



Clarke County Planning Commission

MINUTES – Work Session

Wednesday, July 5, 2023 – 3:00PM

Berryville/Clarke County Government Center – Main Meeting Room

ATTENDANCE:			
George L. Ohrstrom, II (Chair/Russell)	✓	Ronnie “Ron” King (Buckmarsh)	✓
Randy Buckley (Vice-Chair/White Post)	✓	Scott Kreider (Buckmarsh)	X
Terri Catlett (Board of Supervisors)	✓	Frank Lee (Berryville)	✓
Buster Dunning (White Post)	✓	Gwendolyn Malone (Berryville)	X
Robert Glover (Millwood)	✓	John Staelin (Millwood)	X
Pearce Hunt (Russell)	✓	Doug Lawrence (BOS alternate)	X

STAFF PRESENT: Brandon Stidham (Director of Planning), Jeremy Camp (Senior Planner / Zoning Administrator), Kristina Maddox (Office Manager / Zoning Officer), Chris Boies (County Administrator)

OTHERS PRESENT: None.

CALL TO ORDER: By Chair Ohrstrom at 3:03PM.

1. Approval of Agenda

The Commission had no additions to the agenda as presented by Staff.

2. Review of July 7 Business Meeting Agenda Items

A. Agenda Review

Mr. Stidham noted corrections to the meeting minutes from the May 30th Work Session. On page 7 of 128, the fourth line from the bottom of the middle paragraph, “maximum lot size exception” should be “minimum lot size exception.” He said on the bottom paragraph of the same page, “sell” should be “sale.”

Mr. Stidham reviewed the Staff Report for the conditional zoning application submitted by Rappahannock Electric Cooperation (REC) and Virginia Port Authority.

Chair Ohrstrom asked if we could ask them to have a 25-foot landscaping buffer on the south side of the property even though they are not required to. Mr. Stidham said we would want the mechanical areas screened as best as possible as this area might be visible from Featherbed Rd. He said REC will be submitting an alternate landscaping plan which will include a mixture of evergreens, deciduous shrubs, etc.

Commissioner Catlett asked where the cattle would graze and Mr. Stidham pointed to the north side of the property, closest to Stonewall Jackson Highway.

Commissioner Glover asked if the generator will be used for emergencies only to which Mr. Stidham replied yes.

Vice-Chair Buckley asked for confirmation regarding the pump station being on the lowest point on the property to which Mr. Stidham replied yes.

A discussion ensued regarding the VDOT entrance location. Mr. Stidham said if the proposed improvements are approved, the road would have to be widened to allow cars to pass safely.

Commissioner King asked if the State would require them to pave a portion of the road. Mr. Stidham replied it is his understanding that if they are being asked to proffer this condition, then VDOT does not have the authority to require them. Commissioner King asked if the road would be crushed stone to which Mr. Stidham replied he is not certain what the gravel standard is but that it could possibly be tar and chip. He noted that VDOT said it would have to be significant enough to support heavy truck traffic.

Commissioner Catlett asked how many trips per day they expect. Mr. Stidham replied that the entire project estimate is 1,026 trips per day, which includes office workers and the customer service component.

Commissioner Glover asked if the twenty-four foot width is a recommendation and also what the minimum requirement is. Mr. Stidham replied that twenty-four feet is a recommendation and that there is no requirement for them to upgrade the road as VDOT did not include those details in the comment letter.

Vice-Chair Buckley said he realizes that it is a VDOT standard but he is not keen on the entrance location on Featherbed Rd. Mr. Stidham said the original plan had an entrance for the office and a separate entrance on Rt. 340 for the heavy trucks to separate that traffic. He said VDOT could have had concerns regarding the separation distance between the two entrances. Vice-Chair Buckley noted that having the turn lanes closer together makes sense rather than having one in front of the office building as opposed to moving it to Featherbed Lane. Mr. Stidham commented that VDOT did not prefer two entrances and that he is not sure whether or not they have the spacing distance. He said they like to have entrances in alignment with other main entrances or roads on the opposite side of the street.

Vice-Chair Buckley asked if the left-hand turn lane going westbound will be widened from the Rt. 340 entrance to Featherbed Rd. Mr. Stidham said there is supposedly sufficient right of way along Rt. 340 improvements and that VDOT did not recommend that they dedicate an additional right of way.

Chair Ohrstrom asked if the “exp” on the drawing stands for expansion for future use to which Mr. Stidham replied that is what he thought, too.

Commissioner Glover asked if Staff has heard from the public. Mr. Stidham said no one has had negative comments out of the three phone calls he received thus far but that he did receive one email opposing any development on the property.

