

Joint Meeting, Wednesday, March 21, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. Government Center, Verona, VA.

PLANNING COMMISSION:

PRESENT: James W. Curd, Chairman
Stephen N. Bridge, Vice-Chairman
Wayne F. Hite
Kitra A. Shiflett
Joseph Shomo
Thomas H. Byerly
Justine D. Tilghman

ABSENT: None

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

PRESENT: Nancy Taylor Sorrells, Chairwoman
David R. Beyeler, Vice-Chairman
F. James Bailey, Jr.
Wendell L. Coleman
Kay D. Frye
Tracy C. Pyles, Jr.

ABSENT: Larry C. Howdyshell

STAFF: Dale L. Cobb, Director of Community Development
Becky Earhart, Senior Planner
Jeremy Sharp, Associate Planner
Patrick J. Coffield, County Administrator
Steven L. Rosenberg, County Attorney
Beatrice B. Cardellicchio-Weber, Administrative Secretary

VIRGINIA: At a joint meeting of the Augusta County Board of Supervisors and the
Planning Commission, held on Wednesday, March 21,
2007, at 7:00 p.m., at the Government Center, Verona,
Virginia, and in the 231st year of the Commonwealth....

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Nancy T. Sorrells, Chairwoman of the Augusta County Board of Supervisors, called the meeting to order. Mr. Curd, Chairman of the Augusta County Planning Commission, called the Planning Commission meeting to order.

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Chairwoman Sorrells welcomed the citizens present for the meeting and led us with the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Bailey delivered invocation.

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Chairwoman Sorrells expressed her appreciation of public interest and participation in tonight's hearing. She stated that they will open the public hearing to the citizens so that they can give their comments. She stated that they will also accept written comments until Monday, March 26, 2007.

Ms. Earhart stated that she will present a short overview of the draft Comprehensive Plan. She stated that the Plan is available on the County's website. She stated that hard copies of the Plan are available in addition to CDs in the Community Development Department, as well as in the County and City libraries. She stated that they will be accepting written comments until March 26, 2007. She stated that the Comprehensive Plan is a set of guidelines. She stated that it is not law. She stated that it is used as a guide for decision making by the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and other Boards and Commissions of the County. She stated that the Board of Supervisors appointed a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee in April 2005. She asked that the Steering Committee stand so that they can be recognized. She stated that they have spent over eighteen months working on the Plan. She stated that citizens had comments from the draft Plan meetings in January and those comments were relayed to the Steering Committee. She stated that the Steering Committee made some alterations to the Plan and the maps. She stated that before the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission tonight, is the Plan as it is recommended by the Steering Committee. She stated that the basic assumptions remain the same from the January meetings. She stated that the County is going to grow and they used a future population of 87,700 which would be 17,700 new residents over the next twenty years. She stated that the Plan focuses on steering growth to where the County wants it to be. She explained the vision of the Plan. She stated that the four Planning Policy Areas are Urban Service Areas, Community Development Areas, Rural Conservation Areas, and Agricultural Conservation Areas. She stated that the Urban Service Areas are where there is both water and sewer service or where services are expected to be extended. She stated that the Plan calls for 80% of future residential growth and most of the County's business and industrial growth to take place in the Urban Service Areas. She stated that the Urban Service Areas are where the hospital, main County Library, and the Government Center are located. She stated that the Plan is more about encouraging livable communities than trying to set

maximum densities. She stated that Community Development Areas have public water only, with the exception of New Hope which has just public sewer. She stated that the Plan calls for 10% of future residential growth to take place in the Community Development Areas. She stated that these areas are one to two acre lot sizes with some business and light industrial. She stated that the Rural Conservation Areas are areas that are already substantially subdivided and have few intensive agricultural operations. She stated that these areas would accommodate Rural Residential subdivisions with wells and septic systems. She stated that this area could possibly be used for cluster residential subdivisions. She stated that the Agricultural Conservation Areas are the ideal locations for continued agricultural operations, with no more than 5% of the future residential development expected to locate there. She stated that for each parcel in the Urban Service Areas and Community Development Areas there is a Future Land Use designation. She stated that most of them have not changed. She stated that they have added the Mixed Use category which will allow flexibility for developers but also a more deliberate review for the County at the rezoning stage. She stated that these would be projects that would have a variety of uses, including different types of residential uses and possibly business or industrial uses. She stated that there are also Rural Communities which are shown as circles on the map. She stated that these areas would be appropriate for development that would match the existing pattern. She stated that the Plan calls for finding ways to accommodate future development without changing the unique development patterns of these communities. She stated that the Plan has a Goals, Objectives, and Policies section that has 42 Goals, 107 Objectives, and 331 Policies. She stated that also included with the Plan is the Implementation Strategy that assigns a responsible party and a timeframe to many of the Plan's policies. She stated that it will be up to the Board of Supervisors to put the resources and direction to the County agencies to get it done. She stated that key implementation measures are to revise the zoning regulations, Subdivision Ordinance, and stormwater regulations. She stated that it includes also developing strategic plans for education and economic development and Small Area Plans. She stated that developing a strategy for ensuring that infrastructure improvements and preservation programs are funded by all County residents is necessary to make the Plan a success. She stated that the Annual Scorecard will track trends over time. She stated that it will track the number of parcels and where they are being created. She stated that the Planning Commission will have their first worksession on the Plan on April 3, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. She stated that a tentative worksession is scheduled for April 5, 2007 if needed. She stated that the Planning Commission will consider the Plan on April 10, 2007 and make their recommendations to the Board of Supervisors which will be considered at the April 23, 2007 worksession before the Board of Supervisors meeting on April 25, 2007. She stated that the citizens can mail or email any comments if they do not want to speak tonight.

