

PRESENT: J. D. Tilghman, Chairman
S. N. Bridge
T.H. Byerly
J. Curd
K. A. Shiflett
J. Shomo
R. L. Earhart, Senior Planner and Secretary
D. L. Cobb, Director of Community Development

ABSENT: W. F. Hite, Vice-Chairman

VIRGINIA: At the Called Meeting of the Augusta County Planning Commission held on Tuesday, August 9, 2005, at 4:30 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Conference Room, Augusta County Government Center, Verona, Virginia.

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The Planning Commission assembled in the Augusta County Government Center to discuss the master plan and the upcoming items on the BZA agenda. Kenny Robinson, Brad Price, and John Shy from the Virginia Department of Transportation met with the Planning Commission to speak on various projects and the implementation of roundabouts in Augusta County.

Mr. Brad Price stated that the benefits of roundabouts include:

- Reduction in number and severity of accidents
- Reduces fuel consumption and emissions
- Decreases vehicle repair expenses, liability claims and insurance costs
- Lower construction and operation and maintenance expenses
- Reduces waiting times and corresponding stress
- Provides an enhanced visual experience
- Eliminate left turn lane requirements

The Planning Commission and the Virginia Department of Transportation had a lengthy discussion about some of the projects that have come before the Planning Commission in the last six months. Believing that the discussions were worthwhile, they agreed to meet again to continue their discussion.

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Secretary

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ABSENT: W. F. Hite, Vice-Chairman

VIRGINIA: At the Regular Meeting of the Augusta County
Planning Commission held on Tuesday,
August 9, 2005, at 7:00 p.m. in the Board
Meeting Room, Augusta County Government
Center, Verona, Virginia.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Ms. Tilghman stated as there were six (6) members present, there was a quorum.

MINUTES

Mr. Byerly made a motion to approve the minutes of the Called and Regular meeting held on July 12, 2005. Mr. Curd seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

STONEY RUN SUBDIVISION – MASTER PLAN

Stoney Run Subdivision, Section 3 containing 21 lots and one (1) residue lot zoned Single Family Residential (12) located on the south side of Offlitter Road (Route 656) near Stuarts Draft in the Riverheads District.

Mr. Bridge moved to remove the request from the table. Mr. Byerly seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mrs. Earhart stated that the property is zoned Single Family Residential (12) served by public water and sewer, and the lot size is anywhere from .282 acres to a little over 4.6 acres. She stated that at the time the Master Plan was submitted there were things that needed to be corrected. She stated that last month the Planning Commission tabled the request to address some concerns of VDOT in terms of the need for turn lanes. She stated that they are going to address the issue during construction plan stage. She stated that VDOT feels confident that they can deal with the developer during that stage and it does not need to appear on the Master Plan. She stated that the plan does meet the technical requirements of the ordinance.

Ms. Shiflett stated that since the Master Plan meets the technical requirements of the ordinance, she moved to recommend approval. Mr. Bridge seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

MATTERS TO BE PRESENTED BY THE COMMISSION

Ms. Shiflett stated that the Agricultural Task Force has invited Dr. David Kohl from Virginia Tech to speak on Thursday, August 18, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room. She stated they have invited the public to attend the meeting and they would like to have all of the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission attend the meeting. She stated that later in the meeting the Agricultural Task Force would take comments from the public.

Mr. Byerly stated that if property owners are enrolled in an agricultural forestal district they do not get the full tax benefit of donating conservation easements. He stated that there are some property owners that would like to put a conservation easement on their property, but it would take the Board of Supervisors' approval to let the property owners out of the district. He stated that if the property owner is already in an agricultural forestal district then the property is already deemed to be protected temporarily, and therefore, there is no need for a conservation easement and less tax benefit.

Mr. Cobb stated that September 1, 2005 the Agricultural Task Force would be going over Conservation Easements. He stated that the committee is looking at many programs to help farmers keep their farms. He stated that the committee is

looking at Conservation Easements, PDRs, sliding scale, land use, etc. He stated that agricultural forestal districts have a very limited impact on farmers. He stated that many counties have an agricultural part of their Community Development Departments to help property owners understand all of the different programs that are available to landowners.

