

AT A MEETING OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION ON MAY 14, 2014 IN THE BOARD ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER, CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA:

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Rice, Chair, called the meeting to order.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

Ms. Disney established the presence of a quorum.

Present: Bryan Rice, Chair
Frank Lau, Vice-Chair
Cindy W. Disney, Secretary
Coy Allen, Member
Joel Donahue, Member
Sonia Hirt, Member
Scott Kroll, Member
Trey Wolz, Member
Chris Tuck, Board of Supervisors Liaison
Karen Drake, Planning Director
Brea Hopkins, Development Planner
Dari Jenkins, Planning & Zoning Administrator
Erin Puckett, Senior Program Assistant

Absent: Bryan Katz, Member

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

On a motion by Ms. Disney, and seconded by Mr. Donahue and unanimously carried the agenda was approved.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

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

PUBLIC ADDRESS:

Mr. Rice opened the public address, however, there being no comments the public address was closed.

PUBLIC HEARING:

A request by the City of Radford (Agent: Verizon Wireless) for a Special Use Permit (SUP) on approximately 100 acres in an Agricultural (A-1) zoning district to allow a 199 ft. monopole telecommunications tower. The property is located at 5480 Peterson Drive and is identified as Tax Parcel No. 102-A 16, 17 (Account No. 071097) in the Riner Magisterial District (District D). The property currently lies in an area designated as Rural in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Rice introduced the request.

Ms. Jenkins stated that the request was for a tower to enhance Verizon coverage in the I-81 area including coverage for local businesses, residents, emergency responders. She showed zoning and aerial maps of the property and photos of the site. She explained that Verizon will use the existing access from Peterson Drive, a state-maintained road. VDOT had no concerns regarding impacts on their nearby project. Verizon has been granted a 20 foot wide access easement. An E&S permit will be required. The proposed tower will not impact the existing mountain bike trails on site.

Ms. Jenkins explained that Verizon has requested a 195 foot tower with a four (4) foot lightening rod for a total height of 199 feet. The tower is proposed to be a galvanized steel finish and will have spots available for three (3) colocations. She added that the proposed platform antennas may have impacts on the surrounding viewshed. Staff would prefer flush mounted antennas with the pole painted a matte brown color. Staff also recommends landscaping around the compound to account for any future development that may occur adjacent to the tower. She presented propagation maps created by GIS staff which indicate line of sight coverage at various tower heights. Once taller heights are reached, there is little change in coverage. She also mentioned that colocation opportunities had been discussed with the applicant but Verizon has indicated that colocation on nearby AEP towers would not meet coverage objectives. She recommended denial of the 199 foot tower but approval of a 150 foot tower with flush mount antennas with conditions.

Mr. Allen asked for clarification that the balloon test was performed at the correct location.

Ms. Jenkins confirmed this.

Mr. Donahue commented that the zoning map provided did not clearly show the Radford City boundary. He also stated that he would need to know the voltage of the nearby AEP line. He further commented that platform antennas may be safer than flush mount. He added that the viewshed maps do not include Pulaski; therefore, he felt that Verizon's coverage maps were more accurate.

Ms. Jenkins noted that staff does not have access to LIDAR data for Radford and Pulaski.

Mr. Kroll asked for clarification on the line of sight maps as to whether they relate to coverage or viewshed.

Ms. Jenkins explained that they indicate who can see a tower at a certain height, which also correlates with coverage.

Mr. Lau asked if reducing the height of the tower would still allow Emergency Services an opportunity to collocate.

Ms. Jenkins explained that the applicant would offer them the second highest location. If Verizon receives a request from another carrier to collocate, they will give the county notice at which time the county can determine if they would like to collocate there.

Mr. Rice invited the applicant to speak.

Jeff Geiger, attorney for Verizon Wireless, explained that this tower will fill a hole in coverage area, and a 199 foot tower will provide the best coverage while allowing for more collocations. Alternative sites have been evaluated for collocation possibilities, but are unable to achieve the same coverage goals. A 150 foot tower with a platform array could give similar coverage; however, a 150 foot tower with flush mount antennas will limit the space available for co-locators. He presented propagation maps and balloon test photos. Mr. Geiger stated that he had received proposed conditions and the staff report on Friday May 9th and asked that several conditions be revised. Verizon request that the pole not be limited to flush mount antennas and that cables be allowed outside of the pole if space runs out. He requested that microwave dishes be allowed above the tree line until a time when fiber is available, and recommended some additional minor changes to the language.

