

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
February 17, 2010 @ 7:00 P.M.
Board Room, Government Center

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER:

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

PUBLIC ADDRESS:

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

OLD BUSINESS:

- Zoning Ordinance Amendment Update

NEW BUSINESS:

WORK SESSION:

- Green Infrastructure Plan Update (Jamie MacLean)

LIAISON REPORTS:

- Board of Supervisors- John Muffo
- Agriculture & Forestal District- Bob Miller
- Blacksburg Planning Commission – John Tuttle
- Christiansburg Planning Commission – Bryan Rice
- Economic Development Committee- David Moore
- Public Service Authority – Malvin Wells
- Parks & Recreation- Walt Haynes
- Radford Planning Commission- Bob Miller
- School Board- Bill Seitz
- Transportation Safety Committee- Malvin Wells
- Planning Director’s Report- Steven Sandy
 - PC Certification Program, June 17-18 & August 26-27, Blacksburg, VA
 - Conservation Easement Acquisition Fund

MEETING ADJOURNED:

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| March 10, 2010 | Planning Commission Public Hearing (7:00 pm) |
| March 17, 2010 | Planning Commission Site Visit (To be determined)
Planning Regular Meeting (7:00 pm) |
| April 28, 2010 | Regional Planning Commission Training Event, NRV PDC |

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
CONSENT AGENDA
February 17, 2010**

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- January 13, 2010
- January 20, 2010

ISSUE/PURPOSE:

The above listed minutes are before the Planning Commission for approval.

B. SCHEDULE PUBLIC HEARINGS

A request by **WTB Partnership (Sarah Finkner)** for a special use permit to allow a commercial kennel. The property is located at 3740 and 3750 South Main Street, and is identified as Tax Parcel Nos. 67A-A-4,5,6 (Acct # 015065, 015066, 009666) in the Prices Fork Magisterial District (District E). The property currently lies in an area designated as Urban Expansion in the Comprehensive Plan.

AT A MEETING OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION ON JANUARY 13, 2010 IN THE BOARD ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER, CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA:

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Rice, Chair called the meeting to order and Mr. Thum established the presence of a quorum.

Present: Bryan Rice, Chair
William Seitz, Vice Chair
Ryan Thum, Secretary
Robert Miller, Member
John Tuttle, Member
Walt Haynes, Member
Malvin Wells, Member
Dari Jenkins, Planning & Zoning Administrator
Brea Hopkins, Zoning Technician
Jamie MacLean, Development Planner

Absent: Frank Lau, Member
David Moore, Member
John Muffo, Board of Supervisors Liaison
Steve Sandy, Planning Director

CALL TO ORDER:

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

PUBLIC ADDRESS:

Mr. Rice opened the public address session. There being no speakers the public address session was closed.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

On a motion by Mr. Haynes, seconded by Mr. Tuttle, and unanimously carried the agenda was approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

Agriculture Accessory Use Ordinance Amendment

Ms. Jenkins stated possible changes to agriculture accessory uses in the zoning ordinance had been discussed during previous meetings. The Board of Supervisors requested that the Planning Commission review and make a recommendation regarding a possible amendment. The two issues for consideration is that the term premise is not currently defined and trailers are allowed as storage units in the county. A meeting was held with the Farm Bureau and following that meeting a proposed amendment was drafted in coordination with the county attorney as an attempt to resolve some of the issues. The term premise would include all leased or owned land utilized by the same farmer even if geographically separated. Since uses move from property to property screening is not an appropriate resolution. This proposed amendment has been shared with interested parties. Staff is requesting further directive from the Planning Commission on the proposed change to the definition of Agriculture.

Mr. Rice stated the proposed amendment would mean that the ordinance would be based on possession of property not ownership.

Ms. Jenkins noted the proposed definition of premise would apply only to agricultural accessory uses.

Mr. Seitz stated if the amendments were acceptable to the Farm Bureau, then the it would be appropriate to advertise for public hearing.

Mr. Haynes asked if the amendments would address the complainant issue.

Ms. Jenkins stated that the amendment would allow the trailers to remain; however, the structures would still have to meet the setback requirements.

It was the consensus of the planning commission to advertise the proposed amendment.

