

## **WORKSESSION MINUTES**

**September 13, 2006**

**3:00 p.m.**

PLANNING COMMISSION: Wayne Hite, Chairman  
James Curd, Vice-Chairman  
Thomas Byerly  
Kitra Shiflett  
Joe Shomo  
Justine Tilghman

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: Wendell Coleman, Chairman  
Nancy Sorrells, Vice Chairman  
James Bailey  
David Beyeler  
Kay Frye  
Larry Howdysshell

STEERING COMMITTEE: Charles Huffman, Chairman  
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Mark Gatewood  
Ian Heatwole  
Jeanne Hoffman  
Steve Klein  
Leah Root  
Justine Tilghman  
Kitra Shiflett  
Don Vreuls  
James Wenger

STAFF: Patrick Coffield, County Administrator  
John McGehee, Assistant County  
Administrator  
Dale Cobb, Director  
Becky Earhart, Senior Planner  
Jeremy Sharp, Associate Planner

CONSULTANTS: Vlad Gavrilovic  
Chris Sinclair  
Jason Espie  
Jared Ulmer  
Milton Herd  
David Hirschman

Wendell Coleman, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors called the worksession to order and indicated that the purpose of the meeting was to gain consensus on the vision for the Comprehensive Plan as we move toward the completion of the planning effort. He asked those in attendance to speak frankly, get all the issues out in the open, and not leave with thoughts still unspoken. He then introduced the consulting team to run the meeting.

Vlad Gavrilovic reviewed with the group the purpose of a comprehensive plan and their work program and timeline for the transportation and natural resources elements of the plan. Mr. Gavrilovic indicated that although they have been hired to complete the transportation and natural resources elements of the plan, the County has also contracted with them to confirm the vision for the entire planning effort and link that vision to the rest of the plan. Their expectation is to complete the visioning task and the transportation and natural resources elements by the end of the year; acknowledging that it was a "brisk pace" but doable.

Becky Earhart outlined the comprehensive planning process undertaken to date. She indicated that the core assumptions that the Steering Committee has agreed to are that the County will have 17,700 new residents by 2025 and the plan needs to accommodate that growth. Even if the growth is less, eventually the County population will increase by that amount. The goal is to direct new growth to areas with services and away from agricultural areas. She stated that the draft plan recommends only four Planning Policy Areas: Urban Service Areas, Community Development Areas, Rural Conservation Areas, and Agricultural Conservation Areas. She stated that Community Development Areas are those areas that have only one public service- either public water or public sewer, but not both. If an area is served by both public water and sewer, they were designated Urban Service Areas. The draft has eliminated Potential Urban Service Areas and Potential Community Development Areas. Potential Areas were eliminated in an attempt to be clearer about the type of development that is expected in each area.

Milton Herd stated the starting assumption of the consulting team is that the 1994 plan generally established the future growth vision for the County and it is for the most part sound. They are anticipating refinements to that vision, not fundamental changes. The big question to be answered during the worksession is "How shall we live?"

Mr. Herd and Mr. Gavrilovic reviewed each of the four main policy areas and showed graphically what the policies allowed for, what the existing pattern of development the County is getting looks like, and presented options for what future growth could look like. Mr. Hirschman reviewed the policy areas and related the goals to the natural resource considerations that need to be examined.

The group divided into four small groups to consider in more depth the policies of the current plan and identify any concerns they have with the policies. At the end of the small group sessions, each group reported out their findings. A complete listing of the results of the small group sessions follows:

### **Urban Service Areas**

#### Group 1

- Allow for mixing uses:
  - o For example, as in Albemarle County's Crozet area Master Plan.
  - o Augusta County needs to find the right places for mixed use.
- Planned Unit Development was not what was originally visualized for this area.
- Need to design mixed use/Planned Unit Development properly.
- Is now very dependent on the automobile – there is a need for more pedestrian-friendly design.
- Need for connecting developments.
- How do we pay for infrastructure to support new development? Roads, schools, sidewalks, etc.
- Who maintains pedestrian paths (homeowners, state, county?)
- Need to have a plan with clear implementation tools/policies, and who implements the plan?
  - o Homeowners associations?
  - o There is a need for expertise with implementation.
- Apply principles to street connectivity
  - o need to have vision of overall street / development design
- Can the community adapt to support this type of development to preserve rural land?

