

AT A MEETING OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION ON AUGUST 19, 2015 IN BOARD ROOM, COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER, 755 ROANOKE STREET, CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA:

I. CALL TO ORDER:

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

II. DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

Ms. Disney established the presence of a quorum.

Present: Bob Miller, Chair
 Scott Kroll, Vice-Chair
 Cindy W. Disney, Secretary
 Steve Howard, Member
 Coy Allen, Member
 Bryan Rice, Member
 Trey Wolz, Member
 Bryan Katz, Member
 Emily Gibson, Planning Director
 Break Hopkins, Development Planner
 Dari Jenkins, Planning and Zoning Administrator
 Candace Ross, Sr. Program Assistant

Absent: Chris Tuck, Board of Supervisors Liaison
 Sonia Hirt, Member

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Mrs. Gibson requested to discuss New Business first, followed by Old Business.

On a motion by Mr. Rice, and seconded by Mr. Allen and unanimously carried, the agenda was approved.

IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS:

Mr. Miller opened the public address.

There being no comments the public address was closed.

V. NEW BUSINESS: Village Plan Update- UDA Consideration

Mrs. Gibson presented slides explaining UDA's and Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) as well as the two UDA's established in Montgomery County located between the Town of Blacksburg and the Town of Christiansburg and around exit 109 interchange area. She stated staff is asking support from the Commission and to consider a resolution indicating that Montgomery County has designated village areas as growth areas. Mrs. Gibson stated asking the Board to adopt such a resolution is important because we are competing statewide. She explained ways to help Montgomery County score higher. She said staff took a look at each of

the existing village area plans and they are consistent with the intent of UDA's. Mrs. Gibson commented that staff sees no changes to our plans or the way we review plans.

Mr. Miller asked if this will help our score.

Mrs. Gibson answered yes.

Mr. Miller asked what is the status of the development of the 177 corridor around exit 109.

Mrs. Gibson said there are two projects, one related to the roundabout, the other for the realignment of the road. One received an offer on purchase, and the other is ready to move forward in fear of losing state funding if there is no movement soon. Both are fairly active.

Mr. Kroll asked if there is a downside for being defined as a UDA, particularly with PSA.

Mrs. Gibson said staff went through the plans and code language and determined there is no potential negative or downside. Existing villages are already treated like UDA's.

Mrs. Gibson said the HB2 items will need to be submitted to the Board by the end of next month, which is why she wanted the Commission to have the discussion tonight to get their thoughts on the matter.

The Chairman stated the Commission unanimously supports the UDA consideration.

Mrs. Gibson thanked the Planning Commission for their consideration and will share their support with the Board of Supervisors.

VI. OLD BUSINESS: Continued Discussion on State Code Impacts to Agricultural Uses

Mrs. Gibson handed out a resolution from Rockingham County and Albemarle's County Code to show the Commission versatility and options. She stated that Rockingham County is the largest agriculture county in the state. Mrs. Gibson also said that staff wants to receive input from the Commission in the hopes of being consistent with an overall community vision. She described how agriculture is valued in Montgomery County with it being a part of the county's history and heritage, the impacts it has on the economy, and being a part of our community's rural character. Mrs. Gibson explained the importance of distinguishing the definition of substantial, and that staff cannot regulate activities at an agricultural operation unless there is a substantial impact. Mrs. Gibson went over definitions for agricultural operation, agritourism, incidental, usual, customary and substantial. She said the county needs to have some parameters so staff won't be policing each operation. Also, she feels being an active farm should be the primary roll. Intensity of use is a concern, since normally in A-1 districts you don't have the expectations of amplified music, heavy traffic associated with potential uses and other impacts with intense uses. Mrs. Gibson said she would like staff to be able to distinguish substantial in an effort to explain to the applicant they may be able to do this activity on their property, but there may be a separate process if it is substantial. She stated that her main concern is to make the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors aware and get feedback. Mrs. Gibson said A-1 districts are meant to be low density, ideal for farm and forestry, low density residential, and not intended to be more used for more intense uses. Based on those items, she said staff would

like to see formation of a policy, maybe as a joint resolution with the board, or text changes in the Zoning Ordinance. Mrs. Gibson stated she would prefer to have the Commission aware of the activities being proposed on these sites, where now only one person reviews the activity and makes the decision.

Mr. Kroll asked if any of the existing policies or resolutions have been challenged or tested yet.

Mrs. Gibson said not that she is aware of.

Mr. Kroll asked if Botetourt County has a policy.

Mrs. Gibson answered that she did not know.

Mr. Kroll said that he felt that it's a great idea to have in writing and it would provide guidance to staff and potential applicants. He said he likes the format of Rockingham County how it articulates the points of concern and ties into the state code. He also likes the table Albemarle County has. Mr. Kroll stated if there is a way to meld the two together, he felt it would be helpful to staff.

Mr. Allen agreed, and said he liked the clarity of the table.

Mr. Katz commented that if the Board of Supervisors likes the format of Rockingham County's resolution, than he believes the Commission would be able to work with the definitions.

Mrs. Gibson said the Regional Commission has recommended counties look at creating an Agricultural Development Board to review agriculture related items and make recommendations to the Board. This may be an opportunity for the County to consider something like that involving many stakeholders.

Mr. Miller said there are elements in both Rockingham and Albemarle County's resolution/county code that he likes. He stated his concerns for farms to become an un-farm. He also stated the need to look at things that might surprise us, for example, odors. Mr. Miller said he would like for the language to be specific enough, at least to have enough frame work that says can do "a" to "g", not "h".

More discussion was held among the PC members with how to define substantial and their concerns with determining parameters for regulating noise, traffic and other impacts to the environment and surrounding property owners.

Mr. Miller asked if there is a way to pre-disqualify certain activities that we might find offensive to farm/agriculture use, for example, a mug bog, that destroys the land and water.

Mrs. Gibson answered that it could be considered not a farm/agriculture activity, but existing ones fall under that one time use.

Mrs. Gibson said based on the PC discussion so far, she would like to have a two-step process, take a look at some guiding language, similar to the resolution that was handed out, and gear up for a committee for some level of text changes.

Mr. Kroll stated he believes the Commission needs to stay focused on defining substantial and keep it simple.

Mr. Allen commented that there is a fine line they have to follow, but they also have to be specific, because they don't want loop holes.

Mr. Wolz agreed, the Commission should be concerned with impact, rather than what the applicant is doing. Instead look at how it's going to affect the land and community and use the definition for substantial to enforce it.

Ms. Disney suggested starting the guideline given to the applicant to state, 'for the health, safety and general welfare' so the applicant is made aware upfront and the text that follows would be brought back to that guideline.

Mrs. Gibson said she believes with tonight's discussion, staff will have enough to work with.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

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

Chairman

Secretary