Ms. Shiflett stated that a landowner needs to know what they are getting into when they are signing up for these programs. She stated that Loudoun County uses twenty years for their sliding scale land use program. She stated that the land could not be developed for twenty years and that is a long time to wait.

Mr. Byerly stated that infrastructure is very important to keeping agriculture in the County. He explained the importance of the farm implement dealers, etc. to the economy.

Mrs. Earhart encouraged Mr. Byerly and the other Commissioners to go to the Agricultural Task Force meeting on the 18th to voice their opinions.

STAFF REPORTS

A. CODE OF VIRGINIA – SECTION 15.2-2310

Chairman Tilghman asked if there were any comments regarding the upcoming items on the BZA agenda.

SUP#05-48 Allen B. Simmons, Trustee

Mr. Curd moved that the outside storage be screened with opaque fencing. Mr. Bridge seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

SUP#05-52 Steven L. Driver

Mr. Bridge moved that since this area is slated for Low Density Residential development the Special Use Permit, if approved, should only be for a limited amount of time. The applicant should be allowed to use the existing doublewide until the office gets established. However, if the applicant would like to build something new they would need to move to a business zoned district. Ms. Shiflett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

SUP#05-53 John R. Higgs and Shelby S. Higgs

Mr. Shomo stated that the road is not appropriate for big events.

Mr. Byerly stated that the Board of Zoning Appeals should limit the size of the events.

Mr. Shomo stated that the applicant should be considerate of the fact that there is a place of worship nearby.

Mr. Curd moved that the Board of Zoning Appeals limit the size and number of events to minimize the impact on the road and to the church. Mr. Byerly seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

SUP#05-54 New Hope Telephone Company

Ms. Shiflett moved that the architecture of the new building reflect the character of New Hope. Mr. Curd seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

SUP#05-55 Chalmers B. or Darlene J. Moran

Chairman Tilghman stated that there are homes across the street that are quite nice and she would question the outside storage of this request, if this area is where she thinks it is.

Mr. Byerly asked if one sample would be out of character for the area.

Chairman Tilghman stated that there are nice homes in the area.

Mr. Shomo stated that the outside display should also be limited.

Ms. Shiflett moved that the outside display, if allowed, should be limited and be compatible with the neighborhood. Mr. Shomo seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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BETTER MODELS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Cobb stated that at the beginning of the year Frazier and Associates made a presentation to the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and Board of Zoning Appeals on Better Models for commercial development. He stated that staff has asked the Board of Supervisors what they would like to do with the report. He stated that they have presented them with several different options. He stated that the Board of Supervisors wanted to hear what the Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals have to say. He stated that staff came up with a number of options. They are as follows:

1. Staff can try to informally talk to developers at the site plan stage. However, there is no way to force developers to build what we think is more compatible and appropriate for the site.
2. Obtain proffers on each rezoning stressing architectural design features. He stated that the Board of Zoning Appeals can put conditions on Special Use Permit on a case by case basis. He stated that by looking at businesses on a case-by-case basis there may not be consistency and you are only looking at property that needs to be rezoned or that needs a Special Use Permit.

3. Developing commercial corridor design guidelines. He stated that this is where you would make recommendations based on existing character of areas, just like what we talked about in New Hope. He stated that each area would have a different design guideline and would be dealt with neighborhood by neighborhood. He stated that this would still be voluntary. He stated that Frazier could do this for the County for approximately \$35,000 - \$45,000.
4. Frazier can also recommend changes to the County's ordinances so that all parking, landscaping, signs, lighting, and buildings are dealt with consistently for \$45,000 - \$60,000. He stated that this would be in ordinance form and everyone would play by the same rules, but the downside is that the County would be dictating the way a building should look.