#### Group 2

- 3 unit/acre is too low for density in the Urban Service Area.
- Townhouse/duplexes are needed as are higher densities than 3 units/acre (see the Crozet Models).
- Green Space is not necessarily Ag space.
- For residential development, three units/acre is a small lot.
- We don't want to have the current types of subdivisions. We need more density.
- Density is needed for public transportation and services, efficiency.
- Overload schools with increased density.
- More density needs to be more attractive for commercial/schools, etc.
- Master Planning/Comp Plan is needed within the Urban Service Areas to build neighborhoods properly with the right mix, and for the future.
- Natural Resource improvements – rain gardens, grass swales.

### Group 3

- Generally OK with allocation of development in the district.
- VDOT likes consolidating access points, need two access points for safety (e.g., median/boulevard can provide alternate access if one side is blocked).
- Generally support “connected” road system, especially the safety aspect.
- Need to look at keeping some maximum impervious surface standards.

### Group 4

- The direction as presented looks good, but, *how do we get there?*
- How do we clarify the variable densities? Could it be 4 units per acre or less? Needs to be clarified.
- Ordinances need to facilitate the directions identified in the plan.
- Should be careful on how to plan/manage for affordable housing.
- There are no provisions for Conservation Easements or Open Space in the Urban Service area. Are these areas devoid of these?
- How do we get infrastructure in place before new development, and how are we to pay for it?
- In general, the vision interpreted from the 1994 comp plan is affirmed, and many elements are also affirmed by the record of prior public meeting comments and public input.

## **Community Development Areas**

### Group 1

- Septic with clusters? There is a concern about clustering, especially with alternative septic.
- Property rights! These policies have to work for private landowners.
- Market demand is for 5-10 acre lots
- Purchase/transfer of development rights as incentive?

### Group 2

- What about 40 years from now – we need those potential areas.
- Utilities – not likely to get the other (i.e., water and sewer). Intention is not that it couldn't (get both water and sewer). If it did get both would it automatically get bumped up to an Urban Service Area?

### Group 3

- Support context-sensitive architecture for commercial/retail (e.g., the “Sheetz” is not context-sensitive).
- Support clustering to leave as much space open as possible.
- Support pedestrian orientation for clusters.

- Clustered development needs public sewer and water. These areas need to be close to existing sewer lines. This service need is especially important for karst areas.

#### Group 4.

- Do you need rezoning to accomplish 'clustering'? Rezoning is probably needed.
- Basically the 1994 plan elements and intentions are good, but again, how do we get there? The current ordinances do not support the 1994 Plan's directions.
- How do we truly foster pedestrian friendly development, through codes?
- We need to check to make sure the codes/ordinances provide for maintenance of alternative septic and septic systems. There is an importance to protect groundwater resources.

### **Rural Conservation Areas**

#### Group 1

- How do you implement clusters? Through the ordinances?
- We need stronger "carrot" and "sticks" to implement the 1994 policies as they were intended.
- Are public streets and inter-parcel connections really desired?

#### Group 2

- Shouldn't consider clustering – not practical. Concerns over equity between landowners (applies to ACA too).
- Concern over density of drainfields (applies to ACA too).
- Cluster residents demand more services – due to suburban form. Shouldn't extend services to these areas. (applies to ACA too)
- Some disagreement on clustering for RCA.
- People don't like 5 acres – can't mow, can't farm, is a waste of land (5 acres is worthless).
- Prefer houses closer to road and preserve more land for farming.
- Guidance on implementation from BOS.
- Look into hybrids of cluster development.
- Preservation of productive ag land.
- Allow for low-key commercial (horticulture) uses, and ag/rural/compatible businesses in order to keep land rural and profitable.

#### Group 3

- Developments are typically too small (less than 10-20 acres) so perhaps not viable as clusters.