Chairwoman Sorrells opened the public hearing.

Mr. Curd opened the public hearing.

Tom Sikes, representing Solutions Way, Waynesboro, stated that 50% of the old GE plant is located within Augusta County. He stated that there are sixty acres listed as Rural

Conservation Area on the draft Plan. He stated that this site is an industrial site. He stated that they have been working this year to bring additional businesses to the area and possibly expand the operations to the Augusta County side of the property. He asked that the land be taken out of the Rural Conservation Area and placed in the Urban Service Area so that the industrial operations can be expanded. He stated that they have the utilities in the City of Waynesboro which would also serve the County portion of the property. He stated that the property can only be accessed through the City of Waynesboro. He stated that he is trying to get the property classified as a Foreign Trade Zone and he is working with Norfolk Southern to put in another rail spur.

Lynn Gore Ward, 1460 Earlysville Forest Drive, Earlysville, stated that her family owns property on TM#36-84 which is 120 acres fronting on the Middle River and TM#36-92 which is 195 acres fronting on Route 11. She stated that on the previous draft Plan, the Middle River parcel was designated as Rural Conservation Area and the Route 11 parcel was a combination of Rural Conservation Area and Urban Service Area. She stated that the current draft had changed these to the most restrictive use which is Agricultural Conservation Area. She asked that the previous designations be reinstated on both of her properties. She stated that the properties are different in character, but they both have several things in common. She stated that her grandfather purchased these properties over fifty years ago and purchased them with development in mind. She stated that the parcel on the river is landlocked and purchased with a fifty foot easement knowing it would be necessary for development. She stated since the properties were purchased and definitely from 1994 to the present the County's actions have supported the belief that the development of these properties was possible and in compliance with the County Plan. She stated that the County ran public water along Route 11 adjacent to the parcel. She stated that public sewer lines end not far from the property line on Route 11. She stated that there has been significant development allowed to occur adjacent to the Middle River property. She stated that they expected and anticipated the right to develop these properties. She stated that the recent change in the property designation is an abrupt about face and is not consistent with the County's prior actions in these areas. She stated that the Thoroughfare Plan indicates that Route 11 is adequate to support any development on that parcel. She stated that the public infrastructure is in place, therefore, it makes sense to develop the land that is already supported by infrastructure. She stated that the current designation would cause underutilization of the existing infrastructure. She stated that it could push development back into areas where infrastructure may need to be provided and other agricultural parcels could be sacrificed. She stated that 75% of the Middle River property is surrounded by residential development. She stated that with the prior Comprehensive Plan the County was willing to allow development in the area. She stated that this parcel is not visible from Route 11. She stated that there are twenty households that look down on the property. She stated that if there is any opposition to the Rural Conservation designation for this piece of property, it can only come from those who have already developed the land around it. She stated that these two parcels represent 80% of their property holdings and the current proposal reduces the value of these properties as much as 50%. She stated that this is an unreasonable burden to ask them to bear. She stated that she has a strong attachment to the land. She stated that

her family has held this land with the reliance that the County supports the development in this area. She stated that they may not develop the property at all, but they want to retain the right to do so. She is not asking the County to make an abrupt change but merely maintain a course and message consistent with its actions over many years and actions that they have relied on for many years.

