The Honorable G. Rick Wilson, Chair
Dennis Grant Vice Chairman
John R. Kish
Council President Smith, Ex Officio Member
Bill Wellford
Vacancy
Roy Smith, Alternate

Stephanie Anderson, City Solicitor

Jay Measheу, Director
Department of Economic and Community Development

CITY OF LAUREL PLANNING COMMISSION

8103 Sandy Spring Road • Laurel, MD 20707 • 301-725-5300

Commission usually meets Second Tuesday of each Month

SIX HUNDRED-TWENTY FOURTH MEETING – REGULAR
TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2026 – 6:00 P.M.
MINUTES

The meeting was held in person in the Council Chambers. Chairman Wilson presiding. The roll was called with Mr. Wellford and Mr. Grant. From the Department of Economic & Community Development, Mr. Jay Measheу, Director, Ms. Raven Nee, Deputy Director, Mr. Connor Johnson Planner III and Ms. Brooke Herring, Community Development Coordinator, were in attendance. There were approximately fifty (50) members of the public in attendance.

The minutes from the June 9, 2026, meeting were approved as written, on motion by Mr. Grant, seconded by Mr. Wellford, carried on a roll call vote of all members present.

The next item on the agenda was for a Forest Conservation Plan and Resolution No. 26-11-PC, 3048814 Van Dusen Road Laurel, Maryland 20707, filed by Century Engineering LLC, a Kleinfelder Company (Century) on behalf of Prince George's County Department of the Environment, 1801 McCormick Drive Suite 500 Largo, Maryland 20774. Ms. Nee, Deputy Director, presented the staff report regarding the proposed Forest Conservation Plan associated with the Bear Branch Phase III Stream Restoration project. She explained that the County is currently in the process of restoring Bear Branch Stream between Van Dusen Road and Contee Road. The parcel is owned by the City of Laurel, and it is an open space parcel functioning as a county floodplain easement. The wetlands in the upstream project extent will be protected and restored. This project will ultimately stabilize the bank and eroding channel; improving overall water quality and promoting a healthier ecosystem complete with supportive conditions for forest restoration. The project includes stream restoration between Van Dusen Road and County Road on City-owned open space within a county floodplain easement. She reported that 3.24 acres of clearing is proposed, a minimum of 1.10 acres of reforestation is required and the applicant proposes 3.82 acres of reforestation, exceeding the City's and State's requirements. She added all applicable requirements of the Unified Land Development Code have been satisfied.

Project Manager, Mr. Jynesh Sheth, Prince George's County Department of the Environment, 1801 McCormick Drive Suite 500 Largo, Maryland 20774, described the project and explained that it is part of the County's stormwater restoration program and will improve water quality by reducing erosion and sediment entering Laurel Lakes.

Chairman Wilson opened the public hearing at 6:04 p.m.

There was nobody signed up to speak.

Chairman Wilson closed the public hearing at 6:05 p.m.

The Commission, on motion by Mr. Grant, seconded by Mr. Wellford, and carried on a roll call vote of all members present, voted to **approve** the Forest Conservation Plan and Resolution No. 26-11-PC as presented in the Technical Staff Report.

Next was a Plat of Consolidation and Resolution No. 26-08-PC for 26 C Street Laurel, Maryland 20707, filed by Urban Atlantic Development LLC., 7735 Old Georgetown Road Bethesda, Maryland 20814. The Department of Economic & Community Development Planner III, Mr. Johnson presented the staff report regarding the proposed consolidation of Lots 1–4 and 20–23, Block 40, into one parcel. He stated the applicant is seeking approval to combine lots 1-4 and 20-23, Block 40 and an abandoned alley to form one (1) new lot at the property located at 26 C Street, the existing commercial building has been vacant since 2018. He noted the request involves only plat consolidation, no site development or building plans were under consideration and consolidation is consistent with long-standing City planning policy. Mr. Johnston recommended approval subject to standard recording and filing conditions.

Applicant representative, Mr. Tim Longfellow, P.E., Gutschick, Little & Weber, P.A. 3909 National Drive Burtonsville, Maryland 20866, representing Urban Atlantic Development, expressed appreciation to staff and indicated support for the recommendation.

Chairman Wilson opened the public hearing at 6:08 p.m.

Ms. Danielle Delgado, 7553 Woodbine Drive, Laurel, Maryland 20707, stated that while she supports thoughtful mixed-use development at the site, she urged the Planning Board to ensure that adequate parking is included in any proposal. She noted that parking is already limited on C Street, creating challenges for residents, businesses, and visitors, particularly those with mobility limitations. Ms. Delgado emphasized that without a realistic parking plan, future development could negatively impact existing businesses, nearby residents, and the long-term vitality of Main Street.

Mr. John Myers, 7634 Arbory Court, Laurel, Maryland 20707, stated his opposition to the proposed plat of consolidation for Lots 1 and 2 at 26 C Street. He expressed concern that removing the existing public parking lot would negatively impact nearby

businesses, including Sky Vibe Restaurant & Lounge, Myste Lounge, 3 Gear Games, and Chez Yiamme's Catering &Functions, as well as affect community events and public safety operations. Mr. Myers stated that he supports responsible development but believes it must include adequate publicly accessible parking. He requested that any future development provide an equivalent number of public parking spaces or allow the existing lot to remain available for public use with maintenance provided by the property owner or developer.