Joshua Johnson, Director of Facilities and Procurement at REC, spoke to address the entrance concern. He said based on VDOT’s feedback that the taper extends 660 feet at the intersection. He said the road will be widened past Featherbed Rd and that they are prepared to make the required improvements along Featherbed Rd. to include paving, a left-turn lane off Featherbed Rd. heading westbound and back onto Rt 340. He added that their newly revised concept development plan includes these improvements. He said the main truck entrance for deliveries is scheduled to be off Rt. 340. He said the other entrance

would be a member only entrance. He said the secondary entrance is for emergency purposes only. When asked by Mr. Stidham, Mr. Johnson said there will be signage to distinguish between deliveries, members, etc.

Vice-Chair Buckley asked what type of member services will take place at the site to which Mr. Johnson replied their main lobby will be closed, however, there will be an occasional appointment-based system for picking up a meter base for example. He added there will be a kiosk area where a customer could come to their facility to pay their bill.

Mr. Johnson confirmed that “exp” stands for future expansion when asked by Commissioner Glover.

Commissioner Catlett asked if there are future plans for REC work trucks to become electric as the plan shows electric car charging stations. Mr. Johnson replied he is not sure of the work trucks becoming electric, however, there are several employees with electric vehicles.

Mr. Stidham asked if the new conceptual plan includes a pump station site. Mr. Johnson said he could not comment on that just yet as they have not had sufficient time to review the details with counsel.

Mr. Camp reviewed the Staff Report of the minor subdivision application MS-23-07, Olmstead. When asked by Chair Ohrstrom about houses on the property, Mr. Camp said there are two currently that will be divided on separate lots. Mr. Camp said they are required to fit into reserve areas which is difficult with this particular property due to resistivity testing issues that have since been resolved. He continued that they have 100% reserve for one house in the records and a 200% reserve for the house that does not have any records in order to meet the current requirements. He said they plan to use their existing systems but have the reserved areas approved. Chair Ohrstrom asked why a 200% reserve area is required and Commissioner Lee replied that it is due to there being no records on the property.

Commissioner Lee explained his concerns regarding resistivity testing. He said that while he understands and appreciates the importance of the tests, he believes the consultants may be too restrictive. He said he has had one fail due to an anomaly that could not be determined whether it was a solution channel or not but as the consultants err on the side of caution, it was denied. He also noted the review process is time-consuming. He added he does not wish to make any changes at this time, but was merely making Staff aware of his concerns. Mr. Stidham said Staff has a new third-party contractor as of July 1, 2023 and that it is his hope the process improves.

Mr. Stidham said the only other items on the upcoming agenda are the board and committee reports and projected agenda items.

B. Status of Deferred Applications

Mr. Stidham said Staff will schedule a review of Horus Virginia Solar Farm, LLC with the Plans Review Committee this month. He continued that the Bullard Campground application is still pending as well as the Regan Partnership, LP minor subdivision application.

3. Old Business

A. TA-23-01, Campground Regulations

Mr. Stidham reviewed the Staff Report for the campgrounds text amendment and noted the Commission deferred the amendment at the last meeting due to a public speaker's concerns.

Chair Ohrstrom commented that it would be nice to have access to the campgrounds should an emergency occur. Mr. Stidham said there would be access but not a commercial entrance.

Commissioner Lee said he feels comfortable with the text amendment and current regulations as presented after seeing the amount of available land. He said he does not believe a separate exclusion is needed at this time but perhaps as future discussion. He commented that he wished to see topography on the map to better understand camping possibilities.

Commissioner Catlett said she agrees with Commissioner Lee's comments but that she prefers to wait to make a change. Chair Ohrstrom agreed and thanked Mr. Smith for his insight and bringing the information forward to the Commission but that the present language of the text amendment as it stands will suffice.

4. New Business


A. Mid-Year Review, Project Priority List

Mr. Stidham reviewed the mid-year review of project priorities to include the Five-Year Review and Update of the Transportation Plan, the Five-Year Review of the Waterloo Area Plan, and the Rural Lands Plan that will be combination of the Agricultural Land Plan, Mountain Land Plan, and Village Plan.

Mr. Stidham said there are two text amendments that he would like direction on from the Commission. He said the first is the deliberation of the Carter Hall application for removing assembly activities as an accessory use from the country inn use. He continued that if everyone is comfortable doing so, he can add that to the agenda for the Ordinances Committee this year. He said the second text amendment discussion is regarding how to manage an active, pending application when a text amendment occurs. He said the Commission had talked about whether the application should be judged under current regulations or whichever application gets adopted by the Board of Supervisors first. He added that he thought the Commission was leaning toward the latter of the two approaches but that it would be a good idea to codify it in the Ordinance for clarification.

ADJOURN

The Work Session adjourned by consensus at 4:07PM.


George L. Ohrstrom, II (Chair)


Kristina Maddox (Clerk)