Abner Johnston, 733 Dabneys Road, Raphine, stated that he is here on behalf of the St. Mary's-Upper South River Watershed Association, a local citizens group formed to address the watershed issues, particularly flood related concerns, of the community along Route 608 near the Augusta-Rockbridge border. He stated that some of the citizens in the area signed the back of his letter. He stated that they would like to thank the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee as well as the Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, and County staff for their hard work on the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that they are grateful for the opportunity to provide some final input at the public hearing. He stated that there are some very specific areas in the community that need to be addressed in regard to the Comprehensive Plan map. He stated that if you look at the map, you will see that the community is squeezed between the St. Mary's River, Spy Run, the railroad, and the national forest. He stated that on the draft map, this is designated as a Rural Conservation Area. He stated that they would like this area changed to an Agricultural Conservation Area. He stated that there are flooding issues during a heavy thunderstorm. He stated that the yellow areas are where the floodplain is. He stated that it is expensive to drill a well in that area. He stated that they are so far out that it takes one hour for a sheriff or fire truck to arrive in this area. He stated that if the property were changed to an Agricultural Conservation Area it would help the flooding issue. He stated that they have been working with the Army Corps of Engineers to try to get the riverbanks maintained. He stated that any further growth in that area would just hinder the work that they tried to get done.

Eddie Sensabaugh, 467 Greenville School Road, Greenville, stated that he is here representing the citizens of Greenville School Road. He stated that there are water lines on half of the road. He stated that the entire road is in a Rural Conservation Area. He stated that he understands that, up until the water line stops but at that point, he would request that the land be changed back to an Agricultural Conservation Area. He stated that Larry Harris and his two sons are here as well. He stated that they own about 140 acres. He stated that keeping the area in a Rural Conservation Area with more subdivisions would create more traffic. He stated that there is a lot of traffic on this road already. He stated that they are trying to maneuver their farm equipment on a road with regular drivers. He stated that the area is productive farmland. He would like to keep that area on Greenville School Road in the Agricultural Conservation Area.

Charles Huppuch, 81 Fort River Road, Verona, stated that he is here representing the Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District. He stated that he is an Associate Director for Headwaters. He thanked the Steering Committee for volunteering and all the work that the County has done. He thanked the Planning staff for listening to their recommendations. He stated that they are pleased with the vision statement. He stated that this is a good Plan

and he would like to see it adopted. He stated that the natural resource section was done very well. He stated that he supports the target for 80% development in the Urban Service Areas and reducing the growth to 10% in the rural areas. He stated that he supports the protection of farmland, soil, water, and forestry resources and the policies that are in the Plan for guidance. He stated that he supports the goals and the Small Area Plans. He stated that he is disappointed with the amount of acres that are in the Urban Service Area - 39,483 acres. He stated that is too much. He stated that there is prime farmland located within the Urban Service Area and it should stay farmland. He recommends the adoption of the Plan. He stated that the County needs to move ahead with the implementation of the Plan. He stated that the County needs to move ahead with effective ordinances and development of the policies that are listed in the Plan. He stated that with the upcoming budget funds should be allocated to begin this process and revamp the Zoning Ordinance, fund Purchase of Development Rights, and the other items in the Plan. He stated that if it is not funded, twenty years from now the County will be wondering what went wrong.

Gary Blosser, 1324 Keezletown Road, Weyers Cave, stated that he is here representing Blue Mountain Investments. He requested that Tax Map #28, Parcels 15, 17, and 18, which is approximately 165 acres, be included in the Urban Service Area with a Future Land Use designation of Industrial. He stated that the adjacent parcels of approximately 359 acres are in the current Plan with a Future Land Use designation of Industrial. He stated that these parcels being next to the airport, Interstate 81, and the availability of water and sewer make an attractive site for future industrial development. He stated that he has been working with the airport to attract an industry that will compliment the airport and bring desirable jobs to the County. He stated that most industries would require additional acreage for green space and buffer areas.

John Hagen, 109 Balsley Road, Staunton, stated he is the agent for Mehdi Moshashaee and will be speaking on his behalf. He stated that Mr. Moshashaee has a twenty acre parcel that fronts on Kiddsville Road. He expressed his agreement regarding the designation of TM#67-12 and the parcels adjacent to Emerald Hills being in the Urban Service Area with a Future Land Use designation of Medium Density Residential.

Greg Campbell, 77 Aviation Circle, Weyers Cave, stated that he is here representing the Airport Commission. He thanked the Steering Committee and appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the Plan. He stated that he followed the process closely. He stated that he would like to assure that the future development around the airport is compatible with the airport. He stated that the Airport Commission suggested adding language requiring review by the Board of Supervisors for any proposed conservation easement in the immediate vicinity of the airport. He stated that this suggestion was incorporated within the Plan and they support adopting this language. He stated that between the draft of January 8, 2007 and February 21, 2007 portions of airport property were changed from Urban Service Area to an Agricultural Conservation Area. He stated that the Board of Supervisors recently rezoned portions of property to Airport Business. He stated that the change to Agricultural Conservation Area is not consistent with the current zoning. He stated that the airport is a

public facility and is one of a kind. He stated that this property will not always remain agriculture. He requested that all of the property owned by the Airport Commission and zoned Airport Business remain in the Urban Service Area.

