

AT A MEETING OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION ON FEBRUARY 12, 2020 IN THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER, CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA:

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Foster called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

Mr. Workman called the roll to determine a quorum.

Present: Bill Foster, Chair  
Trey Wolz, Vice-Chair  
Adam Workman, Secretary  
Coy Allen  
Bryan Katz  
Robert Miller  
Bryan Rice  
Scott Kroll  
Sara Bohn, Board of Supervisors Liaison

Absent: Will Bulloss

Staff: Emily Gibson, Planning Director  
Brea Hopkins, Development Planner  
Dari Jenkins, Zoning Administrator  
Kimberley Wright, Planning Coordinator

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

On a motion by Mr. Miller, and seconded by Mr. Allen, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the agenda as presented.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

January 15, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Rice, and seconded by Mr. Wolz, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the consent agenda as presented.

**PUBLIC ADDRESS**

Chair Foster opened this portion of the meeting at 7:03 p.m. Having no speakers, the public address session was closed.

**TOURISM PRESENTATION**

Lisa Bleakley, Montgomery County Tourism Development Council Director, thanked the Planning Commission for the opportunity to speak and presented the Planning Commission with the 2018 report noting the 2019 report should be ready by the end of March.

The Tourism program is approximately seven years old, and serves Montgomery County, the Town of Blacksburg and the Town of Christiansburg. Ms. Bleakley explained that tourism is a very important part of economic vitality as it is an instant revenue generator for the locality and the state.

Ms. Bleakley presented a brief video produced for the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

Ms. Bleakley also shared tourism is the fifth largest employer in Virginia: comprising of a lot of different interdependent industries such as lodging, restaurants, transportation, retail, etc. which all exist to serve the visitor.

Manageable and sustainable growth is important for driving tourism and balancing growth with opportunities. More people visiting isn't necessarily good tourism, it is important to know what the "right" number of tourists is for the community.

In 2018 the US Travel Association reported an upward trajectory in tourism for Montgomery County. Local tax revenue generated for 34k households in 2010 resulted in \$281 less taxes per household to pay, thanks to visitors.

The Tourism Council works to generate additional tax revenue, direct revenue to local businesses and indirect positive impact through more jobs and associated payroll.

Ms. Bleakley finished by sharing a quote from a colleague: "Build a place where people want to visit and you'll build a place where people want to live. Build a place where people want to live and you'll build a place where people want to work. Build a place where people want to work and you'll build a place where business has to be."

Mr. Miller asked about a shared revenue corridor with the City Radford, specifically the new Tru by Hilton that is anticipated to be open for business in March. Ms. Gibson indicated there is not a shared revenue of the transient occupancy taxes in this area of the county.

Mr Kroll asked if any overflow is expected from the upcoming Iron Man competition. Based on what she's seen so far, Ms. Bleakley anticipates that Montgomery County should see some overflow.

Chair Foster asked how many rooms are available for overnight rental in the County. Ms. Bleakley responded that, not including Virginia Tech occupancy, around 2,000 beds are available. Virginia Tech occupies about 200 of those rooms.

Chair Foster thanked Ms. Bleakley for the information shared.

**OLD BUSINESS: None.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. WORKSESSION – Oak Forest MHC, LLC**

A request by **Oak Forest MHC, LLC.** (Agent: Gay and Neel, Inc.) to rezone a total of 8.013 acres from Agricultural (A1) to Planned Mobile Home Residential Park (PMR) to allow for the addition of twenty-three (23) mobile homes to the existing Oak Forest Mobile Home Park. The property is located **1070 Hightop Road**, Blacksburg; identified as Tax Map 066-A-99 (Parcel ID: 004860) in the Prices Fork Magisterial District. The property currently lies in an area designated as Urban Expansion in the Comprehensive Plan with no defined density; however, is stated to accommodate a full range of residential unit types and densities.

