

PRESENT: K. Shiflett, Chairman
S. Bridge
T. Cole
J. Curd
E. Shipplett
R. L. Earhart, Senior Planner and Secretary

ABSENT: W.F. Hite, Vice Chairman
K. Leonard
T.K. Fitzgerald, Director of Community Development

VIRGINIA: At the Regular Meeting of the Augusta County Planning Commission held on Tuesday, July 13, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Conference Room, Augusta County Government Center, Verona, Virginia.

* * * * *

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Mrs. Shiflett stated as there were five (5) members present, there was a quorum.

* * * * *

MINUTES

Mr. Curd moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on June 8, 2010 as received.

Mr. Bridge seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

* * * * *

Deerfield Community Center Land Trustees – Add Public Use Overlay Zoning Designation

A request to add the Public Use Overlay Zoning Designation with proffers to approximately 4.9 acres owned by the Deerfield Community Center Land Trustees located on the west side of Marble Valley Road (Rt. 600) approximately 0.1 of a mile south of the intersection with Deerfield Valley Road (Rt. 629) in Deerfield in the Pastures District.

Mrs. Earhart explained the request. She stated the applicant has submitted the following proffer:

1. Additional permitted uses of the property will be limited to:
 - A. Community centers and similar facilities
 - B. Library
 - C. Carnivals, circuses, fairs, festivals, revivals, animal shows, exhibitions, and similar special events not permitted under 25-21 of this Chapter.
 - D. Meeting places and offices of civic clubs, fraternities, lodges and other organizations
 - E. Active and passive recreational facilities, including picnic shelters, gazebos, basketball court (unlighted), and walking trails.

Ron Sites, Director of Parks and Recreation, representing Deerfield Community Center Land Trustees, property owner, explained the purpose of the request is to upgrade facilities at the park. Mr. Sites explained the County acquired the property and then deeded the parcel to the Deerfield Ruritans as trustees. Currently, there is a basketball court and playground on the property, as well as an existing building. If the request is approved, recreational facilities will be upgraded which include a gazebo, walking trail, additional parking, and a picnic shelter. This upgrade will have minimal impact to the property.

Mrs. Shiflett asked if there was anyone wishing to speak in favor or opposition to the request. There being no one desiring to speak Mrs. Shiflett declared the public hearing closed.

Mr. Cole voiced concern with the existing septic system. He asked about plans for accommodating special events.

Mr. Sites stated an outdoor bathroom will be available. He explained for larger events, the bathroom inside the building will be accessible.

Mr. Cole asked if the accommodations would be adequate.

Mr. Sites answered yes. He explained most events host between thirty (30) and fifty (50) people. He stated the facilities meet Health Department requirements.

Mrs. Earhart stated the Health Department is not concerned about the adequacy of the existing septic system for the recreational uses of the property, but has voiced concern about the proposed daily use of the building for business purposes. She explained while an event may host a large amount of people at one time, this use would not be consistent, therefore allowing the system to "catch up".

Mr. Cole stated concern with intensive use of the facilities. He noted riding events host much more than fifty (50) people.

Mr. Shipplett asked which body is in charge of maintaining the restroom and septic facilities.

Mr. Sites answered the Ruritan Club is responsible for the maintenance. He noted with approval of the overlay and more events on the property, it may be determined the systems need to be maintained more frequently.

Mr. Cole stated the building and uses are indispensable to the Deerfield Community. He moved to approve the request with proffers.

Mr. Shipplett seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

An Ordinance amending the Zoning Ordinance of Augusta County by adding “Further processing of meat products for human consumption” to the list of Permitted Uses in the General Industrial zoning district.

This Ordinance amends §25-382 generally by adding a new paragraph and changing item B to read:

B. Assembly, fabrication, processing, or packaging of products including the further processing of meat products for human consumption, provided that, on the premises, no livestock, fish or poultry are killed.

Mrs. Earhart explained the ordinance amendment. She stated the amendment was presented as a result of a possible industry that would like to locate and make use of an existing building in the County. She stated currently this use is permitted by Special Use Permit and requires a mandatory setback of one hundred feet (100') for all buildings, structures, and operations. She stated there are existing buildings within the General Industrial Zoning District that do not meet the required setback; this being the case for this prospect and the reason for the amendment.

Dennis Burnett, Economic Development Director, noted the request has been the second of its kind from possible industries desiring to locate in the County. He noted adoption of the amendment would be economically beneficial to Augusta County.

There being no one else desiring to speak, Mrs. Shiflett declared the public hearing closed.