Mr. Kroll asked if 150 and 199 feet were the only options or if 175 feet could be considered.

Ms. Jenkins explained that she felt that the coverage objective could be met with a 150 foot tower. However, it is her opinion that it would be better to go higher with flush mounted antennas than lower with a platform array, which extends 14.5 feet from the tower.

Mr. Rice asked if any other carriers had expressed an interest in collocating on this tower. He added that in the past, there have been towers with only one carrier located on them for years.

Mr. Geiger stated that there are four major carriers in the area who may wish to collocate.

Mr. Rice asked how tall the trees are on the site.

Mr. Geiger stated that they are mature pines, possibly 80 to 100 feet.

Ms. Jenkins said that in the past the county has approved several small towers rather than one 199 foot tower.

Mr. Donahue expressed a concern that coverage goals may not be achieved at a lower height; however, multiple towers may accomplish those goals. He added that he felt restraining tower height would be micromanaging.

Mr. Rice opened the public hearing. There being no speakers, the public hearing was closed, and the issue was opened for discussion among the Commission.

Mr. Rice commented that in the eight years he has been on the Planning Commission, he has only seen the county approve flush mounted antennas.

Mr. Donahue commented that the existing wireless policy may be behind the times as technology has changed greatly since the time of its adoption.

Mr. Kroll asked the Verizon RF Engineer why he considered the flush mount antennas too restrictive.

The engineer said that in this case the terrain is an issue for flush mount antennas since the location is in a valley.

Mr. Kroll stated that he is not comfortable approving the revised conditions because they have not yet been reviewed.

Mr. Rice commented that while he agrees that wireless service is needed in this area, the additional height and platform array may need to be evaluated carefully before a decision is made.

Mr. Wolz asked the applicant if he could provide comparison maps next week of both antenna types.

Mr. Kroll added that a photo of a platform array may be helpful.

A motion was made by Mr. Donahue, seconded by Mr. Allen to table the request to May 21, 2104.

Ayes: Rice, Lau, Disney, Allen, Donahue, Hirt, Kroll, Wolz

Nays: None

Abstain: None

A request by Montgomery County Board of Supervisors and Taylor Hollow Management (Agent: Balzer & Associates) for rezoning of approximately 3.328 acres from Agriculture (A1) to Traditional Neighborhood Development-Infill (TND-I) for multi-family residential and limited commercial uses, and 5.00 acres from Agriculture (A1) to Residential Multi-Family (RM-1), with possible proffered conditions, to allow multi-family residential uses. In addition, a special use permit (SUP) is requested in the Traditional Neighborhood Development-Infill (TND-I) District to allow senior housing and a farm market. The property is known as the former Princes Fork Elementary School and is located at 4237 Princes Fork Road, identified as Tax Parcel No. 052-A-50, (Acct No. 070688), in the Princes Fork Magisterial District (District E). The property currently lies in an area designated as Village Expansion in the Comprehensive Plan and Mixed Use in the Princes Fork Village Plan with a maximum density of four (4) dwelling units per acre.

Mr. Rice introduced the request.

Mrs. Hopkins described the site location and presented maps of the property. She explained that the area is predominantly zoned A-1, and this lot is designated as mixed-use in the Princes Fork Village Plan. She indicated the three phases of proposed construction: the first being the renovation of the former elementary school building for senior housing and small commercial uses, the second phase being a multifamily development in the rear of the property based on market demand, and phase three being a potential addition to the school building for additional senior housing. The development is proposed to have a maximum of 36 senior housing units. The existing entrance will be used.

Mrs. Hopkins added that traffic impacts had been calculated based on maximum site buildout, which would be 1,109 trips per day. VDOT may evaluate the need for turn lanes; however, as the Village Plan calls for traffic calming measures, staff recommends that turn lanes not be installed. Emergency services has also commented that the existing entrance is adequate for fire and rescue access. The PSA is able to provide water and sewer at this site; extension of PSA services would be required for Phase 2. Dan Berenato with the county public schools has estimated that the development will add 56 children maximum to the school system, which would be well within the existing capacity.