NEW BUSINESS:

2010 Liaison Appointments

Mr. Rice made the following liaison appointments:

- Agriculture & Forestal District- Bob Miller
- Blacksburg Planning Commission – John Tuttle
- Christiansburg Planning Commission – Bryan Rice
- Economic Development Committee- David Moore
- Public Service Authority – Malvin Wells
- Parks & Recreation- Walt Haynes
- Radford Planning Commission- Bob Miller
- School Board- Bill Seitz
- Transportation Safety Committee- Malvin Wells

WORK SESSION:

On a motion by Mr. Haynes, seconded by Mr. Miller and unanimously carried the planning commission entered into work session

Zoning Ordinance Amendment Discussion

a. School of Special Instruction

Ms. Jenkins stated a citizen had submitted a request for a school of special instruction. The request is to allow a yoga class and search and rescue class to be taught on their property. The term is defined in the ordinance; however, is not allowed in any of the zoning districts. Staff has looked at the definition and feels it could be allowed by right in the General Business (GB) and Community Business (CB) zoning districts; however, a SUP should be required in the Agricultural (A1) district or other districts. A special use permit would give the board and the commission an opportunity to look at each request and its potential impacts.

Mr. Rice asked if a school of special instruction for yoga classes is granted by a special use permit could it later be converted to another type of instructional class.

Ms. Jenkins stated a condition could be applied to the SUP to prevent that problem from arising.

Mr. Thum noted certain types of schools of special instruction would need a large piece of land, for example the search and rescue training. Is it possible to add language to clarify the definition? In a business zoning district the use should be allowed by right; however, any other district should require a special use permit.

The Planning Commission advised staff to prepare amendment for hearing in Feb.

b. Birthing Center

Ms. Jenkins stated that a request to add "Birthing Center" to the ordinance definitions and zoning district(s) had been submitted to the Board of Supervisors; however, they have not given any recommendations as of this date. She presented copies of the APHA guidelines and possible definitions for a birthing center. The main questions are: Is this a use that should be defined and included in the ordinance? If so, what guidelines need to be included? She reviewed possible concerns that may need to be considered.

Mr. Thum stated this is a use that is emerging and the ordinance may need to include something to address the issue.

Mr. Haynes stated this is a complicated use. He noted that more discussion and research is necessary prior to proceeding with an amendment.

Mr. Miller discussed his concerns regarding distance to a medical facility, complicated vs. non-complicated pregnancies, etc. He noted that both local hospitals have attempted to create "birthing centers" that are home-like.

Mr. Rice stated any structure used as a birthing center would need to be readily accessible to emergency personnel.

Mr. Seitz stated the facility should be inspected by someone.

Mr. Muffo noted it would be important to discuss the issue with the Health Department. It will only take one death to create a problem.

The Planning Commission advised staff to further research the use. During the research process it would be necessary to discuss the issue with the Virginia Health Department and other licensing agencies that may have regulations pertaining to a birthing center.

On a motion by Mr. Seitz, seconded by Mr. Haynes and unanimously carried the planning commission closed the worksession.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

AT A MEETING OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION ON JANUARY 20, 2010 IN THE BOARD ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER, CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA:

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Rice, Chair called the meeting to order and Mr. Thum established the presence of a quorum.

Present: Bryan Rice, Chair
William Seitz, Vice Chair
Ryan Thum, Secretary
Frank Lau, Member
Robert Miller, Member
John Tuttle, Member
Walt Haynes, Member
Malvin Wells, Member
John Muffo, Board of Supervisors Liaison
Steve Sandy, Planning Director
Dari Jenkins, Planning & Zoning Administrator
Jamie MacLean, Development Planner

Absent: David Moore, Member
Brea Hopkins, Zoning Technician

PUBLIC ADDRESS:

Mr. Rice opened the public address session; however, since no members of the public were present to speak the session was closed.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Mr. Rice stated that discussion of budget reductions for FY2010-2011 would be added under work session.

On a motion by Mr. Seitz, seconded by Mr. Thum, and unanimously carried the agenda was approved as amended.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

On a motion by Mr. Thum, seconded by Mr. Setiz and unanimously carried the consent agenda was approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Presentation of 2009 Annual Report:

Mr. Sandy presented the 2009 annual report to the planning commission members. He reviewed larger projects that were completed during the year.

Mr. Sandy explained the process and completion of the FEMA flood map revisions. He further explained that citizens whose property lied within a flood zone before and after the revisions were notified by letter and invited to attend one of three public meetings to discuss the map changes.

Mr. Sandy discussed the continued work that is being done with the Land Development Office (LDO) software. Much of the customization has been completed in-house; however, a consultant is working with staff for technical revisions and enhancements. A technology fee was added to all permit/applications a few years ago and the revenue from that fee is used toward changes and enhancements to the software system.

