

LANCASTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes

January 20, 2011

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Lancaster County Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Old General District Courtroom of the Lancaster County Administration Building, Lancaster, Virginia.

Present were David Jones, Chairman, Robert Smart, Tara Booth, Steve Sorensen, Glenn Pinn and David Chupp.

Also present were Butch Jenkins, Board of Supervisors Representative, Don Gill, Planning/Land Use Director, Audrey Thomasson, Rappahannock Record, Charles Costello, Stuart McKenzie and others.

Mr. Jones asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the November 18, 2010 regular meeting.

Mr. Jones moved to approve the November 18, 2010 minutes as submitted.

VOTE: 6-0.

DISCUSSION ITEM #1

BLUE-GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

Mr. Jones asked Mr. Gill to present the issue.

Mr. Gill stated that Stuart McKenzie, Environmental Planner with the Northern Neck Planning District Commission was present to make another detailed presentation on blue-green infrastructure planning.

Mr. Gill stated that at the October meeting, the presentation centered on the idea of possibly including the potential reservoir sites identified in the Comprehensive Plan as possible “greenways” or conservation areas, with reduced or no development, in our county that could be linked to similar areas in adjoining counties.

Mr. Gill stated that Mr. McKenzie had suggested that only one or two of those sites be included and offered to determine and map out which site might affect the least amount of homes and/or landowners.

Mr. McKenzie’s presentation explained the objective for blue-green infrastructure planning and showed maps. He stated that a financial objective for blue-green

infrastructure planning is tax relief for those landowners that keep their property in a natural state.

Mr. McKenzie stated that having a plan for blue-green infrastructure would help create larger, functional natural areas as opposed to having “pockets” of smaller, more fragmented areas.

Mr. McKenzie showed an ecological model map with core values ranked.

Mr. Smart asked what criteria were considered with regard to how the core values were ranked.

Mr. McKenzie replied that scientists go out into the field on a landowner’s request or an investigation for a project and catalog various habitats and species. He stated that it has to do with diversity of wildlife and the scientists’ findings are factored in to the requirements that animals need to survive.

Mr. Chupp asked why it was just restricted to wildlife. He further stated that he thought the finding should also include issues such as pollutants that might go into the Chesapeake Bay.

Mr. McKenzie replied that this particular model is the ecological model and that there are other models, such as the forest model, but for this presentation, he was concentrating on the ecological model for simplicity.

A citizen asked if the models showed anything less than 100-acre parcels.

Mr. McKenzie replied no.

Mr. McKenzie stated that he digitized potential reservoir sites from the NEDCO Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan for the Northern Neck and his map shows six areas for reservoirs in the County. He stated that only four structures were impacted in those areas.

Mr. McKenzie spoke about the sloping areas around streams and how the soil is very erodible. He stated that these soils are usually covered in forest because flat land is traditionally farmed. He further stated that these sloping areas are held in place only by tree roots, thus making development in these areas difficult.

Mr. McKenzie stated that soil classes are a way to identify steep slopes by using classes named by letters. He stated that traditional models do not always show these areas accurately.

Mr. Smart stated that it was an excellent presentation and he thought that tying the reservoir issue and the sloping of the land, with its limited use, into the blue-green infrastructure planning adds a new dimension to the issue.

Mr. Jones stated that he thought it would be beneficial to identify the tax map numbers of who owns the land around the reservoirs.

Mr. McKenzie stated that he could do that research if the Commission wanted it.

Mr. Jones stated that he thought that he remembered a prior reservoir study that said that the best potential reservoir did not produce enough water for the County's future water needs, but could supplement the groundwater.

Mr. Jenkins stated that he thought that was correct.

Mr. Jones stated that since five or six reservoir sites have been identified, it would be good to know how much water the reservoirs could produce.

Mr. Smart asked how all of this could be accomplished and how to move forward to keep land in a natural state when it is privately owned.

Mr. McKenzie stated that he was looking into mechanisms on how to help encourage private landowners to consider participating in the blue-green infrastructure planning.

Mr. Jones stated that he thought identifying how many tax map parcels would be affected around each potential reservoir site would be helpful at this time.

Mr. McKenzie stated that he would work on that information.

OTHER BUSINESS

ORDINANCE TO CO-HOLD CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Mr. Gill reminded the members that they had made a motion at November's meeting to forward to the Board of Supervisors that the commission did not think an ordinance or resolution for co-holding conservation easements was necessary at this time and would be looking for further direction from the Board. He further stated that the

Board tabled discussion on the issue at its 11/29/10 meeting and the Northern Neck Land Conservancy requested that it not be on the agenda for the 12/30/10 Board of Supervisors meeting.

Mr. Gill stated that he intended to ask the Board of Supervisors at its 1/27/11 meeting to direct him and the Planning Commission of the next step. He stated that would mean either to stop working on the proposed ordinance or continue drafting an ordinance to be considered by the Board at a later date.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET FY 2012-2016

Mr. Gill stated that the Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) request forms for FY 2012-2016 were issued on December 7, 2010 and that county offices were requested to submit their capital improvement needs no later than January 12, 2011.

Mr. Gill stated that Susan Sciabbarrasi, Lancaster County Public School Superintendent, informed him last week that they would be unable to meet that deadline. He stated that he had extended the deadline to February 7, 2011 and that as of now, he had requests from the Sheriff's Office and the Department of Emergency Services. Mr. Gill further stated that representatives from all departments requesting funding will be asked to attend the February 17th Planning Commission meeting to answer any questions.

ADJOURNMENT

The January 20, 2011 regular meeting of the Lancaster County Planning Commission was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.