Mr. Stewart Sinex, 8846 Herons Flight, Laurel, Maryland 20723, owner of 3 Gear Games at 25 C Street, stated that he shares the concerns raised by previous speakers. He noted that the public parking lot serves several nearby businesses, including Three Gear Games, the art gallery on C Street, and Clyopatra's, and expressed concerns about limited public and accessible parking in the area. Mr. Sinex stated that the existing public lots are already insufficient, especially during events, and that removing the parking lot could increase parking conflicts among businesses and residents. While he supports thoughtful development, he emphasized that future plans should include adequate public parking to support downtown businesses, visitors, and continued growth of Main Street.

Ms. Robin McKinney, 8846 Herons Flight Laurel, Maryland 20723, stated that she teaches at Deerfield Run Elementary School and is a regular customer of 3 Gear Games and Studios. She expressed support for thoughtful development but emphasized that parking remains a significant concern for Main Street businesses and visitors. Ms. McKinney shared that she has nearly left events due to difficulty finding parking and noted that limited parking can discourage visitors from supporting local businesses. She also raised concerns about safety and accessibility, stating that the alternate parking options are not always practical for those walking after dark or for individuals with mobility or health challenges. She referenced the loss of parking access during last winter's "Snow Crete" situation, which required regular customers to arrange carpools. Ms. McKinney requested that any future development includes a solution for maintaining adequate public parking, noting that without convenient parking, visitors may be less likely to support Main Street and C Street businesses.

Mr. Matthew Kohler, 201 Tenth Street, Laurel, Maryland 20707, stated that he is a frequent customer of Clyopatra' s and 3 Gear Games. He shared that these businesses helped him build friendships and connect with the Laurel community when he first moved to the area. Mr. Kohler emphasized that these businesses serve as important community gathering spaces and attract visitors from outside Laurel. He expressed concern that reduced parking availability could discourage people from visiting and supporting local businesses. While he supports responsible development, he encouraged the Planning Board to consider the long-term parking impact of any proposal, noting that replacing existing spaces may not be sufficient to accommodate both new development and current parking needs.

Ms. Kimberly Gilliam, 8901 Briardale Lane, Laurel, Maryland 20708, stated that she is a regular customer of Three Gear Games and emphasized the importance of the existing public parking lot, particularly during the "Snow Crete" situation when the lot was

unavailable. She noted that many visitors come from outside Laurel to support Three Gear Games and other downtown businesses, and that limited parking can create confusion for visitors unfamiliar with public parking locations. Ms. Gilliam stated that parking shortages could discourage visitors from coming to Main Street and impact on local businesses. While she supports development of the property, she requested that the Planning Board carefully consider the parking impact and provide an effective replacement for the existing public parking.

Ms. Cassandra Shartzer, 9680 Barrel House Road, Laurel, Maryland 20723, stated that she was born and raised in Laurel and has been a longtime supporter of Main Street and local businesses. She expressed that she is not opposed to development or the consolidation of the lots but emphasized the importance of addressing parking concerns. Ms. Shartzer noted that parking has long been a challenge, especially during Main Street festivals, the Farmers Market, and other community events. She stated that limited parking can discourage visitors from supporting local businesses, including Three Gear Games, Crystal Fox, and other Main Street establishments. She requested that the Planning Board consider parking needs as part of any future development to ensure continued access to businesses and preservation of the community character of downtown Laurel.

Chairman Wilson stated a couple of written comments expressing similar concerns regarding parking were received and have been entered into the record.

Commission members clarified that the application before them was limited to the plat consolidation and no development proposal or parking plan was being reviewed at this time.

ECD Director Mr. Measheey acknowledged that City officials are aware of parking challenges in the downtown area and noted that while no immediate parking expansion is planned, the issue is recognized by staff and elected officials.

Chairman Wilson closed the public hearing at 6:27 p.m.

The Commission, on motion by Mr. Grant, seconded by Mr. Wellford, and carried on a roll-call vote of all members present, voted to **approve** the Plat of Consolidation Application and Resolution No. 26-08-PC as presented in the Technical Staff Report.

The next item on the agenda was a Forest Conservation Plan and Resolution No. 26-05-PC, Islamic Community Center of Laurel, 7306 Contee Road Laurel, Maryland 20707, filed by North American Islamic Trust Inc., 7306 Contee Road Laurel, Maryland 20707. ECD Deputy Director Ms. Nee presented the staff report regarding the Forest Conservation Plan associated with the proposed expansion of the Islamic Community Center of Laurel. She stated the applicant is requesting approval in support of their plan to expand the existing house of worship and parking lot. This requires removal of some existing trees, and the applicant plans to plant new trees elsewhere on the property. Ms.

Nee reported that approximately 0.11 acres of forest will be cleared, no reforestation is required under the Forest Conservation Worksheet. The applicant proposes approximately 0.23 acres of new tree plantings, exceeding applicable requirements. The majority of the existing forests on the property will remain preserved. The applicant received a Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation Equivalency Letter (NRI-EL) from then Department Director Monta Burrough on February 10, 2025, and that Letter of Exemption continues in force. They subsequently submitted a Forest Conservation Plan, which is required for any project on land forty thousand (40,000) square feet or greater.

The applicant's representative, Mr. Abdullah Hijazi, Hijazi & Carroll, P.A., 3231 Superior Lane, Suite A-26 Bowie, Maryland 20715, described the long history of the Islamic Community Center within the City and noted that the proposed expansion is needed to serve its growing congregation. He also emphasized the applicant's commitment to additional landscaping and tree planting.

The Commission, on motion by Mr. Grant, seconded by Mr. Wellford, and carried on a roll call vote of all members present, voted to **approve** the Forest Conservation Plan Application and Resolution No. 26-05-PC as presented in the Technical Staff Report.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

Approved: Brooke Herring Date: 9/15/26