Barry Hensley, 763 Knightly Lane, Mt. Sidney, stated that the County did a fine job on the Plan. He stated that the Plan envisions a positive and productive future for the County along with protecting the County's history. He stated that the Plan reflects the needs of the citizens of Augusta County. He stated that the Plan is not law and represents only a vision. He stated that the Plan is subject to political, economic, or other pressures which have the potential to alter the Plan dramatically. He stated that the citizens benefit from long term productive planning. He stated that the Plan needs to be maintained by a set of ordinances that ensure proper implementation and discourage changes that deviate from the concepts of the Plan. He stated that he supports the long term support and maintenance of the Plan. He stated that the public should be used to scrutinize and oversee the ordinance changes. He stated that the Board of Supervisors should appoint a standing committee to assist in the development of ordinances, implement the Plan, and provide direction of the continued enforcement of those ordinances. He stated a list can be provided to the Planning Commissioners and Board of Supervisors upon request.

John Eckman, 17 Barristers Row, Staunton, stated that he is representing Valley Conservation Council. He stated that the County has a strong product through this effort. He stated that they are concerned that there is too much red on the map with a County with a vision that the County has stated. He stated that the County should maintain the vision with the population that was stated. He stated that with the flooding in Waynesboro, he would follow all recommendations with performance standards for stormwater and other natural resource protection in Urban Service Areas. He stated that the County should implement low impact development standards and other techniques without impacting the natural resources. He stated that the County will have a great opportunity with the Small Area Plans to maintain open space. He stated that due to restrictions and what infrastructure will allow, it will not all be developed. He stated that he applauds the Urban Open Space designation with the hope of conservation easements in Urban Service Areas. He stated that with maintaining green infrastructure, it will save the community a tremendous amount over the long run. He stated that it is cheaper to save trees than build stormwater facilities. He stated that he appreciates the strong implementation language in the Plan. He stated that strengthening ordinances is not an easy task and finding a way to do that is a tremendous challenge. He stated that maintaining large green areas may be lost if the County cannot strengthen the agricultural zoning in Augusta County and do so in a way by providing funding for Purchase of Development Rights and other incentives. He stated that the smaller the Urban Service Area, the more feasible it is to have a workable Transfer of Development Rights program. He stated that he hopes with the Small Area Plans, it would limit the amount of Urban Service Area. He stated that all of the citizens pay for the infrastructure and they need to pay for green infrastructure. He stated that farmers need compensation if they are going to lose their development rights. He stated that it will take a lot more money than what was set aside

already. He applauded the Annual Scorecard which he thought was a great idea. He hoped that all of the recommendations are fully implemented soon.

Guy Eavers, 539 Walnut Hills Road, Staunton, stated that he had purchased some land at Mint Spring that has been put in the Agricultural Conservation Area. He stated that this land was purchased with development in mind, since it is located at the Interstate interchange with services nearby. He requested that it be re-classified into a Policy Area that would allow him to develop the property as he intended.

Ms. Sorrells stated that Mr. Eavers should give Ms. Earhart some specific tax map numbers and she would get him the information that he needed.

Tom Nelson, 6003 Middlebrook Road, Middlebrook, thanked everyone for their work. He stated that the Plan should include a recommendation to become a Certified Local Government. He stated that he would encourage it. He stated that a lot of the historic preservation issues including Grandma Moses would go before a historic commission before going to the Board of Supervisors. He stated that there could be one representative of each district. He stated that by having a certified local government the state would allow grants. He stated that right now they are not eligible for that. He stated that he would be glad to work with the County to get one started.

Ms. Sorrells asked if a policy relating to Certified Local Government was included in the historic resources section of the Plan.

Mr. Sharp stated yes.

Ms. Sorrells asked if there were any other members of the public who would like to speak.

Ms. Sorrells, hearing none, closed the public hearing.

Mr. Curd closed the public hearing.

Ms. Sorrells thanked the citizens for coming to the meeting. She stated that the Planning Commission will make their recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. She stated that the Plan will go before the Board of Supervisors in late April.

Mr. Beyeler moved that the Board of Supervisors meeting be adjourned.

Ms. Frye seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Ms. Shiflett moved that the Planning Commission meeting be adjourned.

Mr. Byerly seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Chairman, Planning Commission

Secretary