

LANCASTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes

March 20, 2008

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

Present were David Jones, Tara Booth, Steve Sorenson, Robert Smart, Don McCann and Glenn Pinn, Jr.

Also present were Butch Jenkins, Board of Supervisors Representative, Audrey Thomasson, Rappahannock Record, Charles Costello, Kendall Acors and Lee Anne Washington.

Mr. Jones asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the February 21, 2008 regular meeting.

Mr. Jones moved to approve the February 21, 2008 minutes as submitted. Seconded by Ms. Booth. VOTE: 6-0.

Mr. Jones changed the order of business and introduced the new Building and Land Use Secretary, Crystal Rowe, the recommended replacement for Tina Reamer, who has accepted another position within County government and will no longer be able to serve the Planning Commission as Secretary. Pursuant to the Rules and By-Laws of the Lancaster County Planning Commission, Article VII – Succession, “If any officer vacates his office before his term is completed, a special election shall be held at the next regular meeting to fill the vacated office for the remainder of the term.”

Mr. Jones moved to elect Ms. Rowe as secretary. Seconded by Mr. McCann. VOTE: 6-0.

PUBLIC HEARING

UPDATE TO THE LANCASTER COUNTY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET FOR FY 2009-2013

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

Mr. Gill stated that the issue was to take public comment on the Update to the FY 2009-2013 Capital Improvement Budget (CIB). The CIB prioritizes items that cost more than \$10,000 and have a life expectancy of at least five years. Two summary cost sheets

were provided. One listed the CIB items AS PRESENTED to the Planning Commission at its January meeting. The other documented the REVISED lists. Changed areas were highlighted in yellow for comparison. Also, the recommended project of replacing the County's mainframe computer accounting system in FY 2009 had been deleted since that project was approved for FY 2008 funding by the Board of Supervisors at its February 28, 2008 meeting.

Staff recommended favorable consideration. This issue was advertised as required by law. To date, there had been no input from the public.

Mr. Jones asked if there were any questions about the budget from the planning commission.

Mr. Smart commented on last month's meeting being very productive.

Mr. Jones asked if there were any public comments.

Mr. Jones and Mr. Gill decided to go line by line on the CIB.

The first line was to design and construct an ROTC classroom at LHS. Mr. Gill said that was presented at \$290,000 in 2011 and it came off the budget.

The next line was to replace HVAC systems at LPS. Mr. Gill said that remained in 2009 at \$86,400; 2010 at \$118,800; 2011 at \$86,400; 2012 at \$75,600 and 2013 at \$50,000.

The next line was to asphalt the parking lot at LPS. Mr. Gill stated that it came off the budget, but would be proposed in a future update with a firmer figure.

The next line was to redesign and construct a new bus loop and sidewalk at LPS. Mr. Gill stated that it remained in 2009 at \$13,500.

The next line was to construct a canopy at LPS. Mr. Gill said that it was presented at \$17,000 in 2009 and came off of the budget.

The next line was to replace fire alarm systems at LPS. Mr. Gill stated that it was presented at \$30,000 in 2012 and came off of the budget.

The next line was to design and construct a field house at LHS. Mr. Gill stated that it was presented at \$627,000 in 2012 and it came off the budget.

The next line was to redesign the lower band room entrance at LHS. Mr. Gill stated that an engineering study was recommended at \$5000 in 2009.

The next three lines were to construct storage buildings. Mr. Gill stated that initially it was presented for three buildings at \$30,000 each, one for each school. It was decided that it should be just one building to serve all three schools at \$75,000 in 2010.

The next line was to construct a new track at LHS. Mr. Gill stated that it was presented at \$110,000 in 2011 and it came off the budget.

The next line was to construct a new bus garage. Mr. Gill stated that it was presented at \$1,000,000 in 2011 and came off the budget.

The next line was to replace the 6th grade classroom windows. Mr. Gill stated that it remained at \$51,500 in 2009.

The next line was to “air balance” the HVAC systems at LHS. Mr. Gill stated that it was presented in two stages, \$22,100 in 2009 and \$47,840 in 2012, and both came off the budget.

The next line was to replace the cooling tower at LHS. Mr. Gill stated that it remained in the budget at \$60,000 in 2011.

The next line was to replace playground equipment at LPS. Mr. Gill said that it had been presented at \$50,000 in 2010 and it came off the budget.

The next line was to replace playground equipment at LMS. Mr. Gill stated that it had been presented at \$30,000 in 2010 and it came off the budget. Mr. Jones commented that it had been decided that these expenses would come out of the general fund, possibly replacing one piece at a time each year.

