

LANCASTER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes

May 16, 2013

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

Present were Robert Smart, Vice-Chairman, Tara Booth, Steve Sorensen, Ty Brent and David Chupp. David Jones and Glenn Pinn were absent.

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

Mr. Smart asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the April 18, 2013 regular meeting.

Mr. Smart moved to approve the April 18, 2013 minutes as submitted. **VOTE: 5-0.**

ELECTIONS

Mr. Smart stated that he would like to move the Planning Commission elections up to the first order of business.

Mr. Chupp nominated David Jones for Chairman. **VOTE: 5-0.**

Mr. Brent nominated Robert Smart for Vice-Chairman. **VOTE: 4-0-1 (Mr. Smart abstained).**

Mrs. Booth nominated Crystal Whay for Secretary. **VOTE: 5-0.**

DISCUSSION ITEM #1

UPDATE TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – CHAPTER SEVEN

Mr. Smart stated that Chapter Seven is a lengthy chapter and will take a few months to review.

Mr. Gill stated that he would like to give credit to Commission member, David Chupp, for his work on pages 23-24, where it discusses maritime heritage.

Mr. Smart stated that he wanted to thank Mr. Gill for trimming down the excess wording in Chapter Seven and also stated that the complete Comprehensive Plan review has been a painless process due, in part, to Mr. Gill and Ms. Why.

Bill Warren, a District 5 citizen, referred to page 12 and stated that he thought the Virginia Outdoors Foundation should be added to the land trusts list at the top of the page. He further stated that it may be a good idea to put a paragraph in the Chapter that discusses some of the recent large land transactions and referred to a transfer of 350 acres along the Corrotoman River.

Mr. Warren referred to page 24 and stated that about ten years ago, the Planning Commission produced a plan modification to the zoning ordinance to place crab shacks and oyster processing plants in a commercial, residential district. He stated that he thought it was a great idea to reuse places like that, but wanted to make sure that it is not a replacement for something that failed before.

Mr. Chupp suggested that the word “would” could be changed to “could”.

Mr. Warren agreed.

Mr. Jenkins asked if he would name some areas.

Mr. Warren replied the one that he remembered was directly across the water from him on the Eastern Corrotoman River and it was the Farley property. He stated that it was zoned as commercial waterfront and could have been authorized to put a hotel there, for example. He stated that he remembered a lot of opposition.

Mr. Warren referred to page 34, under “Quality Housing and Diverse Communities” and referred to the point that stated “adopt an improved R-2 district to allow for additional multi family housing development outside of the Waterfront Overlay with appropriate development standards to prevent unwanted development patterns and to provide transitions between different development styles” and stated that he did not want a bunch of apartment buildings all over the county, but did not think that point should be taken out.

Mr. Gill replied that the County had approved the R-4 District, which allows for increased density and multi-family housing, so that is why that bullet point was taken out.

Mr. Jenkins stated that the market is driving the lack of multi-family housing.

Mr. Jenkins complimented Mr. Warren on Mercer Place.

Mr. Warren stated that he thought there was a need for another complex like Mercer Place.

Charles Costello, a District 2 citizen, referred to the chart on page 36 that shows the statistics from the Virginia Employment Commission and stated that the figures needed to be updated.

Mr. Jenkins stated that one of the things that needed to be factored in is that in the mid 2000's, there was a dramatic movement of working age people out of the County. He stated that they don't want to give the impression that employment in the County has improved.

Mrs. Booth referred to page 36 and stated that all of the data seemed to be in ten-year increments, except the last date, which was 2012. She asked if 2012 was the correct year in the last paragraph.

Mr. Gill replied yes.

Mr. Warren referred to page 33, where it states that Lancaster County has 31.4% of its population at the age of 65 or older. He suggested that some wording be added to state that Lancaster County has the oldest population in Virginia.

Mr. Jenkins stated that Lancaster County is also one of the oldest counties in the nation.

Mr. Smart stated that Lancaster County is a great retirement community and because of the lack of jobs, young people leave after high school and don't return. He further stated that if the economy recovers, the building industry would help to bring jobs back.

Mr. Jenkins stated that there are some great builders locally, but that the building industry has changed and a builder no longer has to be locally based to do work in an area. He stated that the new courthouse is a good example of this.

Mr. Chupp stated that he agreed with Mr. Warren, in that the dominant feature of the County's economy is the age of the population.

Mr. Gill referred to page 1 on the online version and stated that they are old pictures and would be removed.