Mr. Shipplett moved to recommend approval of the amendment to the County's Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Curd seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

An Ordinance amending the Zoning Ordinance of Augusta County by adding “Wood processing businesses” to the list of Special Use Permit uses in the General Business zoning district

This Ordinance amends §25-304. Uses permitted by Special Use Permit. in the General Business district by adding a new paragraph:

L. Wood processing businesses.

Wood processing businesses, limited to firewood production may be permitted by Special Use Permit provided:

1. The minimum lot size for a wood processing business shall be 10 acres.
2. All buildings, structures and operations will be set back at least one hundred feet (100') from all property lines unless the board of zoning appeals determines that greater setbacks are necessary to adequately protect neighboring properties from noise, light, dust, odor, fumes and vibrations.
3. Traffic generated by the proposed project will be compatible with the roads serving the site and other traffic utilizing said roads; and
4. If within sight of an Interstate Highway, the view from the Interstate Highway is made as pleasant and inviting as possible giving consideration to the value of scenic surroundings to residents, tourists and commercial development.
5. A site plan is filed meeting the requirements of division J article LXVII “Site Plan Review”, approved and followed which clearly delineates the areas intended for outdoor storage and complies with the requirements of this chapter; and
6. Outdoor storage areas will not interfere with convenient, easily accessible parking for the public. Areas delineated on the site plan for parking or aiseways may not be used for outdoor storage; and
7. Outdoor storage areas will be proportionately appropriate in size and scope to the nature of the business.

Mrs. Earhart explained the ordinance amendment. She stated the request is in regards to an existing operation. The property owner wishes to be in compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and the impact to surrounding properties is minimal. The proposed standards are consistent with other uses in the ordinance. Mrs. Earhart clarified the operation would be strictly limited to firewood production.

Mr. Burnett stated the amendment was presented as a result of an existing business that is currently in violation. The property owner desires to be in compliance under the adopted amendment.

There being no one desiring to speak, Mrs. Shiflett declared the public hearing closed.

Mr. Cole asked for an explanation of standard 4.

Mrs. Earhart explained the standard is the same standard that is used for truck stops. She explained the County recognizes the valuable role of the interstates within its boundaries.

Mr. Cole noted the standard should be more general and applicable to all roadways.

Mr. Bridge asked what party would enforce these standards.

Mrs. Earhart stated the standards are reviewed by the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Mr. Bridge moved to recommend approval of the amendment to the County's Zoning Ordinance with the revised language.

Mr. Shipplett seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

* * * * *

STAFF REPORTS

A. CODE OF VIRGINIA – SECTION 15.2-2310

Mrs. Earhart reviewed with the Commission the requests coming before the BZA.

Mrs. Shiflett asked if there were any comments regarding the upcoming items on the BZA agenda.

The Planning Commission took no action on the BZA items.

B. ANNUAL SCORECARD 2009

Ms. Bullerdick summarized the report. She explained the 2009 Census estimates Augusta County's population at 72,114. She stated it is estimated the County's population increases by roughly 1% each year and has grown by almost 10% in the last decade. She further stated there are 39,050 parcels and 393,524 acres of non-federal land in Augusta County and the median parcel size in 2009 was 1.30 acres. Of those parcels, 24,879 (367,000 acres) are zoned Agriculture. She stated there were seven (7) rezonings in 2009 with one of those rezonings, Augusta Marketplace, including almost one hundred forty (140) acres of General Agriculture property rezoned to General Business. With regard to minor subdivisions in agriculture, she stated 2008 and 2009 saw the lowest amounts of newly created lots in the decade. Of those minor subdivision lots created in 2009, 71% were less than five (5) acres in size and 36% of those lots were created through family member exception. She explained there has been a decline in the total number of new building permits issued to the County with the majority of the permits issued in 2009 being in the

Urban Service and Rural Conservation Areas. She noted only sixty seven (67) permits were issued in residential and mixed use zoning districts in 2009. This is a decrease of almost 80% since the year 2005. With regards to employment and wages, Ms. Bullerdick stated the County employs 0.9% of the State's workforce. She further stated the County's unemployment rate of 6.6% is slightly less than the State unemployment rate of 6.7%. Ms. Bullerdick stated three hundred ninety two (392) Home Occupation Permits were issued and sixty (60) Special Use Permits were issued in 2009. For utilities, as of FY2009, the Service Authority reported a total of 15,107 customers and an increase in water usage, however, it was noted there has been a decrease in sewer usage. The Service Authority also reported a decrease in solid waste of 18%, received by the Augusta County Landfill in 2009. For public education, the 2008-2009 School Year saw a drop out rate of 1.2%; this being the lowest rate in the past three (3) years. There were eight hundred three (803) high school graduates/completers (82%) in the County compared to the Virginia statistic of 83%. For the 2009-2010 school years the County saw the lowest enrollment numbers of the decade, totaling 10,602 full-time students. Ms. Bullerdick stated from 2005-2009, fire calls increased at a rate of 14.8% and rescue calls increased at a rate of 6.0%. She stated fire calls had increased because fire is now responding with rescue calls. She explained with regard to Land Use, there are approximately 282,587 acres of land enrolled in the taxation program in the County in 2009. She stated while this amount is the most acres enrolled in the last five (5) years, the average parcel size enrolled in the program is declining. Ms. Bullerdick explained the Parks and Recreation Department provided six hundred forty four (644) programs in 2009 with 7,922 registered participants and also increased number the of athletic programs and registered participants. The library saw a total of 15,077 registered borrowers and 420,000 patron visits at the branches and stations for the year 2009. However, it was noted there was a decrease collection, an increase circulation, and an increase in the attendance at library programs. Social Services saw an increase in enrollment in all programs since FY2007. The Food Stamp Program showed the greatest increase of 26.7%.

* * * * *

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

* * * * *

Chairman

Secretary