The next line was to replace the concrete play area at LPS. Mr. Gill stated that it had been presented at \$25,000 in 2010 and had come off the budget.

The next line was to replace boilers at LMS. Mr. Gill stated that this had been presented for \$60,000 each in the years 2011, 2012, and 2013. Mr. Gill added that they came off the budget because the existing boilers are still working.

The next line was to construct 4 community tennis courts at LMS. Mr. Gill stated that it was presented at \$100,000 in 2013 and it came off the budget.

The next line was to replace the operable partition in the LPS gym. Mr. Gill stated that it came off the budget as a result of being used only a few times each year.

The next line was to replace the intercom at LHS and add a telephone interface. Mr. Gill stated that it was presented at \$30,000 in 2011 and came off the budget.

The next line was to replace the intercom at LPS and add a telephone interface. Mr. Gill stated that it was presented at \$20,000 in 2013 and it came off the budget.

The next line was to replace 2 boilers at LPS. Mr. Gill stated that it was presented at \$125,050 in 2012 and came off the budget since the existing boilers were still working.

The next line was to provide a diesel generator at LPS. Mr. Gill stated that it was presented at \$42,000 in 2012 and came off the budget. Mr. Gill added that there was grant money in place to provide a generator at LMS. It was suggested that a portable generator be considered to be available to all of the schools. Mr. Gill added that this would be beneficial to keep the well pumps running, because if the well pumps shut down for more than 24 hours, the schools have to be closed while the water is tested.

The next line was to provide a diesel generator at LHS. Mr. Gill stated that it was presented at \$52,000 in 2013 and came off the budget for the same reason.

The next line was to replace the television equipment at LHS. Mr. Gill stated that it was presented at \$25,000 in 2013 and came off the budget.

The next line was to replace the bleachers in the LHS gym. Mr. Gill stated that it was presented at \$150,000 in 2013 and came off the budget.

The next line was to replace the fire alarm systems at LMS. Mr. Gill stated that it was presented at \$55,000 in 2013 and remained due to the fact that LMS is an emergency shelter for the county.

Mr. Jones asked if there was any comment from the floor.

Mr. Charles Costello asked if the budget was in order of priority.

Mr. Gill answered that they were not prioritized on the cost summary sheet.

Ms. Booth made a motion to forward the Update to the Lancaster County Capital Improvement Budget for FY 2009-2013 to the Board of Supervisors recommending approval. Seconded by Mr. McCann. VOTE: 6-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Workforce Housing Ordinance

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

Mr. Gill stated that the Workforce Housing Workshop facilitated by Virginia Tech on March 1, 2008 was well attended and received by many local government officials, developers, contractors and interested members of the public. The presentations have been put on the County website as an external link and can be viewed by those who did not attend. For the benefit of those Planning Commission members who could not

attend, a summary of the main points expressed by each speaker was included in each member's meeting packet.

Mr. Gill said that there is a possibility of a regional study coordinated by a local citizen's group with funding from a grant from the DuPont Foundation. The study would give the county some numbers on the availability and need for workforce housing.

Mr. McCann asked if the study would include the towns as well as the county. He said he was curious as to where Kilmarnock would fit in with this.

Mr. Gill added that the study was regional to the Northern Neck and would address 3 areas: 1) low income 2) workforce housing and 3) senior housing. He added that some measures are already in place for low income and senior housing.

Mr. Jones asked what the time frame might be when the study will be completed.

Mr. Gill stated that he did not know.

Mr. Smart stated he thought the workshop was good and thought the figures now would be more harsh than the 2000 census figures. He said it seemed to be a recurring theme as far as people having a hard time with affordable housing.

Mr. Jones asked where the projects would be located and stated the importance of integrating affordable housing within new developments.

Mr. McCann said that the speaker at the workshop, Dr. Ted Koebel gave both viewpoints, but leaned toward inclusionary zoning. He also cited apartments in Norfolk, VA as an example that are inclusionary and very successful.

Mr. Jenkins asked if this is being done anywhere in a rural area.

Mr. Gill answered that it was mostly urban areas. He also added that the sales prices of the homes are much less than their actual values. He said he didn't think that would work well in a rural area such as this. The actual value and sales price should be the same to avoid the need for housing subsidies.

Mr. McCann agreed with Mr. Gill. Mr. McCann added that Kilmarnock would likely be the location for such housing.

Mr. Jones stated that Kilmarnock would have to expand the water and sewer systems.

Mr. Jones also talked about how housing appreciates and how workforce-housing homes could go up in value, essentially making them not affordable for the next buyer.

