

# Clarke County

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## PLANNING COMMISSION BRIEFING MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2016

A briefing meeting of the Planning Commission of Clarke County, Virginia, was held at the Berryville/Clarke County Government Center, Berryville, Virginia, on Tuesday, November 29, 2016.

### ATTENDANCE

**Present:** George L. Ohrstrom, II (Chair); Anne Caldwell (Vice Chair); Robina Bouffault; Randy Buckley; Scott Kreider; Douglas Kruhm; Frank Lee; Gwendolyn Malone; Cliff Nelson; and Jon Turkel.

**Absent:** Mary Daniel

**Staff Present:** Brandon Stidham, Planning Director; Ryan Fincham, Senior Planner/Zoning Administrator

**Others Present:** Emily Day (Agricultural & Forestal District Advisory Committee)

### CALLED TO ORDER

Chair Ohrstrom called the meeting to order at 3:02PM.

### AGENDA

The members approved the agenda by consensus as presented.

Mr. Stidham reviewed the December 2 regular meeting agenda noting that the only item is the public hearing on the text amendment to remove references to the former stormwater regulations from the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances.

### New Business Items

Mr. Stidham presented the draft revised 2016 Agricultural Land Plan noting that this is the version recommended for consideration by the Commission's Agricultural Land Plan Subcommittee. He provided an overview of the Subcommittee's work on the revised Plan and the proposed changes from the current 1997 version.

Mr. Kruhm asked about the Subcommittee's discussions on farm worker housing. Mr. Stidham replied by summarizing potential approaches to facilitate leasing of farmland to resident farmers who intend to keep the land in active agricultural production. This could be accomplished by allowing more flexible use of dwelling unit rights on large tracts of land to create lease areas for farmland and homesteads. Mr. Kruhm asked if dormitory-style housing is proposed for farm workers and Mr.

Stidham replied no, the discussion centered upon farmers that want to lease rather than own the land that they farm. Mr. Kruhm asked if the Plan's proposed Agricultural Committee would develop these new regulations. Mr. Stidham replied that this would still be the Planning Commission's responsibility and that the Agricultural Committee would be responsible for determining the needs of the agriculture community. Mr. Kruhm noted that farm worker housing is a sensitive area that needs a lot of attention and Mr. Turkel concurred.

With no further questions from the Commission, Mr. Stidham stated that the item could be placed on the December 2 meeting agenda to schedule Public Hearing for January. Members agreed by consensus to add this as an action item for the regular meeting agenda. Mr. Lee noted that use of the word "horticulture" needs to be checked throughout the Plan to make sure there is continuity with the approach that the Commission is taking in combining it with agriculture in deliberating agricultural business uses. Chair Ohrstrom offered his thanks to the Subcommittee members for all of their hard work on the revised Plan.

### **Old Business Items**

Mr. Stidham summarized the revised materials prepared by Staff for the Commission's continued discussion of agricultural business uses in the AOC District. He stated that the goal for today is to get consensus from the members on the proposed changes and draft text amendment language so that he can get it reviewed by the County Attorney prior to the Commission's January 3 Briefing Meeting.

Regarding farm machinery sales and service/farm supplies and sales, Mr. Kruhm asked for confirmation that the proposed regulations would prevent a farm machinery junkyard. Mr. Stidham replied that any machinery being serviced would have to be contained within the building. Mr. Stidham also noted that the caps on the building size and outdoor display areas are taken from the current caps on retail uses in the Highway Commercial District. He added that the members need to determine whether these rules would enable such businesses to be built or whether they are too restrictive. Ms. Bouffault said that she thought 15,000 square feet is too small for most of these businesses. Mr. Buckley said that Winchester Equipment is significantly larger in size and that Carlyle & Anderson is smaller. Mr. Stidham reviewed a list of businesses and the floor areas of their primary buildings in Winchester, Front Royal, and Warrenton. Ms. Bouffault asked if the maximum floor area could be increased to 25,000 square feet. Mr. Turkel said that there needs to be some basis for choosing any maximum floor area number. Chair Ohrstrom said that these floor area limitations were designed to avoid "big box" stores. Ms. Bouffault said that she did not think that a 25,000 square foot building would constitute a "big box" store, and Mr. Stidham replied that the number he was familiar with was a minimum of 50,000 square feet. Ms. Bouffault asked if a larger floor area could be allowed with approval of the Planning Commission. Vice-Chair Caldwell replied that since this would be a by-right use, it would have to comply with site plan regulations. Mr. Stidham suggested that they could start with the proposed floor area limits and see if any potential businesses have concerns with them. Ms. Bouffault asked whether this should be done before adopting the text amendment and Vice-Chair Caldwell noted that no one is currently proposing to construct any of these businesses. Mr. Kruhm indicated that he is aware of one business that is looking to expand into this region.

Ms. Bouffault noted that Carlyle & Anderson has a relatively small building however they do stage the equipment being serviced outside to the rear of the building. She added that she believes the floor area limitations are appropriate for the farm supplies and sales use but that the farm machinery sales and service would need to be larger. She also indicated that a large combine being serviced could occupy an entire building by itself. Mr. Buckley asked Staff to get information on the size of the building used by Gladhill Tractor Mart in Frederick, MD for comparison. He said this is a new facility that meets current industry trends and that this could help us understand what type of business we want to attract. He added that this business has two buildings – one for offices, showroom, and service and the other for storage – and a large outdoor storage area. Mr. Lee suggested requiring a special use permit for any businesses over 15,000 square feet in size. Ms. Bouffault replied that this is a very good solution and the other Commissioners agreed. Vice-Chair Caldwell asked if this option would be available for both uses and Mr. Stidham said yes.

Mr. Stidham continued with the overview of the proposed text amendment language. Regarding historic mills, Mr. Lee recommended removing reference to grinding of grains into flour and leaving it as “grinding of grains” since not all milling activity is for the production of flour. Mr. Turkel recommended removing “events” from the list of primary use activities and defer to the County’s special event ordinance. Regarding the issue of referencing biosolids as part of agriculture, Mr. Turkel recommended swapping the order of biosolids and exclusive wholesale/retail sale of agricultural products. Commissioners agreed by consensus to incorporate these changes. With no further comments, Mr. Stidham said that he would forward this to the County Attorney for review and include continued discussion of the topic on the January 3 Briefing Meeting agenda.


### **Other Business**

Chair Ohrstrom asked Mr. Stidham to get information for the Commissioners on the annual conflict of interest form filing, and Mr. Stidham replied that he would check with County Administration Staff.

Mr. Kruhm asked about how farm-to-table restaurants are addressed in the AOC District. Mr. Stidham replied that restaurants are only allowed in the AOC District by special use permit for a country inn.

Mr. Stidham reminded the members of the Board of Supervisors Special Meeting at 7:00PM that evening to hear the presentation of the Telecommunications Infrastructure and Broadband Study by the consultant. He noted that the Commission has been invited to attend but that this is not a joint meeting of the Commission and Board. As such, any questions or comments from Commissioners should be made as individuals.

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 3:52PM.

  
George L. Ohrstrom, II (Chair)

  
Brandon Stidham, Planning Director