

**POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

April 15, 2009

6:30 p.m.

County Complex, Building A

**A. Roll Call**

**Present**

Mr. Chris Henderson, Chair  
Mr. Rich Krapf  
Ms. Deborah Kratter  
Mr. Reese Peck  
Mr. Jack Fraley

**Others Present**

Mr. John McDonald, Manager of FMS  
Ms. Leanne Reidenbach, Senior Planner  
Mr. Jason Purse, Senior Planner  
Mr. Brian Elmore, Development Management Assistant

Mr. Henderson called the meeting to order at 6:35pm.

**B. Minutes – March 11, 2009**

Mr. Reese Peck stated that where the minutes state there are “several vehicles for sale” at Rite Aid, it should read “a number of vehicles, and one for sale.” He also noted that he would like for Mr. Allen Murphy to be noted as absent.

Mr. Rich Krapf moved for approval of the minutes with the vehicle sales amendment, with a second from Ms. Deborah Kratter.

In a voice vote, the minutes were approved (3-1; Yes: Henderson, Kratter, Krapf; No: Peck; Abstain: Fraley).

**C. Old Business**

**a. Z-0003-2009- Reduction of M-1 Setbacks**

Mr. Jason Purse discussed the amendment to the M-1 Limited Business/Industrial zoning district for setback reduction. The Board’s Toano Community Character Area design guidelines include recommendations for reduced setbacks that are not possible under current regulations. The B-1 General Business zoning district allows for a setback reduction to 25 feet. Similar reduced setback language will be added to the M-1 zoning district. The change only allows businesses to apply for reduced setbacks, and includes a provision for Development Review Committee approval of even smaller setbacks. Criteria for DRC approval of reduced setbacks can allow developers several solutions.

Ms. Kratter stated the term ‘extraordinary’ should be more defined or toned down to prevent confusion and uncertainty.

Mr. Purse stated applications could be approved if they met only one of the three criteria.

Mr. Peck stated that rules requiring applicants to “exceed the standards of the Comprehensive Plan” would give the DRC the most discretion.

Mr. Jack Fraley stated that leaving “extraordinary” would help the DRC exceed Comprehensive Plan standards in as many ways as possible.

Mr. Purse stated staff wanted to keep the reduction language consistent between zoning districts.

The Committee discussed the language and wording of the ordinance amendment.

Mr. Purse stated that reduced setbacks, with parking along a building’s rear, would be one of the conditions that exceeded Comprehensive Plan standards.

Mr. Fraley stated the differences between General Business and Limited Business Industrial exist for a purpose, and questioned making them more similar. He said the last housekeeping ordinance reviewed by the Committee included residential tower revisions that has caused some interpretation problems.

Mr. Krapf stated some differences exist because they slip through the cracks. He said safety nets still existed in the more flexible revised M-1 language, including primary and secondary road requirements, compatibility with adjacent uses, and a Board-approved study.

Mr. Purse stated General Business and Limited Business Industrial are often located near one another. He said staff did not want commercial uses to have two separate setback standards. The revised ordinance will state in Section 3(c) that “the applicant has offered site design elements which exceed the development standards of the Comprehensive Plan.”

Mr. Krapf moved for approval of the revised setbacks, with a second from Ms. Kratter.

In a unanimous voice vote, the Committee approved the revised M-1 setbacks (5-0).

**b. Capital Improvements Program ranking criteria**

Mr. Henderson stated that he had spoken with the Board the previous night during its consideration of the budget and thanked them for consideration of the Policy Committee’s project rankings. He said the Board was presented with seven of the Committee’s top-ten CIP rankings. The new budget will include the new police building, police technology initiatives, the Warhill gym, the Jamestown gym, the school administration building, school construction bond, and stormwater initiatives.

Mr. John McDonald stated the County’s investments had no exposure to toxic assets or mortgage backed securities. He said there are conservative restrictions on how the County’s assets may be invested. While the Board may issue debt for the police building, it is doubtful it will issue debt for the gyms.

