

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke Planning Commission was held in Council Chambers on Thursday October 23, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Present:

Commissioners: Nola Tullar,
Jessmin Duryea, Chip Choquette,
Michael Blake, Steven Mills
City Manager: Brandy Matthews
Attorney: Erica Wiltz
City Clerk: Melinda Stafford

Commissioner Choquette made a motion to amend the agenda to add an item between numbers 4 and 5 to discuss rescheduling the next regular meeting, as the next regular meeting falls on Thanksgiving, and to schedule a work session prior to the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tullar and passed unanimously.

Approval of Subdivision and Lot Line Abandonment for the Lands of Visions International MD LLC. Sean Taylor, representing George Young Engineers and Surveyors, presented the application for final approval of a lot line division and lot line abandonment plat. The project was originally submitted in 2023 and had previously appeared before the Planning Commission in March and April 2023. The final requirement was to show a 15-foot utility easement along the 60-foot right-of-way adjacent to lots 3A and 4, and along Cedar Street. Forest conservation approval from the county is still pending. Ms. Matthews presented the staff report detailing the background of the Vision International Maryland LLC project (formerly JWL Enterprises LLC). The Project involves minor subdivision boundary line adjustment, relocation of forest conservation area, creation of parcels totaling 24.94 acres, revision of lots 2 and 3 fronting Cedar Street, and creation of additional lots 4 and 5 for residential development. Questions raised included the addition of 30-foot right-of-way and ditch shown on Cedar Landing plat. Property owner signature line requirements, soil report attachments, forest conservation plan review requirements.

Commissioner Choquette raised questions about the City Managers staff qualifications and planning experience, the late receipt of materials (received day before meeting), need for updated review by Department of Natural Resources, and the lack of certified planning professional support. The motion to table this item was made by Commissioner Choquette and seconded by Commissioner Blake. Motion passes

Drawbridge Villas: Townhouse Development Project

Mr. Davis presented the Drawbridge Villas project, stating these were the same plans previously approved by the commission with no changes. The project involves rebuilding existing townhouses within an established condominium association that has existed for over 20 years. Mr. East from Public Works noted requirements for individual water meters for each unit and fire suppression systems, which would be handled by the county fire marshal's office. Building Design and Elevations. Construction drawings were provided and conditionally approved by First State, homeowners Association Plan, existing condominium documents from 2006 were provided. Landscaping Plan were detailed included in building permit drawings approved by city engineers. Clean Phase II environmental report provided; monitoring well to be removed. Sidewalk Requirements included a \$50,000 contingency in place for sidewalk repairs; new sidewalks and walkways planned. Stormwater Management included existing pond to be cleaned and maintained; no additional stormwater management required. Flood Plain Compliance states that units 13 and 14 will require flood insurance; all units elevated above flood requirements

Special Features of the project:

- Project recipient of state Uplift Grant providing \$50,000 credit to each homebuyer
- 25% of units pre-sold to Habitat for Humanity for affordable housing
- Primary residence requirement with 5-year commitment
- Construction timeline: 120 days from settlement
- All infrastructure (water, sewer, utilities) already in place

Commission attorney Erica Witz commented that a recess may be needed to figure out if the Planning and Zoning Commission have enough information to approve this item due to the amount of questions being asked. A recess was called at 7:12pm and began again at 7:21 pm.

Commissioner Choquette made a motion to approve Drawbridge Villas to continue forward, noting this was a response to prior Planning Commission action and all previously stated criteria appeared to have been met satisfactorily. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Duryea and passed.

Approval of Minutes: June 26, October 1 (closed), October 1 (open)

Commissioner Choquette made a motion to table the approval of minutes because there was insufficient opportunity to review them. The motion was seconded Commissioner Blake and passed, covering both the regular meeting minutes and closed session statement. The closed session statement for October 1, 2025, was read into the record. The session was held under Section 3-305(b) to obtain legal advice regarding planning and zoning commission procedural matters. No action or vote was taken during the closed session. Commissioner Tullar made a motion to approve the closed session statement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Choquette and passed.

Scheduling of next meeting

A five-minute recess was given to check the City Meeting schedule. November 12th will be a meeting and not a work session for the next Planning and Zoning Meeting.

Commission Comments.

None

Public Comments

Brandy Matthews – “It was made mention of my education.

I don't want anyone to everything because I believe the comment was degrading.

And it was. And it came off very aggressive. Just for clarifications, I have 5 degrees. Two of them are MBAs. I've never disrespected any of you in front of this commission. I've given you nothing but respect. But what came off tonight was not okay.”

Commissioner Choquette – “was not appreciated by you, but. So my frustration as a member of this board is that we are not being provided appropriate support for our function. So we rely, as I stated, we rely on a planning professional who has specific education and experience in planning practice to ensure that we are being properly informed of all the issues associated with Planning Zone. And that is no offense to you. You been put in this position. The city council was given the opportunity to put a moratorium on this until they could get a planning professional again, and they chose not to. So I mean no offense to you whatsoever and your educational background. I have nothing but respect for you, ma', am, and the job you were doing. And I'm very happy that you were promoted to city manager. I think you're doing a wonderful job. But a planning professional is a very specific area of practice. And we as a body deserve to get city support from a claiming professional. And we are not getting that. And while I do understand that I have reached out multiple to multiple areas and there is no assistance at this time, I. I actually rely heavily on code enforcement. I actually rely on the city attorney and 1. The plain and zoning attorney. We go over a lot of things before and which is why we don't try to put out the agenda as early. And we come back, this is a present agenda. One of the

things it didn't say.”

Erica Witz – “It was disrespectful. That was the issue. That's the issue. It's the way you asked it. I think that the point is well taken. That you don't have enough time to review things, and that is very valid. Like the way that you talked to Ms. Matthews was unacceptable. And you can bring up that point without doing it the way that you did.”

Mr. Taylor - Inquired about timeline for his project and expressed concern about equal treatment of applications.

Barbara Lord (604 Riverside Drive): Expressed concerns as a neighboring property owner about the Vision International development, particularly regarding student foot traffic and protection of existing residential areas. Noted communication challenges with city information updates.

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Duryea, seconded by Commissioner Mills
Motion Passes

Approved:  City Clerk

Agenda items may or may not be considered in sequence. This agenda is subject to change to include the addition or deletion of items, including executive/closed session.