

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION WORKING GROUP OF THE COUNTY OF JAMES CITY, VIRGINIA, WAS HELD ON THE FOURTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, TWO-THOUSAND AND FOURTEEN, AT 4:00 P.M. IN THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER BOARD ROOM, 101-F MOUNTS BAY ROAD, JAMES CITY COUNTY, VIRGINIA.

1. ROLL CALL

Working Group Members

Present:

Rich Krapf

Tim O'Connor

Chris Basic

George Drummond

John Wright, III

Heath Richardson

Elizabeth Friel

Staff Present:

Paul Holt, Planning Director

Tammy Rosario, Principal Planner

Luke Vinciguerra, Planner I

Scott Whyte, Senior Landscape Planner II

Absent:

Robin Bledsoe

Mr. Rich Krapf called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Krapf opened the public comment.

Mr. Jack Haldeman, 1597 Founders Hill North, spoke on behalf of the James City County Citizens Coalition regarding population growth management and land conservation.

There being no one else wishing to speak, Mr. Krapf closed the public comment.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. August 21, 2014

Mr. Heath Richardson moved for approval of the minutes from August 21, 2014. On a voice vote the minutes were unanimously approved.

4. TOPICS FOR REVIEW

Mr. Krapf noted that the enhanced memo prepared for the Planning Commission Working Group members was very helpful in identifying the changes made to each section.

A. Public Facilities

Mr. Luke Vinciguerra presented a report on the changes to the public facilities section text and goals, strategies and actions (GSAs).

Mr. Krapf referenced proposed GSA PF 1.5.6 and stated that he would like to discuss the development of a facilities master plan, as proposed in a new GSA, versus the use of performance standards in determining when new County facilities will be established.

Ms. Tammy Rosario stated that proposed GSAs would serve as a framework for discussion among departments, as well as with the Board of Supervisors and County Administration, regarding the components a potential master plan would include. Ms. Rosario noted that it may be difficult to identify the specific times at which new facilities would be needed.

Mr. Krapf stated that a master plan would rely on projections that may not always materialize. Mr. Krapf also noted his understanding that the master plan may not be rigid in defining when and where facilities will go, but could instead be used as a guide in conjunction with the other metrics.

Mr. Paul Holt noted that the performance metrics will still be important in determining that the facilities are serving the intended purpose and that nothing is built far in advance of when it is needed.

Mr. Richardson stated that he believes it is important to provide the County's leaders with as much information in the Comprehensive Plan as possible in order to inform their decision making. Mr. Richardson noted that a public facilities master plan would give decision makers the tools they need in order to predict where facilities will be needed. Mr. Richardson also inquired if the County has a population target.

Ms. Rosario stated that there is not a population target. Ms. Rosario explained that a population target would be a very subjective notion that would have to be arrived at through much public conversation and the factors determining that number would have to be agreed upon within the community.

Mr. Richardson suggested that, with the goal of developing a master plan, milestone dates could be established for completing the requisite studies that would allow the County to get a better understanding of where growth will occur.

Mr. Krapf stated that this item will most likely be given further detail once there has been the opportunity for discussion with the new County Administrator.

Ms. Rosario stated that the desires of the Working Group can be relayed to the new County Administrator, and more detail could potentially be added.

Mr. Richardson stated that he would like to have his concerns noted and that he would like the language to become less vague in regards to that GSA.

Mr. Tim O'Connor stated that it was difficult to work through the last Capital Improvements Project (CIP) requests because there are so many competing requests for funds and the County does not have an assessment of their current facilities.

Ms. Elizabeth Friel stated that Community Participation Team heard requests from citizens for a public facilities master plan and stated that a 10 to 20 year plan would be ideal. Ms. Friel inquired if the master plan would include school facilities.

Ms. Rosario stated that schools would be a desirable aspect to include, but further discussions would be required with County Administration and Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools.

Mr. George Drummond stated that the Grove area has been neglected in terms of facilities. Mr. Drummond noted that he is concerned that although the Roberts District generates great industrial revenues, that money is not being returned to the District. Mr. Drummond stated that he would like to see an assessment of the current facilities as well. Mr. Drummond also stated that he feels the Social Services building should be moved closer to the Grove area, as that is where most of the families that they serve are located.

Ms. Rosario stated that she is noting all of the concerns brought forward by the Working Group for further discussions.

Mr. John Wright stated that he did not see anything in the text or GSAs regarding the use of technology to improve service delivery.

Mr. Krapf agreed.

Mr. Richardson suggested a change to the wording regarding neighborhood schools.

Mr. Krapf summarized that the Working Group's comments were focused on looking into a timeline to incorporate in the master plan, assessing the current needs and considering the role of technology.

Ms. Rosario stated that she had also noted a request for assessing the adequacies of the County's current facilities.

