

COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY

WORK SESSION MINUTES

June 9, 2026

OPEN SESSION – Elk Room

4:30 P.M.

NOTE: The recording and transcription of this meeting are available on the County website at www.cecilcountymd.gov

PRESENT: Council Members: Robert Meffley, Al Miller, Rebecca Hamilton, Donna Culberson and Dawn Branch; Council Manager L. Michelle Henson; Council Executive Assistant Christine Palmer; members of the Administration and members of the public.

Call to Order

President Miller called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. and announced that there were five Council Members present which constitute a quorum.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion made by Vice President Meffley, seconded by Councilwoman Branch, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council Work Session of June 2, 2026. The motion passed unanimously.

On a motion made by Councilwoman Culberson, seconded by Vice President Meffley, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Closed Session of May 26, 2026. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentation

Director of Land Use and Development Services Stephen O'Connor – Overview of Development Approval Process

Director of Land Use and Development Services (LUDS) Director Stephen O'Connor provided an overview of the development approval process via Power Point. A copy of the presentation was placed in the record of the minutes.

Director O'Connor stated that the County's Comprehensive Plan is the policy document upon which development review is based, adding that rules are followed consistently and fairly by LUDS staff.

Director O'Connor stated that the review process provides that no one person or agency controls the entire process, adding that no step or stage of the process can be skipped. He stated that public participation is encouraged.

Director O'Connor stated that the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Updates are where the rules are set.

Councilwoman Culberson queried the timeframe for the review process. Director O'Connor stated that the process can take approximately 18 months, adding that the timeframe is dependent upon the applicant as well as the size of the project.

Councilwoman Culberson queried if there are time limits in place regarding completion of a project. Director O'Connor stated that approval of a Concept Plat expires in 3 years; approval of a Preliminary Plat expires in 2 years; and a Final Plat, which is the culmination of a project, does not have an expiration date.

Vice President Meffley noted that Cecil County does not have the authority to impose impact fees, adding that there are certain requirements, such as road improvements, that the County can impose on a development.

Director O'Connor stated that TAC meetings include input from the local fire company; review of the County Road Code to ensure proposed roads will meet County standards; and review of Storm Water Management (SWM) requirements.

Councilwoman Hamilton queried if TAC meetings involve an actual approval process. Director O'Connor stated that TAC is tasked with identifying and advising the Planning Commission of any

issues identified on the concept or preliminary plan, adding that TAC has no authority to approve or disapprove a plan.

Discussion ensued regarding fire department and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) input regarding emergency response. Director O'Connor stated that emergency response agencies will provide guidance to developers regarding appropriate road design to accommodate emergency response vehicles.

Director O'Connor stated that if a developer proposes a project in an area that is designated for future water and/or sewer service, but the infrastructure does not yet exist, the developer is responsible for initiating the water and/or sewer improvements. He added that the infrastructure will be dedicated to the service provider upon completion.

Councilwoman Hamilton queried the status of the currently vacant seat for a citizen member of TAC. Director of Administration Schneckenburger stated that interested parties can apply for the appointment via the normal channels.

Councilwoman Culberson queried if the vacancy for a citizen member of TAC was advertised. Director of Administration Schneckenburger stated he would follow up.

President Miller queried if the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provided input during the development review process. Director O'Connor stated that DNR has authority over Forest Conservation regulations, adding that the Critical Area Commission (CAC), which is a department within DNR, provides input during the development review process.

President Miller queried if the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) is involved in the development review process. Director O'Connor stated MHT is a department within the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP), which participates in the development review process.

Vice President Meffley queried if a development's open space requirements are governed by code. Director O'Connor answered in the affirmative, stating that the Zoning Ordinance provides regulations regarding open space, based upon the zoning designation of the property.

Councilwoman Hamilton queried if SWM facilities can be placed in open space. Director O'Connor answered in the negative, stating that SWM facilities are owned by the Homeowners Association (HOA), and cannot be placed on parcels designated as open space.

Councilwoman Branch queried the regulations pertaining to forest conservation. Director O'Connor stated that forest conservation regulations are based upon the amount of forested area that is retained in a development. He stated that if a developer cannot retain the required amount of forest, then a suitable area must be identified where trees can be planted in lieu of meeting the requirements onsite.

Councilwoman Hamilton queried the parameters considered regarding a traffic impact study (TIS). Director O'Connor stated that the Comprehensive Plan calls out designation of levels of service on County roads within Zoning Districts. He stated a TIS takes into account the projected number of trips generated by a proposed development as well as consideration of traffic movement on all major highways and every intersection in the area, adding that special events and weekend traffic data are also included in the TIS. He stated the data is discussed with the developer during a scoping meeting, adding that a checklist is provided to ensure that everyone is on the same page.

Councilwoman Hamilton, referring to zoning districts identified within the Comprehensive Plan, queried if the County can place a cap on new development, particularly when an adjacent zone permits a different density.

Director O'Connor stated that zoning designations are determined during the Comprehensive Plan and are based, in part, upon 20-year projections. He stated that anticipated growth pursuant

to the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) at Aberdeen led to designation of growth areas in Cecil County.

Discussion ensued regarding implementation of expiration dates regarding various stages of development plans that have no activity for specific periods of time.

Discussion continued regarding incorporation of state-mandated affordable housing within the County Comprehensive Plan. Director O'Connor stated that HB1045, which was passed in 2022-2021 directed local Departments of Planning to use a specific methodology regarding housing requirements. He noted that the State bases affordable and attainable housing in Cecil County upon data from the Combined Greater Metropolitan Area (CGMA), stating the Cecil is included in the Philadelphia CGMA, adding that average annual income in this area is \$92,000 - \$95,000. Discussion ensued regarding affordable housing parameters within Cecil County.

Director of Administration Schneckenburger noted that increasing density can result in greater traffic concerns, while implementation of impact fees can affect housing affordability. He noted the need to grow the commercial tax base within the county.

Discussion ensued regarding competing agendas within various State regulatory departments.

Discussion continued regarding current housing markets and population demographics.

Council Manager Report

Council Manager Henson requested that Council advise staff of upcoming vacations.

Council Member Items

Councilwoman Branch expressed concerns regarding zoning of data centers.

Councilwoman Hamilton stated she requested a Work Session to discuss data centers and zoning.

President Miller, referring to scripts read by Council during the MD250th kickoff event on March 28th, queried Council for a consensus regarding reading of the scripts over the course of successive Work Sessions. It was the consensus of Council to read the scripts over the course of successive Work Sessions.

Adjournment

President Miller requested a motion to adjourn the Work Session.

Councilwoman Culberson made motion to adjourn the Work Session, which was seconded by Councilwoman Branch.

President Miller adjourned the work session at 5:49 pm.

President Miller announced that the next Work Session will be held on Tuesday, June 16, 2026 at 4:30 pm at the Elkton Municipal Building, 100 Railroad Avenue, Elkton.

Approved:


L. Michelle Henson
Council Manager

Al Miller, Council President