Ms. Kratter presented a list of proposed ranking criteria. She stated there was not much published material on what criteria to include in CIP rankings. Among the considerations for any project might be compliance with court-ordered and regulatory requirements. Other

considerations include education, health and safety, risks to persons and property, environmental quality, and economic development (net revenue impacts).

Ms. Leanne Reidenbach stated she had grouped projects into three types based on what they aimed to accomplish: staff items (those included on staff's existing score sheet), project categories (such as schools or economic development), and bonus criteria (new criteria, such as health and safety).

Mr. Fraley stated the Committee already has a quantitative ranking supplied by staff, augmented by the Committee's qualitative judgments. He said it is often difficult to reconcile both types of ranking. Staff and the Committee should not have their own distinct numeric rankings.

Ms. Kratter stated the Committee should agree upon standards to review projects and how to communicate its review factors to the Board.

Ms. Reidenbach stated that staff's criteria included Comprehensive Plan relevance, project funding, site characteristics, timing, and urgency.

Mr. Peck stated that in his previous grant programs, there were objective criteria and program impacts to be evaluated.

Ms. Kratter stated the Committee should be able to judge all aspects of a proposal. For example, competition and inconvenience from economic development projects.

Mr. Henderson stated he wanted to be able to articulate spending priorities in numeric order. He said he did not disagree with the CIP recommendations, but felt the Committee struggled on its rating criteria.

Mr. Krapf stated the Committee should be in agreement on using a variety of factors, including staff rankings, state and federal laws, etc.

Mr. Fraley stated that Commissioners were in their positions to apply their judgment, as opposed to a numeric score. He said the Board accepted this year's rankings based on the Committee's judgment.

Ms. Kratter stated that even if the Committee operated using just subjective factors in the past, there was no reason not to bring greater objectivity into the process going forward.

Mr. Peck stated the Committee should choose one of the several ranking systems detailed in the CIP textbooks.

Ms. Kratter stated the process should be repeatable year after year. She said numbers should be able to reflect subjective judgments.

Mr. Fraley stated that at least one Board member did not prefer a numeric ranking. Mr. Fraley noted technology issues, such as a broadband strategy, will be universal in scope and fit multiple categories.

Ms. Reidenbach passed out a sample criteria sheet used by Bryan, Texas. She stated that Bryan's ranking system included image, which could include sub-categories such as education and quality of life.

Mr. Fraley stated that no matter how refined the ranking system is, at some point the Committee will have to use subjective judgments.

Mr. Krapf stated that everyone in the Committee wanted some sort of model, but some judgement for intangible factors will be required. He said a numeric ranking system was superior to the previous "high, medium, and low" CIP rankings. Whether people agree with the rankings or not, they will be able to apply consistent factors to the projects.

Ms. Kratter stated that after determining which categories will be deciding factors, those factors should be given additional weights.

Mr. Henderson asked members to rank the new police building using the Bryan, Texas method, as an exercise.

Ms. Reidenbach stated that despite the differences in scoring, Committee members could still arrive at the same one-through-five rankings.

Mr. Henderson stated the Board would want each Committee member's weightings in addition to the numeric scores. He said departments can tailor their proposals to better match the ranking system.

Mr. McDonald stated the Committee should make sure departments know which criteria are being used for CIP rankings.

Ms. Reidenbach stated department rankings can be included in CIP formulas and that applications can be tailored so the Planning Division received the information necessary for the Policy Committee to apply the adopted criteria.

Mr. Henderson stated that departments knowing the rankings would allow them to be better prepared for the Committee's questions. He said departments should know details such as Full Time Employee (FTE) savings. Extremely high composite rankings from the entire Committee would indicate to the Board high priorities.

Ms. Kratter stated that a preponderance of extraordinarily high priorities should lead the Committee to realize their ranking system is not functioning as it should.