- Some have been created (e.g., “Rural Estates”)
- “Eats Up” farmland on 5-10 acre farmettes
- Groundwater concerns with clustering.
- Need to protect class I and II soils BUT they are easiest places for “percolating” soils (for septic.)
- Some small farmettes create economic benefits.
- Generally OK with clustering but concerned with implementation.

#### Group 4

- How do we actually achieve clustering? We don’t see it happening realistically. If it’s going to happen we need to provide positive incentives to encourage this form of development. Being able to transfer densities is needed to achieve this.
- How do we prevent the creation of more lots? The subdivision ordinances can and should direct this.
- Are there any RCA areas with service? These are the “edge” areas.

### **Agriculture Conservation Areas**

#### Group 1

- Are public streets and inter-parcel connections really desired?
- Need more encouragement of ag/forestal districts (also in RCA)
  - o Voluntary easements?
  - o Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) / Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs?

#### Group 2

- NO cluster.
- We don’t need public infrastructure in these areas.
- Why not 1 dwelling/20 or 30 acres.
- Parcel size should be large enough to allow active use of land for agricultural purposes.
- Still want family divisions.
- Farmer needs flexibility for some divisions while continuing to farm.
- Leave large tracts available for productive land.

#### Group 3

- Not OK with 10 acre lots in this area – doesn’t preserve viable farming
- However, it is a tough balancing act – don’t know what lot size should be.
- County has one of the strongest farm service infrastructures in the State BUT they are starting to cater to the “farmette” market.
- 10 acre lots or clusters create sprawl.

- Should encourage lots to be in wooded areas BUT have concern over the environmental inputs.
- Need to include recommendations of Agricultural Task Force
- Concern that larger lot sizes (e.g., 40 acre) are the size of some smaller farms in the County. (limits flexibility for family succession).
- Need to address buffers around Residential in farm areas.

#### Group 4

- Clear-cut rules are needed for Conservation Easement and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs. (and the same is true for CDA and RCA).
- Clarify wording on clustering – what is the intent of the existing wording. Our view is that residential development is not desirable in the RCA (not encouraged), but if you have to have it then it should be clustered.
- Currently in the RCA and ACA it is far too easy to develop. The current situation has both of these areas having 32% of new development (approx 16% and 16% each) and this is not acceptable.

### **Other Comments**

#### Group 1

- Policy areas vs. “potential” policy areas
  - o How do we define areas that may change in the future?
  - o Are there ultimate boundaries? Where does the USA expansion end? What do we do with Community Development Areas that are next to Urban Service Areas when they want to add the 2<sup>nd</sup> utility?
- How do we pay for the costs of infrastructure in USA?

#### Group 2

- The “Potential Policy Areas” are needed.
- Crimora – should it be CSA, why is it green?
- Give more options – like a Planned Unit Development.

#### Group 3

- What if the population is doubled? 17,700 may be too low given proximity to Washington.
- State mandates on water resources could impose limits to growth.
- Concern over impacts of cluster development of affluent discharge and water resources.
- Low profits for agriculture mean higher rates of development.
- High land prices mean farming can’t expand.
- The more you restrict development potential the higher the land values grow.

#### Group 4

- A compelling issue for especially the CDA, ACA, RCA areas is to allow for some flexibility. If for example, a CDA needs water and sewer extension because of a health reason and it's provided, does it mean this area automatically assumes the policies of an Urban Service Area? One would hope there would be allowance for exceptions for health or safety reasons so an area could retain its original policy designation intention.
- Comp Plan update issue – how often are the edges redrawn.
- Overlays for riparian zones; environmentally sensitive areas.
- Development below flood control dams. This is a safety issue and concern which is also financial, maintenance, etc. Floodplains are also not fully mapped.
- If the subdivision ordinance is not 'tightened' after all of this then we will have wasted a lot of time and money.

Mr. Gavrilovic reminded the group that they would get together in two weeks, September 28<sup>th</sup>, to review the concerns identified in this session and develop consensus on linking the vision to the plan. There being no further business to come before the groups, the worksession was adjourned.

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Chairman

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Secretary