Mrs. Hopkins stated that the community had voiced some concerns, particularly in regards to the proposed density of the back portion of the property. The Princes Fork Village Plan calls for an overall density of two (2) dwelling units per acre; however, this development would not exceed this from a village-wide standpoint. While the density on a single tract has a suggested limitation of five (5) dwelling units per acre, the Village Plan also allows for higher densities where appropriate. The proposed development also meets many of the Village Plan goals. At a community meeting on April 23, 2014, several citizens expressed their support for preserving the school building and allowing some community based commercial services. Some had concerns regarding traffic, the lack of detail in Phase 2, the split zoning of the lot, and the lack of open space. Since that time, Taylor Hollow has proffered additional conditions in an attempt to address some of these concerns. This project is also one of only eight (8) public private development teams receiving design assistance through the American Architectural Foundation. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources has nominated the former school site for inclusion in the Princes Fork historic district which may present an opportunity for potential rehab tax credits. Staff recommends approval of the request with conditions.

Ms. Hirt asked for clarification regarding the concern over split zoning of the site.

Mrs. Hopkins explained that the applicant has requested different zoning districts for the front and rear of the property which has created some density concerns among the community.

Mr. Donahue commented that the proffer statement included in the packet tonight has not been signed by the county, and that Mr. Fortier's signature has not been properly notarized.

Mrs. Hopkins confirmed that the county had signed the proffer statement since the time that it had been distributed to the Planning Commission.

Mr. McMahon noted that there were no issues with the notarization of the proffers.

Mr. Rice invited the applicant to speak.

Mr. Fortier, Taylor Hollow Construction, discussed his company and continued desire to specialize in small community revitalization projects. He presented the site plan for the Princes Fork project and explained that while there is not a lot of detail yet for the back of the property, the economic benefit is necessary in order to develop the front portion. He reiterated that this was one of eight (8) projects selected by a national design symposium and will utilize this design assistance to ensure that the historic detail of the building is maintained while providing comfortable accommodations for seniors. He discussed plans to add a local food-based business and added that he has received interest in the senior housing units.

Craig Meadows, County Administrator, explained that the county went through an RFP process to find a buyer who would develop the former elementary school property with respect to the Village Plan and the local community. Some citizens have inquired as to why the county did not sell the property as two separate sites. The county had reviewed that option; however, without access from a state-maintained road, the value of the rear of the property would have been minimized.

Steve Semones, Balzer and Associates (agent) stated that he has had several meetings with VDOT regarding traffic impacts. Currently, the traffic on Princes Fork Road is very heavy, but this project would not substantially increase traffic. At this time, turn lanes may make the area less safe for pedestrians and drivers. However, the developer has proffered to work with VDOT and the county. He added that Phase 2 will be limited as to the

amount of lot coverage, as open space is required in the RM-1 zoning district. For this reason, approximately two (2) of the five (5) acres will remain undeveloped.

Mr. Kroll expressed a concern that the project's lack of turn lanes is in conflict with VDOT's initial recommendations.

Mr. Semones stated that VDOT determined that the existing traffic on Prices Fork Road is the factor that is prompting the need for turn lanes, not this specific project. At this time, additional information has been submitted to VDOT for their review and comment. He also confirmed that sight distances are adequate.

Mr. Rice opened the public hearing.

Walter Johnson, 4201 Prices Fork Road, commented that he lives adjacent to the former school site and is concerned about the number of units and income level. He added that several years ago the school approached him about obtaining an 85 foot strip of his property and he noted concerns regarding the loss of property. He expressed concerns about access, and devaluing adjoining property if the development is approved.

Bennett Teates, 3014 Lancaster Drive, stated that he owns property adjacent to the former school site. He stated that he was opposed to the RM-1 zoning in the rear of the property due to the vagueness of the plan currently submitted. The density allowed in RM-1 could allow up to sixty (60) units, which he feels is not in conformance with the Village Plan. A section of the Plan recommends 1.2 dwelling units per acre in the historical district neighborhood. Traffic will also be an issue.

Chuck Shorter, 4595 Long Shop Road, agreed that the renovation of the school will be good for the community. However, he was concerned regarding the loss of open space and the ball fields. He commented that single family homes may be better, and that with no trail connection there may be safety issues with children walking to and from the new school. The potential for increased traffic is also a concern.