AND

A request by **Oak Forest MHC, LLC.** (Agent: Gay and Neel, Inc.) for amendment of an existing Special Use Permit (SUP) approved in 2004 and last amended on June 14, 2010 to update the *Oak Forest Mobile Home Park Conceptual Plan* and allow for the addition of twenty-three (23) mobile homes to the existing

Oak Forest Mobile Home Park. The property is located at 511 Payne Drive and 1070 Hightop Road and identified as Tax Parcels 066-A-98 and 066-A-99; (Parcel IDs: 016259 and 004860) in the Prices Fork Magisterial District. The property currently lies in an area designated as Urban Expansion in the Comprehensive Plan with no defined density; however, is stated to accommodate a full range of residential unit types and densities.

Ms. Hopkins reviewed information about Mobile Home Parks and manufactured home classes/types per Section 10-61 Definitions.

Mr. Katz asked if restrictions for Manufactured Homes Class C are within Manufactured Home Parks only, or privately-owned lots also. Ms. Hopkins clarified that Class C manufactured homes are not allowed to be set/relocated anywhere in Montgomery County.

Ms. Hopkins explained the Zoning history of Oak Forest Mobile Home Park and pointed out various amenities located within the existing park. Oak Forest Mobile Home Park currently has a mixture of singlewide and doublewide homes with an office on-site. Addressing has been updated to current 911 standards and each internal street is named.

Ms. Hopkins explained that a home exists on the subject lot and will remain on a separate one-acre parcel.

Ms. Hopkins explained the rezoning request and the need for a Special Use Permit to amend the existing master plan. The Comprehensive Plan designation for this area is Urban Expansion and it does lie within an Urban Development Area.

The applicant is proposing an additional 20 units, with relocation of three existing units. One unit will most likely have to be relocated upon development because the road will be very close to the unit. However, the other two units will not be immediately relocated.

Ms. Hopkins reviewed the Open Space Concept with passive recreation and stormwater pond location.

John Neel, Applicant Representative and Project Engineer, thanked the Planning Commission for their time. Mr. Neel stated he did want to address an email received by an adjacent property owner that expressed concerns about the expansion. The owner is concerned because the property always acted as a buffer from the park. The applicant wants to maintain as much of the existing vegetation along the south side of the property as possible and will replace any trees that are removed during construction.

Mr. Neel handed out some information regarding areas that are in urban expansion and urban development. This expansion would provide affordable housing per the Comprehensive Plan (HG4.1) to promote affordable housing for all income levels, with a mid-county location.

Dr. Allen asked how many tenants own their home. Mr. Neel responded that about 75% units in the park are owned by the residents, who lease/rent the space.

Mr. Kroll asked if the single-family residential lot that will be subdivided out will have a deeded egress/ingress easement? Mr. Neel explained that the access is existing off of Hightop Road with a shared driveway. Mr. Neel further explained that the lot will not be subdivided, but a boundary line adjustment will adjust that lot to one acre.

The park is currently served by PSA water and sewer, the additional units will be as well.

Mr. Miller asked staff if the schools are aware of this application. Staff responded that the schools are notified of every application received.

Mr. Neel stated that they have confirmation from VDOT that there are no issues at the entrance at Hightop Road.

The Planning Commission recommended to forward the application for public hearing at the March meeting.

## **B. ZONING TEXT AMENDMENTS**

Ms. Gibson explained that staff met with the Development Committee regarding potential amendments for adding travel center as a use and revising the sign ordinance. The goal is review the text amendments with the full Planning Commission, receive initial feedback, prepare and format the amendments for public hearing in March in an effort to receive public feedback to help refine the amendments.

### Travel Centers

It came to the attention of staff, through an inquiry, that there is not a defined use and a comparable use is not found in the Zoning Ordinance.

It appears that all previously permitted truck stops have been "pieced" together with several different uses. Since today's truck stops are larger and offer more amenities that are not covered in our ordinance, a text amendment is needed. Modern truck stops offer amenities such as: convenience store, fuel sales, weigh station, repair station, restaurant, RV dump station, charging stations, and a rest area.

