

PRESENT: Greg Campbell, Chairman
L. Howdyshell, Vice Chairman
C. Bragg
K. Shiflett
R. Thomas
J. Wilkinson, Director of Community Development
L. Tate, Senior Planner

ABSENT: K. Leonard
T. Jennings

VIRGINIA: At the Called Meeting of the Augusta County Planning Commission held on Tuesday, November 10, 2020 at 5:15 p.m. in the Board Room, Augusta County Government Center, Verona, Virginia.

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Ms. Tate discussed the items on the agenda for the upcoming BZA meeting.

The Planning Commission reviewed the following rezoning request and traveled to the following site, which will be considered at the Public Hearing.

**Spring Lakes at the Woodlands
Staunton, VA**

Chairman

Secretary

PRESENT: G. Campbell, Chairman
L. Howdysshell, Vice Chairman
C. Bragg
T. Jennings
K. Leonard
K. Shiflett
R. Thomas
J. Wilkinson, Director of Community Development
L. Tate, Senior Planner

VIRGINIA: At the Regular Meeting of the Augusta County Planning Commission held on Tuesday, November 10, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room, Augusta County Government Center, Verona, Virginia.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Mr. Campbell stated as there were seven (7) members present, there was a quorum.

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Minutes

Mrs. Shiflett moved to approve the minutes of the called and regular meeting held on October 13, 2020.

Mr. Leonard seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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Public Hearing

Ms. Tate stated that there were two public hearings on the agenda.

The first item is a request to rezone Spring Lakes at the Woodlands (TMP 055 76, 055G 3 A, 055G 6 A, 055G 6 A1, 055G 7 A and 055G1 1 B), owned by Woodlands Associates, LLC % George Lester and Woodland Spring Lakes at Woodlands Property Owners Association, by amending the Master Plan and zoning regulations. Amendments to the Master Plan include the following: an increase in Townhouse units from 290 to 389 and a decrease in apartment units from 213 to 0, a decrease in gross density from 2.9 units per acre to 2.69 units per acre, increase common area open space from 47.4 acres to

53.97 acres, sidewalks included along certain roadways, townhouse lot layout proposed for Area A (74 -94 units – range depends on Single Family vs. Townhouse development), Area F-5 (15-42 units), and Area G (114 to 139), mailbox kiosks shown on certain open space areas, and a note stating that natural surface walking trails shall be constructed when 20 new lots have building permits issued subsequent to the approval date of the revised zoning ordinance. Amendments to the Spring Lakes zoning regulations include removing several permitted uses in Area A, specifically apartments among others, establishing similar use, setback, and accessory standards for Area F-5, A, and G that are permitted under existing provisions for Area F-2 and F-3, and adding mailbox kiosks as a permitted use in Area I Open Space. Spring Lakes is located on the eastern side of Old Greenville Road (Route 613) just south of the Route 262 interchange in Staunton in the Beverley Manor District. The proposed general use of the property is residential (single family and townhouse). The proposed general use of the property stated in the Comprehensive Plan is Planned Residential, which may include a variety of residential uses at a density of 4 to 8 residential units per acre.

Mrs. Tate mentioned that the request would add more townhouses, decrease the number of apartments, increase common area/open spaces, add new sidewalks, new mail kiosk, and a RV parking area.

Mr. Campbell asked if the applicant was present and wished to speak.

Ed Blackwell of Blackwell Engineering spoke on behalf of the request. Mr. Blackwell stated that the townhouses were doing very well and they are a well-liked product they decided to add more. Mr. Blackwell stated they met with the HOA Board and had a community meeting about the mailbox kiosk. He stated that the location of the kiosk is up to the community board members and that since they were requesting to change the ordinances that they would add the kiosk in with the request. Mr. Blackwell mentioned that they are currently working on a location for RV parking.

Donna Morrison, president of Lester Group stated if the RV parking area was to be located in the upper part of Spring Lakes, then access from within Spring Lakes would be almost impossible due to the topography. She stated that they are continuing to look for alternate locations. Ms. Morrison stated that the townhouse committee asked about relocating the existing mailbox kiosk stating the current ones are not in good condition.

Mr. Campbell asked if he was correct in understanding that if the ordinance amendment was to be approved that the mailbox kiosk could be relocated to any of the greenspaces.

Mr. Blackwell stated that the HOA and developers need to tell them where they want the kiosk to be located so that a site plan can be prepared and submitted to the county for approval.

Ms. Morrison stated that it was never the developers plan to build a new kiosk. The idea was presented to them by the townhouse committee. The developers added the kiosk to the amendment to save the townhouse committee the submittal fee.

Mr. Campbell opened the public hearing asking if anyone present wished to speak on the matter.

Dan Fernez of 21 West Park View Ln. is concerned about the safety of the location of the mail kiosk. Mr. Fernez stated that the proposed area of the kiosk is the only green recreational area they have. He mentioned the number of cars that would be in the area.

Mr. Leonard asked if Mr. Fernez had voiced his opinion to the HOA.

Mr. Fernez stated that yes, his wife had given her opinion on the matter to the HOA.