Mr. Sandy stated he had been working with the Virginia Association of Counties (VACO) on a pipeline safety plan that can be used by localities for land use planning around pipelines. A grant was received to increase Montgomery County's pipeline preparedness. A table-top simulation exercise was held with emergency service personnel.

Mr. Sandy discussed other projects completed by staff such as ordinance amendments and various work on committees.

Mr. Sandy then reviewed the rezoning and special use permits for the year, as well as subdivision activity. He explained that major subdivision activity is down from previous years due in part to recent economic circumstances; however there have not been a large decrease in the number of boundary line adjustments, minor subdivisions, and family subdivisions being processed.

Mr. Sandy extended the invitation for additions and edits and if we hear none we will present to the BOS and BZA at a future date.

Mr. Seitz asked who maintains the website.

Mr. Sandy stated the planning page is maintained by planning staff members and the main county web site is maintained by the Public Information Department. If there are questions or changes they should be directed to planning staff.

Mr. Miller stated he was pleased with the content and appearance of the report.

Mr. Seitz stated the report doesn't show the number of times a request was tabled for more information.

Mr. Sandy commented that the report has not typically contained that information.

WORKSESSION:

On a motion by Mr. Seitz, seconded by Mr. Thum and unanimously carried the planning commission entered into work session.

2010 Work Program Discussion

Mr. Sandy reviewed goals for the 2010 work program. Examples of projects include: continued customization of LDO, Urban Development Areas, zoning and subdivision ordinance amendments, 911 regional systems, and general reassessment. Staff will continue to work on daily activities.

Budget Reductions for FY 2010-2011

Mr. Sandy spoke about the Governors' revised budget for the state of Virginia. The new governor hasn't changed anything with the budget as of this time. He discussed some of the budgetary problems

facing the county and presented a power point presentation that was presented to the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Muffo explained that the state mandates that the county provide certain services; however, the local government is forced to subsidize the services if the state does not provide funding. For example, to cover \$4.2 million of the funds that will not be received from the state, a 6 cent increase on the real estate tax rate would be required. Given these figures there will likely be a reduction in local services.

Mr. Sandy stated that including the state budget cuts for the school system there is approximately a \$10 million shortfall in the county budget.

Mr. Miller noted that Montgomery County schools have exceeded the state's standards; however, they will be forced to move closer toward the state standards with the proposed cuts. This will yield larger class sizes.

On a motion by Mr. Seitz, seconded by Mr. Thum and unanimously carried the work session was closed.

LIAISON REPORTS:

Board of Supervisors

Mr. Muffo stated he would continue to be the Planning Commission liaison. The Board is having a local retreat this weekend.

Agriculture & Forestal District

No report.

Blacksburg Planning Commission

No report.

Christiansburg Planning Commission

Mr. Rice stated that the Christiansburg Planning Commission rezoned a lot on Roanoke Street to Industrial and rezoned part of the Harkrader Farm from Residential (R1) to Residential (R3). They are also looking into historical overlays to determine if they are wanted or needed within the town. A proposed tower on Palmer Street did not meet the setback requirements so the applicants will need to apply to the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) for a Variance.

Economic Development Committee

No report.

Public Service Authority

Mr. Wells stated he had attended the December and January meetings of the PSA. At the December meeting there was discussion regarding a water line break in the Town of Christiansburg and the effect it had on the County. During the January meeting Mr. Fronk discussed his intent to apply for the Christiansburg Planning Commission.

Parks & Recreation

No report.

Radford Planning Commission

Mr. Miller stated that the Radford Planning Commission met January 19, 2010. They are working toward developing an urban farming ordinance for goats and chickens. They also discussed the prospect of using wind mills for power.

School Board

Mr. Seitz stated he had attended the December and January meetings of the School Board. There was discussion regarding school facilities, including a possible renovation to the Auburn schools. Regarding the old Blacksburg middle school, the board passed a resolution declaring the property as surplus. If the Board of Supervisors allows the school board to keep the revenue from sales of the middle school they will use it toward payment of debts. A new superintendent was appointed and will start in March. Additionally, the school board discussed that there are some historic buildings on Auburn school site, the cannery and a log cabin may be declared historical structures, and the school board is looking into possible preservation and declaration of the sites. The budget developed by staff included a reduction of \$5.5 million, however that is only an estimate at this point.

