



WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, ZONING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Julie M. Giordano
County Executive

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Assistant Director of Administration

Tracey G. Taylor
Director

MINUTES

The Wicomico County Planning and Zoning Commission ("Commission") met in regular session on February 19, 2026, in Room 301, Council Chambers, Government Office Building, with the following persons participating:

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Charles "Chip" Dashiell, Chairman
Daniel Moreno-Holt, Vice Chairman
Sara Bynum-King
Mandel Copeland
Tanisha Siggers

PLANNING STAFF:

Tracey Taylor, Wicomico County Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development ("PZCD")
Janae Merchant, Recording Secretary, PZCD
Colin Harrison, PZCD

Andrew Illuminati, Wicomico County, Department of Law

Chairman Dashiell called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

MINUTES: The County minutes from January 15, 2026, were brought forward for approval. Mr. Daniel Moreno-Holt moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Mandel Copeland; the motion carried. The minutes from the January 15, 2026, meeting were **APPROVED**.

Chairman Dashiell requested that everyone who planned to testify before the Commission stand and be sworn in; Mr. Andrew Illuminati administered the Oath.

PUBLIC HEARING – CRITICAL AREA OFFICIAL MAPS - Repeal and replace the Official Critical Area District Map as enumerated in Chapter 125-4 of the Wicomico County Code. (C. Harrison & F. McKenzie)

The Public Hearing began at 4:06 p.m.

Mr. Andrew Illuminati read the Public Hearing notice.

Mr. Frank McKenzie and Mr. Colin Harrison approached the table. Mr. Harrison presented the Staff Report.

Mr. Harrison stated that in the spring of 2008, legislation was passed and signed into law requiring the State to work cooperatively with local jurisdictions to update the Critical Area maps in all affected jurisdictions. The legislation directed the Department of Natural Resources to prepare a Statewide base map that includes a State-determined shoreline and landward boundary of tidal wetlands, and to digitally generate a georeferenced thousand-foot Critical Area boundary, as appropriate, for integration into the Geographic Information System. Wicomico County and our municipalities were granted two years to adopt the new Critical Area boundary maps. We were just made aware that we need to file by March 4th, prior to the Critical Area Commission meeting. Since we are assisting Mardela Springs, we will need them to generate a similar letter. Given the timing to get through the Planning Commission and Council, we are not going to make that deadline. So, we will be asking for an extension from the Critical Area Commission.

Staff recommended that the Planning Commission forward a **FAVORABLE** recommendation to the County Council for the repeal and replacement of the Official Critical Area District Map, as enumerated in Chapter 125-4, entitled "Official Maps" of the Wicomico County Code.

With no comments from the public or the Commission members, Ms. Sara Bynum-King moved to forward a favorable recommendation to the County Council for the repeal and replacement of the official Critical Area District Map, as enumerated in Chapter 25-4, entitled "Official Maps," of the Wicomico County Code. Seconded by Ms. Teri Denton, which was duly carried.

Chairman Dashiell stated the motion was **APPROVED**.

The Public Hearing concluded at 4:11 p.m.

MARYLAND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION ACT OF 2012 (SB 236) – "SEPTIC TIER LAW" – OVERVIEW AND PRESENTATION (T. Taylor)

Ms. Tracey Taylor presented a Septic Tiers Law 101 session using a PowerPoint slideshow on "**Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012 (SB236)**." The purpose and intent of the law is to address the environmental impacts of on-site septic systems and the negative impacts they have when they start to fail. The law applies to every political subdivision. So, all municipalities and counties in the State of Maryland must comply with this law. The law applies only to residential subdivisions; it does not affect commercial, institutional, or industrial development.

SB236 became effective July 1, 2012; anything that occurred prior to this date was grandfathered. Local governments were required to formally adopt a Tier Map by December 31, 2012. If one was not adopted, then no major subdivisions on septic were permitted. Municipalities had the option not to implement a Tier Map, but if they did not, they could not approve any major subdivisions in their jurisdiction. The State allowed local governments to change the definition of a minor subdivision. Wicomico County modified its definition of minor subdivision and increased the number of lots from five (5) to seven (7).

