

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

ABSENT: K. Leonard, Chairman  
J. Curd  
W. Garvey

VIRGINIA: At the Regular Meeting of the Augusta County Planning Commission held on Tuesday, September 10, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room, Augusta County Government Center, Verona, Virginia.

\* \* \* \* \*

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

Mr. Cole stated as there were four (4) members present, there was a quorum.

\* \* \* \* \*

**MINUTES**

Mr. Shipplett moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on August 13, 2013.

Mrs. Shiflett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Fitzgerald introduced Amanda Glover as the new Director of the Economic Development Department. She was formerly the Assistant Director of Economic Development for the City of Staunton. Her official start date is September 27, 2013.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Comprehensive Plan Review**

Mrs. Earhart stated that the Economic Section of the Comprehensive Plan has many changes to it. One reason for the changes is because one of the major recommendations in the last version of the Comp Plan was to prepare a strategic plan, which has been done. Many of the revised goals, objectives, and strategies come as direct recommendations from the Strategic Plan. The second reason for the changes is because Dennis Burnett and the Economic Development Authority were asked to review the Comp Plan section. Upon their review, numerous changes were made. Mrs. Earhart reviewed the goals, objectives, and policies stated in the Economic Section with the Commission.

Mr. Cole stated while there is a lot of the Economic Development Strategic Plan within the Comp Plan, why it was not incorporated into the Comp Plan as a whole instead of incorporating only parts of it.

Mrs. Earhart stated that the Economic Development Plan could be incorporated wholly, but in this case, while the concepts may have come from the Economic Development Strategy, there are more details contained in the Comp Plan. The recommendation from the Strategic Plan may have been to increase the amount of workforce training in the area. The Comp Plan is more specific about working with Valley Vocational Technical Center and Blue Ridge Community College to increase the amount of skilled labor in the workforce. Mrs. Earhart said the same questions came up about the Parks and Recreational Plan and how much of that plan should be included in the Comp Plan and whether it should just be adopted in its entirety. However, staff thinks it is more efficient to have it all in the Comp Plan.

Mr. Cole stated he felt that each area of the Comp Plan should be consistent as far as the policies and goals.

Mrs. Earhart stated the Comp Plan is preparing for the next tier of recommendations and is the next set of goals for the County to move towards in terms of economic development.

Mr. Cole asked if the Economic Development Strategy complies with the Comp Plan.

Mrs. Earhart stated it does comply with the Comp Plan. The recommendations that are being suggested for the Comp Plan comply with the Economic Development Strategy.

Mrs. Glover used the City of Staunton as an example and stated that the Strategic Plan for the city has not been updated since 1988. Comprehensive Plans, however, are required under State law to be reviewed every five years. At one point the Comp Plan and the Economic Development plan matched identically. However, over time changes made within the Comp Plan were not made in the Strategic Plan. The Economic Development Section in the County Comp Plan is a good place to make changes and clarifications in order to insure they are recorded in a specific document.

Mr. Cole stated he felt the Comp Plan and the Strategic Plan should be one in the same as far as the goals and objectives are concerned.

Mrs. Earhart stated that the Comp Plan is a document that gives direction for the next steps to be taken in each area. The only other option would be to hold the Economic Development Section of the Comp Plan back to the recommendations from the Economic Development Strategic Plan that was prepared five or six years ago, however, there would be no direction for Economic Development at that point. The recommendation is to look at the next steps for economic development and focus on labor resources and site assessment and certification, which are areas where the Strategic Plan is weak.

Mrs. Earhart referred to Objective D of the Comp Plan which is to maintain or improve the County's ratio of population to jobs. Staff has recommended that this objective be removed from the Plan because it is not easily quantifiable in terms of an appropriate target. She also stated that a population to jobs ratio doesn't accurately reflect all the aspects of the equation, such as the retirement population and the amount of workers commuting into the area to work.

The Commissioners agreed that Objective D should be removed from the Plan.

Mrs. Earhart referred to the Sports Tourism section under Goal 5, Policy 4 of the plan. She stated this policy explores the possibility of developing a ball field complex to be used by local schools and for hosting ball tournaments. It is realized that due to the current budget for the County, this is not a project for the near future, but possibly within the 20 year plan spectrum. A project such as this would not only be beneficial to local schools and residents, but would also promote tourism.

Mrs. Earhart asked if the Commissioners had any questions regarding the Economic Development Plan Section.

Mr. Cole referred to Goal 4, Objective A and asked if this goal should provide for the ability for businesses to come together to share different support aspects of each business.

Mrs. Earhart clarified that Mr. Cole was referring to the second tier of businesses that support existing businesses, such as their suppliers and transportation providers. The Goal could also encompass the concept of shared facilities for businesses. She will work on adding language to the Plan implementing his suggestion.

There were no other concerns raised regarding the Economy Section.

Mrs. Earhart referred to the Library Section of the Comprehensive Plan. She stated that library staff, the Library Board, and Friends of the Library reviewed this section of the Comp Plan. The goal of the Library Board is to have first rate library services. One significant service that County libraries provide is internet service. This allows patrons that do not have home internet service to access the internet at the library. Many improvements have been made to ensure the cleanliness and safety at the County

libraries with significant improvements made with the new location of the Craigsville library station. Technology services continue to be a large issue for all County libraries as well as a need to provide sufficient learning and meeting space. It has been recommended to add to the Plan the need to support the Talking Book Center which is a collaborative effort with Staunton and Waynesboro.

The Commission made no changes to the Library section of the Plan.

Mrs. Earhart referred to the Human Services Section of the Comp Plan. She stated that Elizabeth Middleton, Director of Shenandoah Valley Social Services, Dave Deering, Director of Valley Community Services Board, and Melissa Orndorff, Director of Office on Youth reviewed this section of the Plan. The Goals and Objectives have been changed to be more inclusive and reflect the changes in service delivery and needs. Buildings that are used to house Social Service agencies need to be ADA compliant. Resources at each agency need to be available for the language that is spoken. As the County becomes more diverse, the need to provide services in more languages and interpretation services has become a greater challenge for the agencies. More of the client benefit programs are accessed through the internet which becomes a challenge for the clients that are not computer literate. There is a need to find a way for these clients to get the computer skills needed.

The Commission made no changes to the Human Services section of the Plan.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### A. CODE OF VIRGINIA – SECTION 15.2-2310

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

Mr. Cole asked if there were any comments regarding the upcoming items on the BZA agenda.

The Planning Commission took no action on the BZA items.

\* \* \* \* \*

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

\* \* \* \* \*

---

Chairman

---

Secretary