Ms. Reidenbach stated that ranking criteria could be adopted in advance of the Comprehensive Plan to make changes to the application and that departments could be working on their submissions. She suggested; however, that the Committee defers consideration of the applications received until the new Comprehensive Plan is adopted.

Mr. McDonald stated that even if there are few CIP funds next fiscal year, the Committee should rank projects on a five year horizon.

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Mr. Henderson asked Ms. Kratter and Mr. Peck to revise the CIP ranking criteria. He said he wanted them to review benefits to health, private investment, participation, opportunities for lifelong learning, and revenue recovery as subcategories. The discussion would be continued at a meeting in May.

#### **D. New Business**

Mr. Peck stated that he was concerned that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) was not going through the Planning Commission as other service standards required by Virginia law. He said the PRMP was going through the Comprehensive Plan as opposed to normal Planning channels. The integrity of the planning process and Commission is at risk. There is sufficient time for the Commission to work with the Steering Committee and the Board on approvals. At the next Commission meeting, he will suggest establishing a planning process protocol for projects with service standards. Service standards should be approved by the Commission before departments begin work on master plans and should match with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Reidenbach stated that staff decided the PRMP, which had not been updated in a decade, should be revised along with the Comprehensive Plan. She said the master plan went through a thorough public participation process, led by a consultant group, and has been evaluated by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.

Mr. Peck stated that there are substantial financial impacts from the proposed service standard changes. He said the ten-year update should not have happened at this time but that the Comprehensive Plan should have established the standards and then the PRMP developed.

Ms. Kratter stated that Comprehensive Plan standards will have been pre-decided by master plans, making the Comprehensive Plan itself much less important. She asked which document is subordinate to the other.

Mr. Fraley stated the PRMP was reviewed and voted on by the Steering Committee, which includes a majority of Commission members. He said Commissioners often change their minds on issues.

Mr. Krapf stated that although he agrees with Mr. Peck on how the process should work, the 2003 Comprehensive Plan should not be amended to address standards revised for the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. He also said the 2003 Greenways Master Plan did not go through the Planning Commission. The County Attorney's office determined that master plans are a separately constituted activity from the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Peck stated he was meeting with County Administration to discuss the review process.

Mr. Henderson stated that department-oriented master plans would provide a different perspective than the community-focused Commission. He said Parks and Recreation's role in the larger community was missing from their master plan.

Mr. Peck stated the PRMP did not match County proffer standards. He said parks proffers should reference which national design standard they were developed from.

Mr. Fraley stated there were nearly 40 action items in the Parks and Recreation Goals, Strategies, and Actions. He stated the Commission must abide by the Board's opinion.

Mr. Peck stated he did not want his Commission vote pre-determined. He said agency master plans should also be appearing before the Commission due to its role in bringing amendments before the Board.

Mr. Fraley stated that in his meetings with Board members, he was told the PRMP was going to the Commission primarily as a courtesy. He said the Board stated the PRMP was separate from the Comprehensive Plan. He requested that the spreadsheet provided to the Steering Committee that compared 1993/2003 standards with the 2009 proposed standards be included in the Planning Commission's next meeting packet.

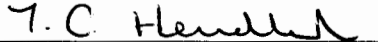
Ms. Kratter stated she would support sending a letter to the Board letting them know of the Commission's concern for protocol and asking them to defer their decision until the Comprehensive Plan is approved, to ensure those documents are in synch. Mr. Henderson and Mr. Fraley concurred.

Mr. Krapf stated that although he would have preferred to have considered the PRMP, the Board is the legislative authority in the County. The Board viewed the PRMP as a separate document. The Comprehensive Plan only serves as guidelines, and does not prevent departments from stricter standards.

#### **E. Adjournment**

Mr. Krapf moved for adjournment, with a second from Ms. Kratter.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.

  
Chris Henderson, Chair of the Policy Committee