Transportation Safety Committee

Mr. Wells stated that the committee discussed transportation issues relating to the snow storm. He noted that some stranded motorists were picked up by Elliston Fire Department members in all terrain vehicles and taken to a shelter. The Elliston Fire Department served as a shelter during the storm and provided shelter for 15-19 people.

Planning Director's Report

No report.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:11 pm.

New River Valley Green Infrastructure Initiative



What is Green Infrastructure ?

Green infrastructure is the interconnected network of waterways, wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitats, and other natural areas; greenways, parks, and other conservation lands; working farms, ranches and forests; and wilderness and other open spaces that support native species, maintain natural ecological processes, sustain air and water resources and contribute to health and quality of life (McDonald, Benedict, and O'Conner, 2005).

<http://www.greeninfrastructurecenter.org/about.htm>

What is Green Infrastructure Planning?

Green infrastructure planning is a process for inventorying and mapping natural assets and devising strategies for protecting them. It seeks to guide development to more appropriate locations by identifying areas that should be protected before development begins. Most importantly, green infrastructure plans to create linkages so that animals and people can move across the landscape.

The Process of Green Infrastructure Planning

- **Inventory** green assets (such as natural hazards, recreational areas, cultural assets, waterways, working lands, and forested lands) and connections,
- **Identify** opportunities for their protection and/or restoration, and
- **Develop** a coordinated strategy to channel development and re-development to the most appropriate locations.

What is the status of the NRV Green Infrastructure Initiative?

- **First phase:** 2006 NRVPDC and partners began education and outreach. Water quality concerns prevailed at this time.
- **Second phase:** Developing a GI network design and its associated mapping, and determined a set of goals with GI steering committee.

Goals of the NRV GI Initiative

- **Forest and Farming Lands**: Protect the working landscapes of the NRV including forests and agricultural lands to provide source of regional economic support and maintain the region's rural character.
- **Water**: Protect and enhance water resources including watersheds, wetlands, groundwater, and source water areas (such as floodplains, steep slopes, unstable soils, and karst areas) for special consideration during development review.
- **Natural Hazard Areas**: Protect human life and property by identifying potential natural hazard areas (such as floodplains, steep slopes, unstable soils, and karst areas) for special consideration during development review.

Goals (2)...

- **Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity**: Protect and enhance natural landscapes and biodiversity of the New River Valley, to provide habitat for region's plant communities, wildlife and fisheries, including unique ecological communities and rare, threatened, or endangered species, and other areas of environmental concern.
- **Recreation and Health**: Protect and enhance parkland, open space, connecting land and water corridors of the NRV, to provide for outdoor recreation opportunities such as hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, paddling, camping and trail based activities.

Goals continued (3)

- **Cultural Heritage:** Protect significant cultural sites, historic and archeological resources, and scenic view sheds of the NRV to provide an opportunity to continue to tell stories of our nation's past and the settlement and growth of the NRV region.
- The aforementioned goals form the framework of a regional green infrastructure network.
- GI Steering Committee, NRVPDC, Conservation Management Institute (CMI) at VT, and GI center in Charlottesville have collaborated to map the natural and cultural assets.

Identifying Goals and Mapping

- Worked to establish a base map showing lands with high ecological value, based on certain criteria (size and shape of core, length of streams, wetlands, etc) as determined by VA DCR Conservation Lands Needs Assessment database.
- Using data from the needs assessment allowed steering committee to capture ecological important areas without trying to make judgments of their own.
- Next tried to identify lands that may not have been in the core but were ecologically significant for reasons such as being forested or agricultural working lands. (CMI gathered info to include parcels equal to or over 100 acres).

How will the plan be used?

- The goal is to have the plan be a resource for jurisdictions in the region to incorporate in their comprehensive plans and use as a tool in making development decisions.

Meeting Reminder

- April 28, 2010 Annual Planning Commissioner's Training Session (NRVPDC). This year's session will deal, in part, with green infrastructure/natural asset planning.

Questions?

The New River Valley Green Infrastructure Initiative: What Does Green Infrastructure Look Like?

Green Infrastructure is our Community's Natural Life Support System.

An interconnected network of land and water that contributes to the health, economic well being & quality of life for communities & people.