The Tier Law focuses on residential development, distinguishing between major and minor subdivisions. It required a jurisdiction to classify its lands into four tiers. Once classified, the tiers were submitted to the State for review and consideration. The tiers are as follows:

- ▶ Tier I: Areas currently served by sewerage systems. Major and minor subdivisions permitted on public sewerage systems; no on-site septic systems permitted.
- ▶ Tier II: Areas planned to be served by sewerage systems. Major subdivisions on public sewerage systems – no major subdivisions permitted with on-site septic systems. Minor subdivisions on public sewerage systems and on-site septic systems are permitted; however, on-site septic systems shall be considered “interim” systems until public sewer is available.
- ▶ Tier III: Areas not planned to be served by sewerage systems; areas where residential growth on septic systems can occur. Major and minor subdivisions permitted with on-site, community, and shared sewerage disposal systems.
- ▶ Tier IV: Areas planned for preservation/conservation and not planned to be served by sewerage systems. Major subdivisions with on-site septic systems are not permitted. Minor subdivisions are permitted with on-site septic systems.

Chairman Dashiell thanked Ms. Taylor for the presentation.

PLANNING DIRECTOR UPDATES – (T. Taylor)

Ms. Taylor provided updates on the following:

- The RFP for the Comprehensive Plan update has been released. Ms. Taylor anticipates bids coming in and an award out by the end of March or early April. The first thing in the RFP is a kickoff orientation meeting with the Planning Commission. Monthly work sessions have been built into the schedule. If the Commission agenda is light, we should be able to incorporate work sessions into the regularly scheduled meeting. Mr. Matt Littlejohn, our Long Range Planner, will be the Project Manager for the comp plan update.
- MOU's went out with to the engineers to all the municipalities for the Comprehensive Water Sewer Plan update.
- The Housing Study is being reviewed by Ms. Lori Carter, Ms. Kaylee Justice, Ms. Joni Kindell, and Ms. Taylor. It will be brought before the Commission in March or April.
- The Public Hearing for the manufactured / modular housing legislation will probably go before the County Council at the first meeting in March.
- Last month's amendment, reviewed by the Commission, will probably be heard by the County Council at the second meeting in March.
- The process has begun for rewriting the subdivision regulations. There are sections that require reworking to make them more usable and up to date. Hopefully, this information will be before the Commission early to midsummer.
- A set of regulations to allow for accessory dwelling units is something that we will be working on in the next couple of months, and hopefully, we'll bring it to you early to midsummer, because that State law is effective October 1, 2026.
- Ms. Taylor has been reviewing an average of five legislative bills per week through MACo to ensure we provide the right testimony for or against whatever is coming our way. The one Ms. Taylor is concerned about is a middle housing bill, which is aimed at duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, and similar homes. An analysis of all of our vacant and underutilized commercial and industrial land needs to be completed to allow for middle housing on those lands. Instead of putting housing on underutilized or vacant commercial properties, Ms. Taylor believes we should entice businesses to locate there, create jobs, keep people here, and help people earn money so they can afford housing.

MEETING DATES – March 19, 2026, and April 16, 2026

Chairman Dashiell announced the meeting dates for the next two months.


ANNOUNCEMENTS

With no additional comments, Chairman Dashiell requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Bynum-King made the motion, seconded by Mr. Moreno-Holt, and the motion was duly carried.

The meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Wicomico County Planning Commission will be held on March 19, 2026.

This is a summary of the meeting's proceedings. Detailed information is in the permanent files for each case, as presented and filed with the Wicomico County Department of Planning and Zoning and Community Development Office.



Charles "Chip" Dashiell, Chairman



Tracey G. Taylor, Secretary



Janae Merchant, Recording Secretary