supply of potential dwelling units within the existing Town limits to forestall the need to annex significant additional land for some time, at least solely for the sake of accommodating projected residential growth. In fact 3,083 units should last approximately 20 years at the 1.75% annual growth rate that this Plan targets. Furthermore this far exceeds the growth in total units we witnessed in the most recent Census Interval (i.e. 2010 – 2020) during which Easton added only 516 dwelling units, thus reinforcing the notion that the existing Town limits can accommodate growth for the next ten years. On the other hand this is tempered by the fact that clearly not all land that is as yet undeveloped is suitable for development, or at least not at the theoretical maximum density. Likewise land identified as potential for redevelopment may be constrained from such activity by any number of economic or environmental factors, not to mention the politics of development approval, which often results in projects being approved at less that the "Smart Growth Density," if not denied. Finally, there is clearly an argument that one of the issues (and arguably, the most critical issue) regarding housing affordability in Easton is a simple issue of a lack of a supply of available units, thus to the extent that Easton seriously tackles the housing affordability, one approach could very well involve an effort to increase housing supply.

END

Submitting Annual Reports and Technical Assistance

(A) Annual Reports may be submitted via email (preferred) to david.dahlstrom@maryland.gov with a cc: to mdp.planreview@maryland.gov, or if emailing is not possible one copy may be mailed to:

Office of the Secretary
Maryland Department of Planning
301 W. Preston Street, Suite 1101
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2305
Attn: David Dahlstrom, AICP

(B) Annual reports should include a cover letter indicating that it has been approved by the planning commission and that a copy has been filed with the local legislative body. The cover letter should also indicate a point of contact(s) should MDP have questions about the report.

(C) If you need assistance to prepare or submit reports, MDP regional planners are available to assist. Contact information is found at: Planning.Maryland.gov/OurWork/local-planning-staff.shtml

(D) You may wish to send additional copies directly to your MDP regional planner or school board facilities planner.

(E) Copies of this annual report worksheet, and links to legislation about annual report requirements can be found on the Maryland Department of Planning website: Planning.Maryland.gov/YourPart/SGGAnnualReport.shtml

(F) If you have any suggestions to improve this worksheet or any of the annual report materials, please list or contact David Dahlstrom at david.dahlstrom@maryland.gov.