Green infrastructure networks are found at every scale:

Parcel or Site

- ❖ Designing homes and businesses around green spaces
- ❖ Creating community open spaces
- ❖ Clustering units in new residential developments
- ❖ Linking parcels to the greater community using trails or greenways

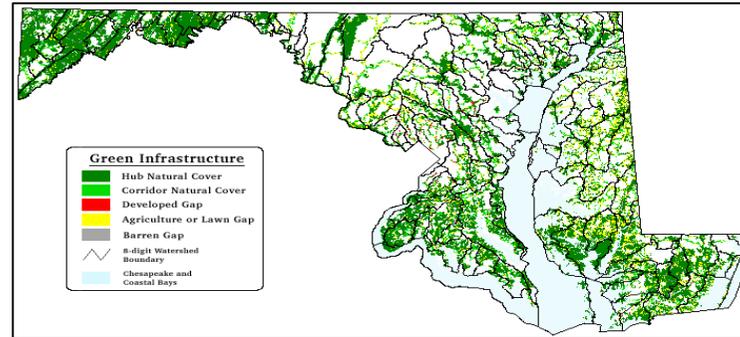
Community Scale

- ❖ Creating greenways that link existing parks and green spaces, providing alternative transportation routes and access to recreation
- ❖ Setting aside buffers along rivers and streams that protect against flooding
- ❖ Creating greenways networks
- ❖ Buffering land uses with compatible growth

Regional or Statewide

- ❖ Encourage compatible uses adjacent to agricultural areas, national forests, and state parks
- ❖ Seek out connections to conservation lands and other natural areas

Map of Maryland Green Infrastructure Plan



A Green Infrastructure Network may include:

- ❖ Water Resources
- ❖ Working Lands
- ❖ Outdoor Recreation and Trail Networks
- ❖ Cultural Resources
- ❖ Natural Areas
- ❖ Conservation Lands

What are the initial steps to develop a Green Infrastructure Network?

- ❖ Educate interest groups about the green infrastructure process and organize around a shared vision and goals
- ❖ Conduct an inventory of the area's natural and cultural resources
- ❖ Identify which resources provide services to the public (clean air and water, flood protection, recreation, food and energy production, etc.)
- ❖ Link key landscape features and designate optimal areas for new growth and development to occur

What does YOUR Green Infrastructure look like?



Appalachian Trail



New River



Farms



Jefferson National Forest



Town of Pearisburg

For more information please contact:

Regina Elsner, New River Valley Planning District Commission (540) 639-9313 or relsner@nrvc.org

Benefits of Conserving and Sustaining our Green Infrastructure in the New River Valley

Green Infrastructure is our Community's Natural Life Support System.

An interconnected network of land and water that contributes to the health, economic well being & quality of life for communities & people.



Ecosystem Services

In the Delaware Valley, urban forests remove 1.7 million pounds of air pollutants each year, at an estimated value of \$3.9 million.

The Charles River Basin located in Massachusetts, contains 8,534 acres of freshwater marsh & wooded swamp resulting in \$95 million in annual economic benefits that includes:

- \$40 million in flood damage prevention
- \$25 million in pollution reduction

In New York City, the installation of a water treatment plant costs \$6-8 billion vs. \$1-1.5 billion over 10 years to protect the Catskill, Delaware & Croton watersheds, which together deliver 1.3 billion gallons of water per day.

Economic Benefits

Providing ecological services that save local governments and state agencies millions of dollars by not having to construct manmade structures.



Examples include:

- ✧ Supply clean drinking water
- ✧ Mitigate droughts and floods
- ✧ Removing air pollutants
- ✧ Detoxify and decompose wastes
- ✧ Habitat for fisheries

Sustaining working lands for forestry and agriculture that provides opportunities for resource-based livelihoods, local food production, and maintains the rural character of the New River Valley.

Providing trails and sites for nature-based recreation and tourism, which translates to millions of tourist dollars every year.

Offering natural and restored green settings for growth and development that provide economic benefits to landowners while attracting new residents and businesses.

Community Benefits

Creation of community green spaces that provide gathering places and accessible areas for relaxation and recreation.

Trails and sites for nature-based recreation that support activities to improve physical and mental health while helping residents and visitors re-connect with nature.

Opportunities for land stewardship projects such as planting trees and restoring river banks.



Natural Functions and Values

Sustaining air and water resources; water is purified as it flows through wetland floodplains or filters through forest soils into the ground

Supporting native wildlife and plants as well as the habitats they depend on for survival

What does YOUR Green Infrastructure look like?



New River



Above Angel's Rest



Buffalo Mountain



Town of Blacksburg

For more information please contact:

Regina Elsner, New River Valley Planning District Commission (540) 639-9313 or relsner@nrvc.org