Ms. Hopkins presented a proposed definition for discussion, which included language "that a travel center shall be located within *one-quarter (1/4) mile distance of an interstate exit...*". Staff presented maps developed by GIS to illustrate ¼ mile and ½ distance from exits, for the two applicable exits located within in Montgomery County.

Ms. Hopkins stated the proposed use would be allowed by Special Use Permit in the following Zoning Districts: General Business, Manufacturing and Manufacturing Light.

Mr. Kroll inquired of the existing zoning designation(s) at the I-81 exits. There are different designations, and a rezoning may be required in conjunction with a Special Use Permit application if this type of development is desired. Ms. Hopkins responded that there are several existing zoning areas around the two exits, but they are in areas in the Comprehensive Plan that could be rezoned to those districts. Both exits are within UDA areas. Exit 105 was not included in staff evaluations because it is currently designated as Rural and Resource Stewardship and would not qualify for a rezoning to General Business, Manufacturing or Manufacturing Light. Staff does not anticipate a future land use change in that area since there are no public utilities present.

Mr. Katz suggested removing "major collector routes" from the definition since Prices Fork is classified as such. Discussion ensued, and it was determined that the words "major collector route" should be changed to "major arterial."

Mr. Wolz asked about size, minimum acreage potential. Staff will evaluate and compare with other ordinances.

Mr. Wolz asked if barber services and emergency care clinics uses would be included in the "other travel related services." Staff confirmed it would be included. Ms. Hopkins stated that even if the medical clinic use were to be separate, it is allowed by right in General Business.

Chair Foster asked if “long-term” should be defined/clarified.

The amendment will move forward to public hearing in March.

### Specialty Signage

Ms. Gibson presented the sign ordinance amendment proposals that would address issues with limited signage for some properties.

At this time, staff is proposing an overlay area that would provide a 100 percent sign area bonus (double frontage) for visibility from both the bypass as well as South Main Street. This would not allow an additional free-standing sign, but double the square footage currently allowed. Staff would not direct where the signage was placed.

Ms. Gibson explained signage is something that could be helpful to make travelers aware of businesses in the area.

Dr. Allen asked if staff is working with the Towns to be consistent with both ordinances. Ms. Gibson responded that parcels in the Town were not generally impacted by this issue.

Discussion ensued about the double frontage options of business owners to use their signage on either side. Ms. Gibson indicated the update gave business owners the option, but does not prescribe where their signage should be located, giving the owner more flexibility. Mr. Kroll asked if the proposed amendment circumvented the limitations that we currently have for business signage? Ms. Gibson explained that double frontage was key in providing this option in this corridor and that other corridors could be considered in the future. Ms. Gibson stated that staff could consider a minimum percentage split on front/rear.

Mr. Kroll asked if the proposal would create a disparity, while perhaps a business across the street would not have secondary frontage.

Mr. Rice stated that it does seem reasonable that businesses with double frontage have double square footage, but that the standards on the front should remain the same for all.

Staff and the Commisison agreed this was a good item to incorporate in the text edits.

Staff also proposed an amendment to allow taller, on-premise freestanding sign options; including high rise signs for properties located within one-quarter mile of an interstate exit.

Mr. Miller suggested dark sky considerations be considered upon submittal of sign packages that would take advantage of this option. He believes that people who live and farm close to the exits would probably support taller signs as long as they weren't lighted at night. Ms. Gibson discussed lighting options citing an example of advertised gas prices. The red and green diodes are not very intrusive compared to lighting that is overly bright. Montgomery County has a provision in the code that lit signs change to a different brightness at night, which would be applied in this situation. Brightness and lighting could also be addressed through the Special Use Permit process. Ms. Gibson will research the Dark Sky website for information on best practices for tall signs.

Mr. Katz suggested allowing “shared” signage within a certain area. Ms. Gibson stated that the ordinance does promote sharing signage.

