



# Clarke County Planning Commission

MINUTES – Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting

Tuesday, January 25, 2022 – 2:00PM

Berryville/Clarke County Government Center – Main Meeting Room

ATTENDANCE:			
Matthew Bass (Board of Supervisors)	✓	Bob Glover (Millwood)	X
Anne Caldwell (Millwood)	✓	Randy Buckley (White Post)	✓
George L. Ohrstrom, II (Ex Officio)	✓E		

E – Denotes Electronic Participation

NOTE – Chair Ohrstrom served as a voting alternate member for this meeting and participated electronically due to health issues related to the current pandemic.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Brandon Stidham (Director of Planning), Jeremy Camp (Senior Planner/Zoning Administrator)

**CALL TO ORDER:** By Mr. Stidham at 2:05PM.

## 1. Approval of Agenda

Members voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented by Staff.

Motion to approve the agenda as presented:			
Bass	AYE	Glover	Absent
Caldwell	AYE	Buckley	AYE (seconded)
Ohrstrom (alternate)	AYE (moved)		

## 2. Approval of Minutes – January 10, 2022 Meeting

Commissioner Caldwell identified one correction on Page 3 of 46, last paragraph, third line, the words “shall” and “should” need to be reversed. Mr. Stidham noted this correction.

Members voted unanimously to approve the January 10, 2022 meeting minutes as amended.

Motion to approve January 10, 2022 meeting minutes as amended:			
Bass	AYE (moved)	Glover	Absent
Caldwell	AYE	Buckley	AYE (seconded)
Ohrstrom (alternate)	AYE		

## 3. Comprehensive Plan Update – Overview of Revised Chapter I (General Information)

Mr. Stidham stated that an initial draft of Chapter I is provided for review, noting that it is missing a new section on County infrastructure and facilities that is still under development. He said that he hopes to have this section available for the next meeting. Commissioner Caldwell

said that Chapter I is an amazing snapshot of the County and a section on infrastructure and facilities is the missing piece. Chair Ohrstrom congratulated Mr. Camp for doing a nice job on the Chapter I draft.

Mr. Camp gave a Powerpoint presentation on the changes to Chapter I. Chair Ohrstrom asked if all comments and corrections should be offered after Mr. Camp's presentation and Mr. Stidham replied yes. Mr. Camp said that he did not want to discourage any members who have comments, noting that he wanted to focus on a big picture analysis since Staff is continuing to work on some of the data. He added that a lot of the data from the 2020 Census has not been released so Staff is using other resources such as the American Community Survey. He also distributed a handout that outlines the changes made to date.

Regarding Map 2 (Major Features), Chair Ohrstrom asked whether the large gray area at the bottom of the map extending into Fauquier County is Sky Meadows and Mr. Camp replied yes. Chair Ohrstrom suggested modifying the map legend for that color to say "Appalachian Trail Corridor and State parks."

Regarding Map 3, Chair Ohrstrom suggested that Mr. Camp consult Commissioner Lee about the groundwater hydrology information to be depicted.

Regarding Table 2B (Conservation Easement Purchase Summary), Chair Ohrstrom asked why the Conservation Easement Purchase Summary has not been updated. Mr. Camp said that Staff is still working on the data and Mr. Stidham added that recently-retired Alison Teetor assembled this information in the past. Chair Ohrstrom suggested checking the most recent Easement Authority review report for this information.

Regarding population and growth rates in Tables 5 and 6, Chair Ohrstrom asked if it would be accurate to say that the growth rate from 2000-2020 can be determined by adding the growth rates from 2000-2010 and 2010-2020 together. Commissioner Caldwell said that you have to do the math differently by subtracting the 2000 population from the 2020 population, then dividing that number by the 2000 population to come up with the 20-year growth rate. Mr. Stidham said that this comes out to be 16.8%. Chair Ohrstrom said that this is not far off from the Weldon-Cooper Center's projected growth rate of 20%. Commissioner Bass noted that the 2025 growth rate projection is likely low given the number of new homes recently built and to be built in Berryville.

Regarding Table 8A (Commuting Patterns), Commissioner Caldwell asked if working from home has gone up. Mr. Camp replied that it has and that he expects it will continue to increase.

Regarding Table 8B (Top 10 Places Residents Are Commuting To and From), Chair Ohrstrom asked whether the table listing the places non-residents are commuting from means people commuting to Berryville. Mr. Camp replied that the data is reported by the Virginia Employment Commission but does not say where the non-residents are commuting to in the County. He also noted the spike in unemployment due to the pandemic and referenced the new language included to address this issue.

Regarding Table 13 (Age Distribution of Population in Clarke County), Mr. Stidham noted that the age percentages when added up exceed 100%. Mr. Camp noted that this is likely because the data is from a survey. He also stated that the American Community Survey has a high margin of error which is a drawback to using the data.

Regarding Table 17 (Current Land Use), Mr. Stidham noted that the land use types were established by prior staff who attempted to coordinate terms used by planning and by the Commissioner of the Revenue. He added that the average reader could be confused by usage of the terms “urban residential,” “suburban residential,” and “rural residential” in relation to how we address residential uses in planning and zoning. Mr. Camp added that it is not a true land use breakdown but it is a calculation tool that can be managed. Chair Ohrstrom asked that Table 17 not be split between two pages when the final document is formatted.

Regarding Table 18 (County Zoning Districts; Land Uses in Berryville and Boyce), Commissioner Bass suggested adding the title “County Zoning Districts” to the empty cell in the top left corner. Mr. Stidham replied that the first five categories are zoning districts and the “Light Industrial” category can be deleted because it is a County zoning district that was removed long ago. He added that while Boyce only has one residential and one commercial zoning district, Berryville has multiple residential and commercial zoning districts. He suggested the solution of splitting the table into two separate tables and members agreed.

