

PRESENT: J. Curd, Chairman  
T. Cole  
W. Hite  
K. Shiflett  
E. Shipplett  
R.L. Earhart, Senior Planner and Secretary  
T. Fitzgerald, Director of Community Development  
K. Hull, Associate Planner

ABSENT: W. Garvey  
K. Leonard

VIRGINIA: At the Worksession Meeting of the Augusta County Planning Commission held on Tuesday, November 13, 2012, at 5:15 p.m. in the Board Room, Augusta County Government Center, Verona, Virginia.

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The meeting was called to order by Mr. Curd, Chairman.

Mrs. Hull explained the purpose of the Annual Scorecard as presented on PowerPoint and stated that it is updated and presented annually. She stated that the Scorecard includes topics, like population, parcel statistics, building permits, fire-rescue calls and economic statistics. The Comprehensive Plan also includes a table that lays out certain indicators related to each topic as the basis for the report.

Mrs. Hull addressed the Parcel Counts and Statistics of the Scorecard. She stated that Augusta County is made up of 39,537 parcels and over 395,000 acres. The median parcel size in the County was 1.32 acres. There are 24,862 parcels of land that are zoned Agriculture, which equates to over 367,000 acres. She explained that in 2010 and 2011 the least number of minor subdivision lots were created in the last five years. 45% of new lots in 2011 were created through Family Member Exception, however, this number is deceiving because there were less total FME lots created over the last few years.

Mr. Cole asked if it was known how many of these lots were being built on.

Mrs. Hull stated that she did not have those figures, but could track it if interested.

Mrs. Hull explained that in 2011 there was an increase in the total number of residential permits issued in the County. There was a 10% increase, since 2007 with 150 new building permits issued in residential and mixed use zoning, while a 59.4% decrease was seen in the new permits issued in agriculture zoning from 2007-2011.

Mrs. Hull stated that Augusta County residents make up 0.9% of the workforce in the state. The majority of Augusta County's jobs continue to be in the 3 sectors: services, manufacturing, and government, comprising of almost 71% of the jobs. In 2010 the median household income in Augusta County was \$50,534, compared to \$60,665 for the state of Virginia.

On the issue of Economic Development, there was a decrease of 8.1% in County taxable sales since 2007. The state and region saw significant drops in taxable sales as well. There were 291 Home Occupation Permits issued in 2011 and 519 Home Occupation Permits issued in 2007; a decrease of 44%. In 2011 there were 42 Special Use Permits issued and there were more Special Use Permits granted in the RCA and ACA combined, than in the USA and CDA combined.

In regards to Utilities, as of fiscal year 2011, ACSA has a total of 15,346 customers. The majority of customers are located in Urban Service and Community Development areas. There was an increase in water usage from 2010-2011. 56% of water customers are located in residential areas. There was a 2.1% decrease in solid waste received by the Augusta County Landfill from 2010-2011. Decreases in waste and recycled materials could correspond to the changes in the economy.

In relation to Land Use and Agriculture, there were 282,076 acres of land enrolled in the land use taxation program in 2011. The average parcel size in the program is declining but the number of parcels has increased from 2007-2011.

Mr. Curd asked what the average parcel size is.

Mrs. Earhart stated that the average parcel size in 2007 was 50.2 acres, now it is 48.5 acres

Mr. Cole asked if you had to have 20 acres to enroll.

Mrs. Earhart said 20 acres of Woodlands and five acres of agriculture land, excluding a one acre home site.

Mrs. Hull stated that the Virginia Outdoor Foundation holds 113 easements for 17,777 acres in the County. The County is ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in Virginia in the number of VOF acres eased and 8<sup>th</sup> in the number of easements recorded.

Mr. Cole asked if the trend in land use lot size was troubling.

Mrs. Earhart said she would be more concerned if the acres in land use were going down verses the parcel size.

Mrs. Hull presented some demographics of Staunton, Augusta County and Waynesboro. In 2010 there were population increases for both Augusta County and Waynesboro, while Staunton had a slight decrease over a ten year span. The population counts include those living in group quarters such as college residence halls, residential treatment centers, skilled nursing facilities, group homes, etc.

Augusta County has the highest percentage of owner-occupied housing at almost 74%, while Staunton and Waynesboro have almost double what Augusta has in population living in rental housing.

Mrs. Hull explained that Augusta County has fared better in their economic status than the City of Staunton and the City of Waynesboro. The County's unemployment rate was lower than both cities in 2010 and the Median Household Income was higher.

According to the Weldon Cooper Center's projections for the future of Augusta County and the two cities, the aging population will increase by 2020. The projections also show that a larger proportion of people are reporting themselves as "non-whites". This projects that the County and the SAW area as a whole will grow older and more racially/ethnically diverse in the years to come. In 2030 the aging continues with almost 57% of Augusta County's population being over 40 years of age.

Mr. Cole stated that water quality would become more of a concern as the population grows. He stated that there is a significant number of streams that are impaired and feels that we should track those streams through data collected from DEQ.

Mrs. Hull addressed the task of completing the five year review of the Comp Plan. According to §15.2-2230 of the State Code, "At least once every five years the comprehensive plan shall be reviewed by the local planning commission to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan." Mrs. Hull stated that the existing information that is present in the Comp Plan will be used to evaluate if there have been changes in the County since 2007 to warrant content changes in the Comp Plan. There are mandatory items that are required by the State to be in the plan such as transportation and affordable housing.

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to forecast and prepare for future changes in the community. The Comp Plan also serves as a tool to identify the concerns, needs and aspiration of the local citizens to improve the quality of life and set goals for the futures. Policies have been put into place to act as a guide for staff and the Planning Commission in making decisions and achieving those goals.

The Comprehensive Plan is not law or ordinance. It is a guide that can be used in decision making on items such as rezonings. There is also an Implementation Strategy included in the Plan that shows different goals, how to achieve those goals, and who is responsible for helping to do so.

Mr. Shipplett stated that growth changes are not occurring at the same rate as they were in 2007. He said that in the past developers, such as his company, would buy large parcels of land to develop, but that is not the case at this point. He said the Plan doesn't have the growth potential that it did when it was first developed.

Mr. Cole asked the question if the economy would always be slow. He stated that maybe there is a need to establish a foundation for when the economy does pick up again, the County will be in a stronger position to handle that. He also asked about

reporting on economic drivers in the County, using those to evaluate how we stack up in relation to other counties.

Mrs. Earhart stated that the Board said to look at the whole Comp Plan. She feels the public should be approached early on to determine what they feel the needs are for the County.

Mr. Shipplett stated that there needs to be something to show the public. The public will want to see the finished product before they can make suggestions.

Mrs. Shiflett agreed and stated that the public should be shown the final maps instead of the County gathering input from the public and then changing the maps.

Mrs. Earhart suggested that the County meet with the public, show them the maps, get their suggestions, and then revisit the areas addressed. She also stated that the Plan is all interrelated. Discussions and decisions cannot be made without the input from other agencies such as ACSA, Augusta County Schools, and VDOT.

Mr. Hite stated that it is a good plan to have the other agencies offer information.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

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Chairman

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Secretary