Andrea Robinson, 4261 Prices Fork Road, commented that she lives on a property adjacent to the former school. She expressed concern about approving a rezoning now for a development that may not come for years, and which may not fit well with the Village. She asked that the Commission delay approval of the rezoning for Phase 2 until the applicant has a better idea of what that may look like.

Jessica Schultz, 401 Hunt Club Road, Assistant Coordinator for a local food system assessment operation, stated that Taylor Hollow had approached the local farmer's market about food business incubators. The proposed café and/or farmer's market would provide opportunities for local businesses and partnerships for local food promotion. She expressed her support for the overall project.

Elizabeth Willis, NRV Home Consortium, stated that funding may be available to support affordable housing for this project. She said that Taylor Hollow does high quality work, and her organization has funded four other Taylor Hollow projects in the past. There is a need for senior housing as much of the existing housing in the area is not designed for aging populations. She expressed her support for the project.

Shaun Ray, Virginia Community Capital, stated that he supports the project because it will preserve an existing building and Mr. Fortier's projects are consistently high quality.

Tina King, Director of NRV Agency on Aging, commented that the proposed project supports a high quality of life for all ages. The local senior population is growing rapidly and seniors want to be in a vibrant community. She added that as potential renters will not wish to live in the senior housing if Phase II is developed in an undesirable way, she is confident that Taylor Hollow will construct a high quality development.

Michelle Bird, 1600 Thomas Lane, stated that she agrees with Mr. Shorter that the school building renovation is a great project, but that more detail is needed for the back five (5) acres. She stated that this site is the heart of the Village and the community wants to have some assurance as to what the development will look like in the future. She asked that if the rezoning is passed, for the county to make sure to evaluate any development proposals with the history and character of the village in mind.

There being no further public comments, Mr. Rice closed the public hearing and opened the item for discussion among the Commission.

Mr. Donahue stated that he felt that the staff had a conflict of interest in this case as the county is selling the property and the Planning Department works for the county. He noted that the staff analysis supports the proposed development but provides no information regarding alternatives. He would like more information before making a decision

Mr. Rice reminded Mr. Donahue that the applicant has only developed one proposal, which the Commission is making a decision on.

Mr. Rice asked staff for clarification regarding the proffer that would allow the Planning Commission an opportunity to review the site plan prior to developing the (5) five acres.

Mrs. Hopkins explained that normally a site plan review is an administrative approval, but in this case the applicant has proffered to bring the site plan back for Planning Commission review and comment.

Mr. McMahon confirmed that an allowed use could not be denied, but the Commission and the public could give input at that time.

Mr. Kroll expressed a concern regarding the ambiguity of some of the proffers. Specifically, he would like greater detail in regards to the trail connection and bus shelter. He also inquired as to when that bus shelter would be constructed.

Mr. McMahon agreed that additional language may be added to specify some details of the bus shelter. He stated that the bus shelter will be built when public transit is extended to the site or when the back portion of the property is developed, whichever comes first.

Mrs. Hopkins added that if public transit is extended to that site, Blacksburg Transit does have some standards in place for their bus shelters.

Mr. Kroll recognized the need for the county and developer to generate revenue from the property, so while he understands the concerns of some of the citizens who have voiced their opposition, he also does not wish to restrict the back five (5) acres too much and risk diminishing the value. The proposed RM-1 zoning with certain proffered conditions retains some level of control. He added that the Commission should keep the big picture in mind, and while the project may not please everybody, it seems to be a good fit for the community overall.

Mr. Allen agreed and stated that with some additional specifics for some of the proffers, he would be in favor of approving the request.

Ms. Hirt asked the applicant how they could assure the county that the residential units would be high quality affordable housing.

Mr. Fortier answered that for Phase 1, half of the units will be for people making less than fifty (50) percent of area median income (AMI) and the other half for those making less than eighty (80) percent AMI. Similar provisions will be in place for development in the back.

Mr. Rice stated that he feels the project will meet many goals of the Comprehensive Plan with the RM-1 zoning portion. The plan does not distinguish between townhomes and single family homes. He added that some of the proffers should be more specific and enforceable, but otherwise he is in favor of moving forward with approval of the project.

Mr. Donahue motioned to table the request to May 21, 2014 to allow the applicant and staff to revise the proffers and ensure that they are unique to the property and do not reiterate state requirements.

