



City of Annapolis
Planning Commission
Department of Planning & Zoning
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April 15, 2015

To: Annapolis City Council
From: Planning Commission
Re: Findings for O-32-14: Forest Conservation Act

SUMMARY

The proposed legislation creates a comprehensive Forest Conservation Act.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

The Planning Commission began its review of this proposed legislation on March 5, 2015. A public hearing was begun and continued as it became clear that the Planning Commission wanted to make significant changes to the proposed legislation. The matter was held over until the April 2, 2015 meeting, at which time it was decided to continue the Commission's review until April 15, 2015. The Commission voted unanimously to reopen the public hearing so that the amended legislation could be published, reviewed, and commented upon by the City staff and the public.

PUBLIC HEARING AND DELIBERATION

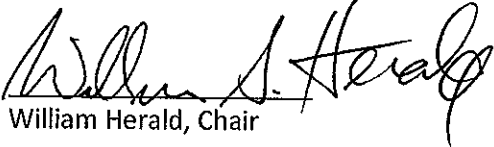
On April 15, 2015, the Planning Commission heard public testimony on the amended legislation and found the following:

- a simplified Forest Conservation Act is needed;
- a Forest Conservation Act that strives for objective, fact-based decision-making is preferable to subjective, influencable decision-making;
- governmental transparency, freely-flowed information, and citizen involvement at appropriate times will be beneficial to arriving at consensus decisions;
- the Forest Conservation Act review process should not control the wider planning process but, rather, should be a part and parcel of the planning process;
- there should not be multiple appeals; rather, there should be one consolidated appeal of planning and Forest Conservation Act decisions;
- the entire Forest Conservation Act should be in Title 21 of the City Code so as to simplify, clarify and unify the planning process.

RECOMMENDATION

Finally, on April 15, 2015, the Planning Commission voted 6-0 to recommend the amended legislation to the City Council.

Adopted this 15th day of April, 2015


William Herald, Chair