



City of Annapolis
Planning Commission
Department of Planning and Zoning
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IN THE MATTER OF ORDINANCE O-16-26
Forest Conservation - Program Amendments to Conform with State Law

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission on July 16, 2026 held a public hearing on this proposed legislation.

Urban Forester Brian Adams reviewed the legislation with Commissioners, who had been provided a detailed report submitted by Senior Comprehensive Planner Alexis Robinson.

Members of the public had the opportunity to speak. Alderman Robert Savidge related the history and background of the legislation. He provided several documents explaining the processes in the proposed legislation and describing the differences between the City of Annapolis' Forest Conservation Act and the lesser State requirements. He reviewed his proposed Amendments 2 through 7 to the legislation. No other members of the public testified. No written comments were received.

The proposed amendments address:

#2: Stream Buffers. The Director of P&Z is allowed to enlarge the required stream buffers; this amendment defines the factors upon which his decision must be based.

#3. Annual Report. Only the due date of an annual report to DNR is changed. The City has been submitting this report for several years.

#4: Appeals. The State is now requiring a final, appealable decision on final forest conservation plans. This amendment clarifies the City processes; the preliminary plan is reviewed by the Planning Commission; if approved by the Commission, the final conservation plan goes to the Director of P&Z; his decision may be appealed to the Zoning Board of Appeals; that decision is final and can be appealed to the Circuit Court.

#5: Notice of Plan Approval. The Director's decision must be published in a newspaper of general circulation and, presumably, in the City's project tracking website.

#6: Applicability. The current proposed amendment makes this legislation applicable upon passage by the City Council. Ald. Savidge testified he may adjust the amendment so as to grandfather any current applications to the standards of the current forest conservation act.

#7: Text language. No substantive changes.

Furthermore, the Commission recommends the following language be added to the Forest Conservation Act:

In cases where divergent standards apply, the most restrictive standard shall be imposed.

After discussion the Commission voted unanimously to recommend APPROVAL of the proposed legislation and amendments, including the additional amendment requiring adherence to the most restrictive standards applicable.

This recommendation shall be forwarded to the City Council for its consideration.

Entered this 17th day of July, 2026 on behalf of the Planning Commission:



Alex Pline, Chair

Annapolis Planning Commission