Mr. Smart referred to page 3 and stated that he would like to see the words "primary conservation areas" in larger print.

Mrs. Booth referred to page 7 and asked about the integrity of the sliding scale.

Mr. Gill replied that the scale shown is just an example and the figures can vary from county to county.

Mr. Chupp suggested that the sliding scale be taken out.

The Commission agreed.

Mr. Smart referred to page 13 and the sentence that reads, “Many ordinances require that homebuyers who move to parcels adjacent to or near working farms be notified about the possible negative impacts of agricultural activities”. He stated that he thought that was a really good idea. He stated that the page refers to flyers or notices that can be distributed to all prospective homebuyers and he thought that was a good idea as well.

Mrs. Booth referred to page 20, where it reads, “These sites will be further studied and decisions will be reached on which of these sites and their adjoining watersheds should be protected from intensive development” and asked when those decisions would be reached, since that sentence had been in the plan for a long time.

Mr. Smart stated that he had marked that sentence as well and made a notation that a few reservoir sites should be identified.

Mr. Gill stated that potential reservoir sites were listed in Chapter Three and that Reverend Gayl Fowler had pointed out that reservoirs were probably not going to be part of the future and that desalinization and water treatment plants were more probable.

Mr. Jenkins stated that there is not a single pond in the County that is big enough to serve as a reservoir. He further stated that there were a lot of ponds, but it would cost a fortune to have a system to link them together.

Mr. Smart referred to page 23 and stated that he would like to add the activities of sailing and kayaking to the inset list.

Mr. Chupp stated that he would like to add fishing to the list as well.

Mr. Jenkins suggested that the list include the words “seafood harvesting”.

Mr. Smart referred to page 25, where it stated that “according to the 2000 Census, employment related to farming, fishing and forestry declined over 65% between 1990 and 2000” and stated that that was astounding. He stated that some of that decline is because of increased efficiency, in that it takes less manpower to do the same jobs.

Mr. Chupp referred to page 28 where it speaks of bargain sales and asked about the term.

Mr. Jenkins replied that it is normally a tax sale.

Mr. Jenkins referred to page 29 and asked about the first bullet, which reads, “expand the land-use taxation program”.

Mr. Gill replied that he assumed that meant to expand the land use program to include timberland.

Mr. Chupp referred to page 30 and suggested adding encouraging buffering of clear-cut forest areas. He stated that he knew the state forestry department actively discourages the idea.

Mr. Jenkins stated that the reason the forestry people discourage buffering has to do with the dynamics of the woods. He stated that those trees on the outer perimeter have grown to be strong forward, not from the back, because they are buffered from wind from the back. He stated that that makes those trees more vulnerable once there is cutting behind them. He further stated that the trees are a crop just like corn and a property owner has every right to harvest them, if they choose. He stated that it is a part of being an agricultural, rural community.

Mr. Chupp stated that what he was suggesting is that the Comprehensive Plan state that the County was encouraging, not requiring, buffering of clear cut areas.

Mr. Jenkins stated that it would not pass at the Board level.

Mr. Smart referred to page 31 and stated that he hoped the bike trails could be expanded.

Mr. Brent referred to page 33 and asked to include an updated building permit figure in the first paragraph.

Mr. Chupp referred to page 32 and suggested adding under the strategies title, a Parks and Recreation Department.

Mr. Gill stated that the County had one many years ago before the County had a YMCA.

Mr. Chupp referred to page 34 and asked about the sentence that reads, “review family member transfer standards to ensure regulations are not creating an undue burden on families”.

Mr. Gill replied that there are different standards for family subdivisions as opposed to regular subdivisions, such as right of way widths.

Mr. Brent suggested rewording the last paragraph on page 35 so that it is not contradictory concerning the population of the County.

Mr. Smart suggested that at next month’s meeting, more discussion would need to be done on page 35, which discusses economic opportunities.

Mr. Chupp agreed. He further stated that the need for high-speed internet service should be mentioned as well.

Mr. Chupp referred to page 40 and stated that the Chapter should include the words “fisheries and aquaculture”. He also suggested adding the wording to the first paragraph of “aquaculture, an industry that seems admirably suited to this area”.

Mr. Smart stated that they had had a good review and will continue the review at next month’s meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Gill stated that he wanted to inform the Planning Commission that the Board of Supervisors is considering adding an additional item to the Capital Improvement Budget. He stated that it would be under public access sites in the amount of \$189,900.

ADJOURNMENT

The May 16, 2013 regular meeting of the Lancaster County Planning Commission was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.