Mr. McMahon explained that the reason other statutes or laws are incorporated in the proffers is that it makes all requirements very clear. In addition, some of the ambiguous language is intentional; for example, it is not yet known where a trail could be located on the property. He feels that it is better to have a vague proffer for some of these items than not at all.

Mr. Donahue reiterated that more time is needed to evaluate the proffers and restated his motion to table the request.

Mr. Lau seconded the motion.

Mr. Semones stated that he has worked with county staff on this wording. If the Commission recommends approval of the request, he is happy to continue to work with Mr. McMahon to include the recommended changes discussed before the item goes to the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Kroll agreed that this may be the best course of action. He stated that if modifications were made to make the trail requirement more specific, and ensure the bus shelter fits with the aesthetics of the Village, he would be comfortable approving the request.

Mr. Donahue withdrew his motion.

A motion was made by Mr. Kroll, seconded by Mr. Donahue to recommend approval of the request to rezone approximately 3.328 acres from Agriculture to Traditional Neighborhood Development Infill and 5.00 acres from Agriculture to Residential Multi-Family with the following revised proffered conditions:

1. Property shall be developed in substantial conformance with the conceptual plan by Balzer and Associates, Inc. dated March 3, 2014.
2. The site shall be served by Montgomery County PSA sanitary sewer and water. The rezoning of the property does not allocate or reserve water and sewer capacity for the proposed development. Site plan approval for the development shall be conditioned upon adequate water and sewer capacity being available.
3. A detailed site plan in conformance with zoning ordinance requirements shall be submitted and approved by the zoning administrator and all other necessary local and state agencies prior to issuance of building permits for this development.
4. Stormwater management on the property shall be in accordance with all State and Local stormwater management standards.
5. The following uses will be prohibited in the TND Infill district and the RM-I district: funeral home, cemetery, boarding or transition houses, and park and ride lot.
6. The applicant shall provide a trail connection at a mutually beneficial location on the eastern side of the property at the time a future trail system is identified and constructed by Montgomery County serving the property.
7. The applicant commits to coordinate with Montgomery County and the Virginia Department of Transportation in the future in regards to the dedication of additional right of way or easements to better facilitate pedestrian, bicycle or vehicular travel along the subject property's frontage on Prices Fork Road within the Prices Fork historic village area.

8. The applicant shall provide at a minimum a 5' x 14' covered bus shelter constructed of durable architecturally sound materials that will withstand continual exposure to the elements. The shelter shall be located at one of the proposed site entrances along the frontage of Prices Fork Road with the specific site to be determined at a later date. The shelter shall be completed prior to any CO's being issued in Phase II if Phase II is developed for any residential use other than senior housing or once the property is served by public transit, whichever occurs first.
9. Any additional building constructed in the TND Infill district as shown in Phase III will have an architectural style that is complimentary to the existing building.
10. Any structures located in Phase II will have a variety of exterior finishes, textures and styles that are in keeping with the Prices Fork Village Comprehensive plan principles including but not limited to masonry materials such as brick or stone, cementitious siding, and vinyl siding.
11. The project will incorporate the following sustainable design features:
 - a. Maximize the walkability of the property with sidewalks and pedestrian paths.
 - b. Maximize green space and limit hard paved surfaces.
 - c. Residential units will be energy efficient and will meet Energy Star certification where applicable.
12. Prior to site plan approval of Phase II, the applicant agrees to submit the site plan to the Montgomery County Planning Commission for their review and comment on the proposed plan's compatibility with the approved zoning. The applicant further agrees to a work session meeting with the Planning Commission to discuss the site plan.
13. The applicant will investigate the opportunity to work with Montgomery County to obtain Community Development Block Grant or Home Consortium funds and other types of alternative financing for the development of Phase II.
14. Any daycare facility proposed for the project will be fully licensed and certified to meet all required Federal, State and Local guidelines governing daycare facilities.

Ayes: Rice, Lau, Disney, Allen, Donahue, Hirt, Kroll, Wolz

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

OLD BUSINESS:

None presented.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ms. Drake stated that the NRVPC annual training would be held on May 28th. She also stated that the Commission would take a site visit to an active fill site on May 21st.

MEETING ADJOURNED:

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:12 PM.

Chairman

Secretary