

FEATURED

Public demands extension on comprehensive plan review

By TAMARA WARD tward@somdnews.com Dec 5, 2017



Commissioners' Vice President Evan Slaughenhaupt (R) during Tuesday's Board of County Commissioners meeting. Slaughenhaupt said residents have ample time to review the first draft update to the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan.

STAFF PHOTO BY TAMARA WARD

Newly organized citizens group Keep Calvert Country launched a petition on Change.org to urge the county to provide the public more time to review Calvert County's first draft of the comprehensive plan.

The petition demands the planning commission extend the Dec. 8 deadline for public comments and allow at least another 90 days to review a second draft before the document goes to public hearing.

"The new Comprehensive Plan is being rushed through and citizens are being left out of the process. The first draft of the Plan, released in October, is not a complete draft and many issues have not been adequately studied," states the petition letter addressed to Carolyn Sunderland, planning commission administrator.

The petition — titled "Don't Let Calvert County Become Another Waldorf!" — asserts the consultant for the county's comprehensive plan update project has not adequately studied issues to include infrastructure, residential development and land preservation.

The first draft of the plan was released to the public via the county's website Oct. 27. The deadline for public comments is close of business this Friday, Dec. 8.

"It's been out there for well over a month ... that's plenty of time to look at it and provide some comments," said Commissioners' Vice President Evan Slaughenhaupt (R), referring to the comprehensive plan, during a Tuesday work session on a related planning and zoning matter. "How anyone can say we're not transparent — I guess those not paying attention would say that."

The Calvert Recorder reached out to Planning Commission Chair Carolyn McHugh and Planning and Zoning Director Mark Willis to see if the county is considering extending the comment period. McHugh was not aware of the petition. Willis was aware but said he could not speak for the Board of County Commissioners or the planning commission on their points of view.

The petition, launched Monday afternoon, garnered nearly 400 e-signatures and three dozen comments in its first 24 hours.

"I'm signing because I love the views along Route 4. I moved to Calvert County precisely because it did NOT look like Charles County or St. Mary's," posted Port Republic resident Jo Longhill in the petition's comment section.

Patricia Weaver of Prince Frederick posted a request for the county to slow down the plan process and to allocate time for an intensive study of infrastructure and traffic and environmental impacts before signing off on the draft plan.

The petition can be found at <http://bit.ly/2AAKCCe>.

The first draft of the Calvert County Comprehensive Plan can be viewed at www.co.cal.md.us/DocumentCenter/View/17315.

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