Mr. Camp concluded his presentation and encouraged members to ask questions and provide comments.

Regarding Map 1, Commissioner Caldwell noted that some of the state roads shown on the map do not continue to the next locality. She also noted that other important roads are not shown such as the U.S. 17 corridor. Mr. Camp asked if Staff should show all primary highways and Commissioner Caldwell replied yes. Commissioner Caldwell asked if color could be used to differentiate the road types. Mr. Stidham asked if the vicinity perspective should be zoomed in and Commissioner Caldwell replied no.

Regarding Map 2, Commissioner Caldwell noted that the State Arboretum is listed in the legend but not shown on the map. She asked to have the Opequon Creek included and noted that all of the villages should be shown in addition to White Post. She said that Double Tollgate and Waterloo should be shown as business intersections. She suggested adding the electric power substations to go with the major transmission lines. She also suggested using color to distinguish road types as she suggested for Map 1. Mr. Stidham noted that the railroads layer is not showing up on the map. Chair Ohrstrom said that the map might be missing a transmission line in the northern part of the County. Mr. Stidham thought that it might be a gas line only. Chair Ohrstrom cautioned that using color may significantly increase printing costs. Commissioner Caldwell said that line width could be used to contrast road types instead of color. She also suggested printing copies double-sided to save paper and grouping maps in sections with the narrative to which they apply. Mr. Camp said that Staff will optimize spacing and layout when all new and revised information is included and the final draft is compiled. Vice-Chair Buckley asked Mr. Stidham to elaborate on his earlier comment about a gas line in the northern part of the County. Mr. Stidham said that he thought the transmission line in the northern part of the

County that extends to the southwestern part of the County is a gas line only. Vice-Chair Buckley asked if we want to include gas transmission lines on the map. Mr. Stidham questioned whether he could get mapping for that. Mr. Camp suggested moving this information to the section on public infrastructure. Vice-Chair Buckley noted that the gas line is currently being upgraded from a 10-inch to a 24-inch pipeline and would be significant. Mr. Stidham noted that it may not be possible to get mapping as gas companies may not want the location of their pipelines shown for security reasons.

Regarding Map 4 (Groundwater Recharge Area), Commissioner Caldwell asked why a limestone ridge be a recharge area for the County's karst areas. She added that she did not see an explanation for this in the Plan and thought it would be important to add. Chair Ohrstrom said that it is counterintuitive and you would think that a limestone ridge would make the water go away faster. Commissioner Caldwell reiterated that it would be nice to include some narrative on how the groundwater recharge area works.

Regarding Section 3 (Relief), Commissioner Caldwell said that the section sentence should be rewritten with more explanation because the statement that "softer sedimentary rocks have eroded considerably" comes across as jarring. She added that the "Eastern and Central lowland areas" should just be referred to as the Valley.

Regarding the History and Historic Resources Section, Commissioner Caldwell said that she found a lot of the text confusing to read. She cited the third paragraph in that section on Page 17 of 46 as an example. Commissioner Bass asked about the source material for this section and Mr. Camp replied that it is existing text from the current Comprehensive Plan. Chair Ohrstrom suggested simplifying the language, such as replacing reference to the County being "part of a 50,212 acre grant" by saying "less than half of the County." Commissioner Caldwell said that this could be written much more clearly so you can actually follow the story. Mr. Camp said that this could be the result of trying to condense 100 years of history into a single paragraph. Mr. Stidham noted that this language also appears in the Historic Resources Plan. Chair Ohrstrom suggested removing "By tradition" in the last sentence of that paragraph regarding the sign post in White Post as it is awkward, possibly replacing with "according to lore" or some similar wording. Vice-Chair Buckley noted that the statement is factual. Commissioner Caldwell advised that the paragraph should be written for an audience that knows nothing about Clarke County. She also noted that in the second paragraph on Page 18 of 46, the Lower Shenandoah Valley should be referred to as the Northern Shenandoah Valley. Mr. Stidham suggested that since most of this text appears verbatim in the Historic Resources Plan that Staff could do a scrub or pare it back into a more concise summary. Chair Ohrstrom thought a thorough scrub to simplify the wording would be better than paring back the information. Commissioner Caldwell also noted that this paragraph would be better divided into two paragraphs – one discussing settlement in the County and the other about the formation of the County from other counties.

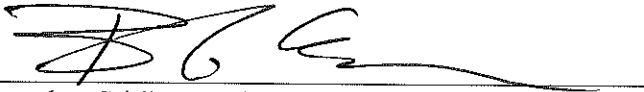
On Page 21 of 46, next to last sentence in the second paragraph, Chair Ohrstrom said that "hand in hand" sounds awkward. On Page 23 of 46, end of second paragraph, he suggested clarifying that the goal of an easement is to reduce the number of dwelling units but not necessarily down to one. In the last sentence of the last paragraph, he said "any" should be removed between "forego" and "development." Commissioner Caldwell noted in the top paragraph that language

should be added to explain the FOC regulations are designed to protect the most difficult terrain from development.

Commissioner Bass left the meeting at 3:15 and quorum was lost.

Mr. Stidham said that he will coordinate scheduling of the next meeting and offered some potential dates. He also noted that the Commission will be receiving the final drafts of Chapters II and III for discussion at the February 1 Work Session.

**ADJOURN:** Meeting was adjourned by consensus at 3:20PM.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Stidham', written over a horizontal line.

Brandon Stidham, Clerk