



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Office of the Chairman
Prince George's County Planning Board

14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772
www.mncppc.org/pgco

(301) 952-3561

February 15, 2018

The Honorable Dannielle Glaros
Chairwoman
Prince George's County Council
County Administration Building
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

Re: CB-5-2018

Dear Chairwoman Glaros: *Dannielle*

Thank you for providing the Planning Board an opportunity to review and comment on proposed District Council legislation. During the February 15, 2018 Planning Board meeting, the following position was adopted in accordance with the planning staff's recommendations on the proposed legislation. **A Planning Board Analysis of the bill is attached for your consideration and a brief excerpt from the report is provided below:**

***CB-5-2018** amends Section 24-128 (Private roads and easements.) by adding language to permit the Planning Board to approve private streets and alleys when developing townhouses or two-family attached dwellings on land located in the Rural Residential (R-R), One-Family Detached Residential (R-55), Residential Townhouse (R-T), Commercial Shopping Center (C-S-C), Commercial Miscellaneous (C-M) and the Planned Industrial/Employment Park (I-3) Zones.*

Planning Board Recommendation: Oppose
(See Attachment 1 for full analysis)

The bill as drafted could have a very broad application and would apply to numerous properties within the R-R, R-55, R-T, C-S-C, C-M and I-3 Zones. The title and purpose statement should be amended to include R-55, R-T, and I-3 Zones. On page 2 line 8, the words "when appropriate" should be clarified. What is meant by reducing the pavement width of private streets to twenty-two (22) feet when appropriate?

Lines 9 through 10 should be deleted. Requiring the Planning Board to find that rear alleys constitute frontage is counterintuitive and raises more questions than it resolves. A townhouse or two-family dwelling would end up with two frontages. Requiring rear alleys to be classified as frontage on property could place residences at risk of not receiving emergency services. Alleys typically provide secondary or service access and do not require sidewalks and street trees like a public or private street. In addition, the reduced alley width may impact the turn radius for emergency and other vehicles and may cause ingress and egress issues. The front of a property has street numbers, not the alley; therefore, the numbers would not be visible from a public street.

If it is the intent of the District Council to move forward with this bill, design standards should be added to the bill to direct the use, width and location of alleys. The use of alley design standards would maintain a hierarchical street system and ensure that alleys are not used for general circulation. Alleys should connect to a public or private street and be designed to provide access to the dwelling units. Adequate turn radius and connection to public or private streets should also be required for alleys.

As always, Planning Department staff members are available to work with the Council and your legislative staff on any pertinent legislative matters. Please let us know if we may be of further assistance.

Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Planning Director at 301-952-3595. Thank you, again, for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Betty".

Elizabeth M. Hewlett
Chairman

Attachments

CB-5-2018 – Planning Board Analysis (Attachment 1)

CB-5-2018 amends Section 24-128 (Private roads and easements.) by adding language to permit the Planning Board to approve private streets and alleys when developing townhouses or two-family attached dwellings on land located in the Rural Residential (R-R), One-Family Detached Residential (R-55), Residential Townhouse (R-T), Commercial Shopping Center (C-S-C), Commercial Miscellaneous (C-M) and the Planned Industrial/Employment Park (I-3) Zones.

In addition, the pavement width of the private streets may be reduced to twenty-two (22) feet in width when appropriate and the pavement width for private alleys must not be less than eighteen (18) feet in width. Lastly, the bill requires the Planning Board to find that a rear alley constitutes frontage.

The Planning Board has the following comments for consideration by the District Council:

The bill as drafted could have a very broad application and would apply to numerous properties within the R-R, R-55, R-T, C-S-C, C-M and I-3 Zones. The title and purpose statement should be amended to include R-55, R-T, and I-3 Zones. On page 2 line 8, the words "when appropriate" should be clarified. What is meant by reducing the pavement width of private streets to twenty-two (22) feet when appropriate?

Lines 9 through 10 should be deleted. Requiring the Planning Board to find that rear alleys constitute frontage is counterintuitive and raises more questions than it resolves. A townhouse or two-family dwelling would end up with two frontages. Requiring rear alleys to be classified as frontage on property could place residences at risk of not receiving emergency services. Alleys typically provide secondary or service access and do not require sidewalks and street trees like a public or private street. In addition, the reduced alley width may impact the turn radius for emergency and other vehicles and may cause ingress and egress issues. The front of a property has street numbers, not the alley; therefore, the numbers would not be visible from a public street.

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Lastly, the Planning Board notes that the complete legislative draft of the zoning rewrite is under development for transmittal to the District Council in early March. Therefore, we strongly recommend against the consideration of text amendments that amend the current ordinances. Although text amendments have their place, we respectfully suggest that the time may have come for the District Council to focus its full attention on approving a new 21st century zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations that will make continuing text amendment repairs unnecessary. Continuing to amend ordinances that are about to be replaced will be confusing to the public and could distract the District Council from the all-important work of reviewing the new ordinances.

Following discussion, the Planning Board voted to oppose CB-5-2018.

cc: Prince George's County Council Members
Robert J. Williams, Jr., Council Administrator
Jackie W. Brown, Director, PZED Committee
Rajesh Kumar, Principal Counsel to District Council
Karen Zavakos, Legislative Officer
Redis Floyd, Clerk to the Council
Maurene McNeil, Chief Zoning Hearing Examiner
Nicholas A. Majett, Chief Administrative Officer
Brad Frome, Assistant Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
David Iannuci, Assistant Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Andrea Anderson, Appointments Liaison
Jared McCarthy, County Attorney
LaKeecia Allen, Associate County Attorney
Dinora A. Hernandez, Associate County Attorney
Nathaniel Tutt III, Council Liaison