Ms. Hopkins added that she sent this particular item for feedback to the Virginia Association of Zoning Officials, which included information of one locality that requiring these types of signs to be so many feet apart.

Ms. Gibson outlined staff's plan for next steps, including public hearings set for each on March 18.

## **LIAISON REPORTS**

Board of Supervisors – Supervisor Bohn informed the Planning Commission that she was elected as Vice-Chair of the Board of Supervisors and Mr. Steve Fijalkowski was elected as Chair. The Board of Supervisors approved the Kipps Farm/Westhill rezoning request as recommended by the Planning Commission. They also passed an ordinance update related to flow control (household and commercial trash). The cost increase to single family homes should be only \$2-3 per month; however, apartment complexes, commercial and industrial costs will increase more.

The Board has changed their public hearing speaking time changed from five minutes to four minutes. Also, it is budget season, and it is anticipated that the School Board will approve their requested budget soon. The Board will hold the second portion of its extended work session which started last month as an opportunity for team building and strategic planning.

A few of the Supervisors went to VACO legislative day last week to meet with delegates and state senators. Mary Biggs and April DeMotts have been nominated to be on the VACO Board. Supervisor Bohn attended the Chairperson's Institute program. Emergency Services Director Neal Turner has retired.

Public Service Authority – The PSA approved an engineering firm to bring waterline from the Water Authority to Mud Pike to Bethel. Work continues on Meadow Creek waterline from Riner to Bethel.

Blacksburg Planning Commission – Mr. Foster attended the February 4<sup>th</sup> meeting which had two public hearings including one regarding expansion of the historic districts, which was approved. The second public hearing was a rezoning on Glade Road for a number of units that included 177 bedrooms. Their concerns were intensity of project, small garden plots for the residents, walkability, bikeability.

Christiansburg Planning Commission – Mr. Rice reported that he did not attend, but he did review the minutes for the past few meetings. The temporary park and ride previously located on Roanoke Street near the 460 bypass has been purchased, but there is no zoning designation due to it being owned previously by VDOT. The new owner is seeking to have it zoned B3.

Radford Planning Commission – Bob Miller had no report and will not be able to attend the next three months; however, he offered to provide a report based on agendas and minutes from Melissa Skelton. The Commission was comfortable with this approach moving forward.

Tourism Council – Mr. Katz stated that the next meeting is February 27<sup>th</sup> and he is unable to continue to attend. The meetings are held quarterly on Thursdays at 9am The next meeting will be at the Great Room. Mr. Miller volunteered to begin attending these meetings.

Parks and Recreation – Mr. Workman had no report to share.

Planning Director's Report – Ms. Gibson informed the Planning Commission that the department currently has an intern, Katie Hanton, who will be working approximately 20 hours a week. The new Development Planner position was advertised a second time, interviews will be next week.

The grand opening for Mill Stone Kitchen at Old Prices Fork Elementary was held today. The 16 residential units are full with a waitlist and Moon Hollow Brewery has also opened at the site.

Ms. Gibson updated the Commission on the following projects:

- The Kipps Farm/Westhill rezoning request was approved.
- The Prices Fork Road revenue sharing turn lane project will be completed soon. Mr. Katz added that Brookfield and Thomas Street signs should be mixed case. Ms. Gibson will bring it to the attention of the Project Manager.
- The Meadow Creek Road revenue sharing realignment project should be completed soon as well.
- The 2019 Planning Commission Annual Report will be emailed to the Planning Commission for their review and approval
- Staff hoped to begin to providing Quarterly Reports to the Planning Commission with information on workload items and project.

If any Planning Commissioners want to learn more about flow control, Ms. Gibson will be happy to provide information on that item.

Ms. Gibson presented a t-shirt with the new County branding information. If any Commissioners are interested in a shirt, let staff know and provide the size needed.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no additional business, Chair Foster adjourned the meeting at 9:26 p.m.