Ms. Sheila Iberg of 89 Villa View Dr. stated that she agreed with Mr. Fernez. She stated that the reason she moved to the townhouses was because the green space would give her grandchildren a place to play. She stated that she wouldn't let the kids play with the road going through there.

Dean Stenzel of 77 Whispering Oaks Dr. mentioned the high volume of cars in the area if the kiosk were moved. Mr. Stenzel said that the current location of the kiosk is the proper location for it.

Cathy Ramsey of 45 Whispering Oaks Dr. stated that she is against the relocation of the kiosk. Ms. Ramsey mentioned that the reason that she moved to the area was for the green space. She stated that the green space is where she walks her dogs. Ms. Ramsey stated that there is no other green space available and that she believes the best place for the mailbox kiosk is the entrance to the neighborhood.

Mrs. Tate state that the Planning Commission had received approximately 10 letters concerning the mailbox location. The letters will be put into the record.

With no one else to speak on the request, Mr. Campbell closed the public hearing.

Mr. Howdyshell mentioned the emails he received from citizens who were not opposed to the development but opposed to losing the green space. Mr. Howdyshell stated that the kiosk would create a congestion nightmare with traffic. He stated that he cannot support the rezoning right now.

Mrs. Shiflett stated that she supported the townhouses, common areas, sidewalks, and walking trails. She stated that she had a problem with the mailbox kiosk and the RV parking areas. Mrs. Shiflett stated that there needs to be more clarity.

Mr. Blackwell said that adding the kiosk to the rezoning was done as a request by the community board. He stated that he would be willing to remove the kiosk from the rezoning request.

Mr. Jennings liked the development and rezoning request with the exception of the kiosk.

Mr. Jennings made a motion to approve the request on the conditions that the mailbox kiosk be removed as a permitted use in Area I Open Space and to add another area on the master plan within the rezoning documents specifically for mailbox kiosks for Area A, F-5, and G.

Mrs. Bragg seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda is a an ordinance to amend Chapter 25. Zoning. Division A. In General. Article VI.D. Solar Energy Systems. Amendments include: amend definition of small (less than 50 acres) and large (greater than 50 acres) solar energy systems, add buffering, bonding, site plan submittal and decommissioning requirements for small solar energy systems, clarify existing use of consultant language, reduce notification perimeter for large solar energy systems community meeting, clarify existing cost benefit analysis language, leave setbacks as currently adopted, but add language concerning standards or topic considerations for reduced setbacks, amend fencing requirements for greater flexibility – to be determined as a part of the special use permit, add language concerning exclusion of salvage value in bond.

Mr. Jennings asked where the 50-acre threshold was determined.

Mrs. Tate stated that it came from state legislation.

Mrs. Bragg asked about ground water monitoring.

Mrs. Tate stated that it would only apply to the large-scale solar systems in this draft.

Mr. Campbell opened the public hearing asking if anyone wished to speak on the request.

Sam Batton of 139 Teter Rd. stated that he had conversations with some solar companies and that nothing was ever mentioned about setback requirements. Mr. Batton stated that the tax payers are the ones paying for the grants.

Rick Pfizenmayer of 30 Round Hill Dr. stated that he urges the commission to adopt a setback requirement of a minimum of 1,000 feet for industrial scale solar projects when they are sited toward public roads.

Stan Sikorski of 169 Benz Rd. urged the planning commission of the current public health crisis. He felt that this was not a good time to make decisions related to utility scale solar development.

Nancy Sorrells of 3419 Cold Springs Rd. made some suggestions on changes to be made to the solar ordinance. A copy of Mrs. Sorrells comments can be found in the ordinance amendment file.

With no one else to speak Mr. Campbell closed the public hearing.

Mrs. Bragg stated she believes the Planning Commission needs to take a look at the existing document and what the intent was and what's important to the citizens. Mrs. Bragg mentioned that it is her understanding that county residents want to preserve the natural beauty of the area. Mrs. Bragg stated that she is concerned about the reduced setbacks along a public right of way. Mrs. Bragg stated that the community meeting notices should not be reduced from a 1-mile radius to a ½ mile radius.

Mr. Howdyshell stated that he felt like this was a good starting point. He stated that he liked what has been presented and supports it. Mr. Howdyshell mentioned that there will be amendments as time goes along.

Mr. Jennings stated that he agreed with Mr. Howdyshell in that ordinances change and that the meeting notification should stay at 1 mile. Mr. Jennings stated that lesser notification is never a good thing.

Mr. Howdyshell made a motion to approve the amendments, which includes a 50' setback from public right of ways that can be adjusted by the Board of Supervisors, with the exception of the amendment to reduce the community meeting notification from a 1 mile perimeter to a ½ mile perimeter.

Mr. Thomas seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a four in favor of vote.

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STAFF REPORTS

A. CODE OF VIRGINIA – SECTION 15.2-2310

Mrs. Tate reviewed with the Commissioners the requests coming before the BZA at the December meeting.

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Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Mrs. Bragg made a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Jennings seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Chairman

Secretary