Mr. Cobb stated that he presented this to the Board of Zoning Appeals at their monthly meeting on August 4, 2005. He stated that they were not ready to make a decision, but they really did not think the informal options would get the County anywhere. He stated that other than Special Use Permits, everything but the ordinance is voluntary. He stated that proffers are voluntary.

Mrs. Earhart stated that when you look at the Fishersville area, everything that will be used for business over the next twenty years is probably already zoned business. She stated that the County will not be able to affect at all what the development in that corridor looks like.

Mr. Cobb stated that if the Liberty gas station goes onto that property and builds something that is not tasteful and that is the first thing in that 119 acre development, he asked how do you think the rest of that development will go.

Mr. Byerly stated that would set the stage for the other businesses that go in that area. He asked how the Liberty in Charlottesville became a brick building.

Mrs. Earhart stated that their site plan meetings are public hearings and in Charlottesville they negotiate what they want their buildings to look like.

Mr. Cobb stated that if someone wants to go to a specific site and if they have to make a building a little fancier then that will not influence their decision.

Mr. Byerly stated that you need to get to them at the right stage.

Mr. Cobb stated that they have tried this at the site plan stage and it has not worked so far.

Mr. Byerly asked if there is anyway that Augusta County could take another locality's better development models ordinance that is working and modify it to meet the needs of this County.

Mr. Cobb stated that he thinks the County could do something themselves. He stated that the only problem is workload. He stated that they have been working on the Subdivision Ordinance and they are getting ready to take the Subdivision Ordinance to the Board of Supervisors to see if staff could advertise it so that it could go before the Planning Commission and every time they meet they argue over details and it has taken them months to go over the Subdivision Ordinance.

Mrs. Earhart stated that the request would have to be bid out. She stated that they do not have the ability in-house to do all the work, especially the graphic illustrations, to sell this to the public.

Mr. Shomo stated that the \$60,000 the County pays for this ordinance would be paid back to the County because the businesses would look much better and be worth more.

Mr. Cobb stated that the results that they received from the Comprehensive Plan survey state that most people do not want any growth but if the County does have growth they want it to look attractive. He stated that the former Planning Commissioner from Mr. Shomo's district always said that we could do better in Augusta County. He stated that he thinks that there are a lot of people who think that we could do better as well.

Mr. Byerly stated that maybe a grant could be given to entice the developers.

Mrs. Earhart stated that Rockbridge County paid for the design work to show developers what could be done to implement their new sign ordinance. She stated that she thinks they did some cost share on the actual construction.

Chairman Tilghman stated that she did not know how the public would respond to that. She stated that you should not have to bribe developers to come to the County.

Mr. Curd stated that Augusta County is the carrot. He stated that this must be regulated by an ordinance.

Mr. Bridge stated that if the County thinks this is important, an ordinance is the County's only option.

Mr. Shomo stated that consistency is very important in the County. He stated that it would be great for the County to have design guidelines that developers could use.

Mr. Shomo moved to recommend that the Board of Supervisors take into consideration the Better Models of Development guidelines in the form of an ordinance with visual aspects that must be adhered to. The Planning Commission's recommendation is based on the need to treat everyone the same way and they would like to see consistency when developing areas. The Planning Commission would like the developers to know clearly what is expected of them when developing in the County. The Planning Commission does not feel that the volunteer options will work in Augusta County.

Mr. Curd seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Mrs. Earhart stated that on September 12th, the Steering Committee will have their first review of the Existing Conditions Draft. She stated that the first public input session on the Comprehensive Plan would be October 17, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. She stated that County staff would be happy to come and make presentations to groups to explain the Comprehensive Planning process. She stated that the next round of public meetings would be in January or February of 2006.

VDOT

Chairman Tilghman stated that her last conversation with Mr. Price suggested that he would like to come back and meet with the Planning Commission. She stated that she told him to coordinate the meeting with staff. She stated that he would like to come back next month. She stated that he needed to coordinate with Mrs. Earhart because they did not know what is on the upcoming agenda. She stated that the matters were not resolved. She stated that the Planning Commission would like to meet only with Mr. Price, not Mr. Robinson.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.

Chairman

Secretary