Mr. Kendall Acors asked about the median family income.

Mr. Gill stated that there is a wide variation of median family income information. He added that the rule of thumb is 3 times the family's annual salary is considered to be the price of the home they could afford.

Mr. Jones asked if leasing or renting had been addressed.

Mr. Gill said the speakers at the Workforce Housing Workshop had addressed it and used lower figures for income.

Mr. McCann stated he saw some zoning issues. He suggested mixed-use zoning.

Mr. Jones stated he thought that King and Queen County had recently passed an ordinance about density and open space that might address workforce housing as well.

Ms. Lee Anne Washington commented on how nice Hanover County's subdivisions are. She stated that apartments, smaller homes, and then larger homes are all within the same subdivision. Some even have shared golf courses and country club facilities.

Mr. Jenkins stated that the developers probably didn't take much risk when developing those subdivisions.

Mr. Jones stated that he knows there is a demand for affordable housing, but until the study is done, there is no way of knowing exact numbers.

Mr. McCann asked how many developments are currently on the books.

Mr. Gill said he would gather that information and provide it next month.

Mr. McCann stated that possibly while the study was going on, a new zoning designation might be looked at.

Mr. Jones stated it would be beneficial to know that study's timetable.

Mr. Gill stated he didn't know the timetable at this point, but would try to find out.

Mr. Jones stated that he thought the consensus for the time being was to wait for the study to be done.

Mr. Gill asked if the commission wanted to have inclusionary zoning with density bonuses.

Mr. Jenkins stated that he thought that approach might work because it gives a potential developer more options. He also stated he didn't believe the county was going to subsidize workforce housing.

Mr. Jones added that it should be worthwhile for the potential developers.

Mr. Smart said that a workshop speaker had stated that workforce housing was best accomplished through private enterprise and the role of the government was to zone sufficient land within a price range so a builder could build a home and sell it at a profit. He added that the role of the government was to set the ground rules.

Mr. Gill stated that workforce housing should be located near the PGA, but not limited there. He said perhaps it could also be applicable to rural villages and county owned land.

Mr. Jenkins stated that he thought something should be included about open space.

Mr. Smart said that potential builders might come in with proffers when they want their developments approved.

Mr. Gill stated that he had a developer ask him if they were required to build a certain percentage of homes in the workforce price range and couldn't sell them, would the county buy the homes. Mr. Gill said the answer was no.

Mr. Jenkins said he didn't know if this was the area where developers would find attractive to want to include workforce housing.

Mr. Jones stated that he thought that is what the study will show.

A citizen stated that he thought nice, affordable rental properties were also important in this area. He said that some people don't want to buy a house; they just want somewhere to rent. He mentioned professional people such as teachers.

Mr. Gill stated that when he was traveling to training earlier in the month, he noticed a lot of cars coming into the county early in the morning, but few traveling out. Although unscientific, it suggests that a possible need for affordable housing exists.

Mr. Gill next brought up the issue of minimum lot sizes.

Mr. McCann said that there is a group called the "new urbanists" which push the idea of no minimum lot size.

Mr. Jenkins stated that what he thought mattered was how many structures were on the total acreage.

Mr. McCann spoke about allowing cluster developments within the zoning districts.

Mr. Gill stated that he thought cluster development or conservation subdivision could be addressed by re-writing Section 5-26 of the Subdivision Ordinance. He added that the county already has an open space requirement in Section 5-26 of ten percent. He said the rewrite could establish different percentages for each district.

Mr. Jones said that he thought it had been a good discussion and the study on the workforce housing will be very important.

Mr. Smart stated that the study information would help the builders as well, so they will know where the demand is.

A citizen asked about controlling the value of homes that were considered workforce housing.

Mr. Gill said the way urban localities control the affordability of workforce housing can be very complex, expensive and time consuming. Lancaster does not have the staff or resources to copy that approach.

Mr. Jones added that part of the problem is that a home considered as workforce housing in the same neighborhood as expensive homes can cause that home to increase greatly in value. Then the home can be priced out of the workforce price range.

Mr. Gill suggested that one possible control might be a mortgage lender certification statement on the deed that would certify the person buying the home is qualified within a pre-determined workforce housing price range.

Mr. Smart added that he admired what Virginia Beach has done with workforce housing.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Jones said that in the comprehensive plan it states that a citizens' committee on Parks and Recreation be established. He asked Mr. Jenkins if the Board of Supervisors would discuss this issue.

Mr. Jones asked if anyone had any more business.

ADJOURNMENT

The March 20, 2008 regular meeting of the Lancaster County Planning Commission was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.