



Charles County Planning Commission

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Planning Commission Report to the County Commissioners

Aviation Business Park ZTA #23-176 / Bill 2024-07 and ZMA #23-02 / Bill 2024-08

Summary of Amendments:

Charles County proposes to rezone certain properties surrounding the Maryland Airport to a new Aviation Business Park (ABP) Zone. The purpose of the zoning amendments is to allow commercial and industrial development compatible with the Maryland Airport and to support economic development. The proposed legislation consists of Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) #23-176 and Zoning Map Amendment (ZMA) #23-02. The text amendment would amend certain provisions of the Charles County Zoning Ordinance to establish a new base zoning district, the Aviation Business Park (ABP) Zone. The map amendment would amend the Charles County Zoning Maps to rezone certain properties around the airport to the new ABP Zone, with certain properties along Ray Drive being rezoned to Light Industrial (IG). In 2021, the Charles County Commissioners approved a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to change the land use designation for lands around the Airport from Watershed Conservation to Employment and Industrial. This rezoning process is now necessary to establish zoning that would allow these employment and industrial uses.

Summary of Initial Planning Commission Public Process

The Charles County Planning Commission received an introductory briefing on ZTA #23-176 and ZMA #23-02 on July 17, 2023, and on September 18, 2023, the Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on the proposed amendments. At the conclusion of the Public Hearing, the record was held open for 30 days, closing on October 19, 2023. The Planning Commission received a total of 41 comments from the public during this process. On December 4, 2023, after the conclusion of their Work Session, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to forward a recommendation of approval of the proposed ZTA #23-176 and ZMA #23-02, Aviation Business Park, for adoption by the Board of County Commissioners.

Summary of Initial County Commissioner Public Process

The Charles County Commissioners received an introductory briefing on Bill 2024-07 (ZTA #23-176) and Bill 2024-08 (ZMA #23-02) on March 5, 2024 and on April 9, 2024, the County Commissioners held a Public Hearing on the proposed amendments. The Commissioners received a total of 169 public comments during this process. At their July 9, 2024, work session, the Commissioners requested that staff revise the proposed zoning maps to address public comment from the April 9, 2024 public hearing and Commissioner concerns by reducing the area to be considered for rezoning. The County Commissioners requested that the amendments, as revised, be brought back to the Planning Commission for an additional public hearing.

Second Planning Commission process

Introductory Briefing:

The Planning Commission received an introductory briefing on ZTA #23-176 and ZMA #23-02, as revised by the County Commissioners, on July 15, 2024. At this meeting the Planning Commission voted to schedule a public hearing on the proposed amendments.

Public Hearing:

On August 5, 2024, the Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on ZTA #23-176 and ZMA #23-02. At the hearing, fifteen (15) individuals voiced comments on the zoning amendments. At the conclusion of the Public Hearing, the record was held open for 30 days concluding on September 5, 2024; ten (10) written comments were received during the open record period. There were also two (2) written comments submitted prior to the hearing, and one additional comment that was submitted after the close of the record.

Work Session:

On September 16, 2024, the Planning Commission held a Work Session to consider the proposed zoning amendments and public testimony. During their discussion, the Planning Commission members expressed that all of the Ray Drive properties that are improved with businesses should be zoned IG. They also discussed additional changes to the map to protect steep slopes and other environmental features.

Recommendation:

On September 16, 2024, after the conclusion of the Work Session, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to forward a recommendation of approval of the proposed ZTA #23-176 and ZMA #23-02, Aviation Business Park, for adoption by the Board of County Commissioners, with the following revisions: 1) change the zoning of Parcel 505 (Map 12) on Ray Drive from WCD to IG; and 2) remove an additional 41 acres of Parcel 157 (up to where it meets the northern property line of Parcel 503 (Map 12)) from the proposed ABP Zone and place it in the WCD Zone.

Kevin B. Wedding
Kevin B. Wedding (Sep 24, 2024 16:26 EDT)

Kevin Wedding, Chair