Mr. Chris Basic stated that the concept of a master plan sounds great but extending beyond a 10-year vision could result in facilities being built where there is not as much need as anticipated.

Mr. Holt stated that the goal of a master plan would not be to set specific dates and locations for facilities to be built. Mr. Holt explained that it would be a service level plan that gives the County a head start on proper planning while remaining reactive to the changing needs and expectations within the community. Mr. Holt further noted that technology would play an integral role in the planning as it will determine how new facilities are developed and how services will be provided.

Mr. Wright inquired if Zoning regulations will provide a framework for the master plan.

Mr. Holt stated that the County's Land Use map will play a role in determining which public facilities can go where but cannot be the sole input.

Mr. Richardson stated that having a framework for decision makers to look at will help alleviate overly reactive decisions and that things such as housing studies can assist in putting together that framework.

B. Community Character

Mr. Scott Whyte presented a report on the changes to the Community Character section text and GSAs.

Mr. Wright stated that he feels the text of the Community Character section is not completely put into practice, as developers often completely clear the land without leaving any mature trees.

Mr. Whyte noted several policies and ordinances that have been established in response to this based on the last Comprehensive Plan update.

Ms. Rosario noted that the combination of modern construction practices and having large areas of development can result in many trees being removed.

Mr. Wright stated that Charlotte, North Carolina has a very strict tree clearing policy which has resulted in a beautifully landscaped city and stated that he fears that continuing to allow so much tree removal will result in a community that does not match up to the corridors described in the text.

Mr. Drummond asked if there were any plans to recognize or improve the Grove area.

Mr. Whyte stated that Grove has been added to the list of special places but has not become a Community Character Corridor because it lacks specific geographic boundaries and historic architecture.

Ms. Rosario stated that the Historical Commission has recently recognized the community with historical markers and that the significance of the community will be taken into consideration during any road improvement projects.

Mr. Whyte stated there is land in the Grove area that participates in the Agricultural and Forestal District program, helping to maintain its character.

Ms. Rosario confirmed that this was specifically in the area of Carter's Grove.

Mr. Drummond inquired if there have been considerations by the County to purchase Carter's Grove.

Ms. Rosario stated that she has not been involved in any such conversations.

Mr. Drummond stated that the markers that have been put up are great but only receive attention when they are first put up. Mr. Drummond stated that Grove has great potential and attention should be brought to the area.

Mr. Basic noted that the Longhill Road corridor has received attention based on its mention in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan and inquired if any other corridors have been identified as needing attention.

Ms. Rosario stated that this is an item that could be addressed with the Transportation section and can be revisited during that meeting.

Ms. Friel stated that Community Character was brought up many times by the citizens and is critical to the future of the County.

Mr. Krapf stated that the desire of the section is to create a unique sense of place and inquired if other areas of the County would benefit from the development of design guidelines, such as in Toano. Mr. Krapf noted that there are several areas of the County that have aspects that would be beneficial to maintain.

Mr. Richardson stated that he would be supportive of that idea.

Mr. Krapf stated that throughout the growth process small details that distinguish a community can be lost. Mr. Krapf stated that his idea is not to mandate standards for everywhere in the County, but only in areas that have specific features that should be preserved.

Mr. Wright noted that the County of Roanoke developed design guidelines for the entire County.

Mr. O'Connor stated that he is concerned that the County is developing towards a homogenous appearance and stated that the design guidelines could help distinguish the various areas within the County. Mr. O'Connor also stated that he would like more direct language in the GSAs, as this would provide predictability in the development process.

Mr. Basic stated that he had jumped ahead into Transportation conversations earlier because those projects also incorporate the aesthetics of the particular area. Mr. Basic stated that Jamestown Road may be an area to consider.

Mr. Holt stated that it would be helpful for the Planning Commission to continue to work with staff to establish their end goals regarding community character.

Mr. Krapf asked what will be the best forum to continue the conversation.

Mr. Richardson noted that the Community Leaders Forum is an option to receive further input from the community.

Ms. Rosario stated that much input has already been received from the community, but she is also comfortable with engaging the group for specific questions the Working Group may have. Ms. Rosario stated that it would be helpful for staff for the Working Group to establish the list of items they would like considered and the avenues they suggest for pursuing those items.

Mr. Holt stated that the section can be revisited at a later Working Group meeting.

Ms. Friel agreed that this update process is the correct venue for this discussion, and the Working Group could work with staff to develop a new GSA.

Ms. Rosario stated that there will be a joint work session with the Board in October to engage the Board on the concerns brought forward by the Working Group.

Mr. Krapf stated that he agrees that it is important to have these conversations with the Board early in the process. Mr. Krapf also inquired how a decision is made whether or not to engage an outside firm in the development of design guidelines.

Mr. Holt stated that the funds would come from the normal operating budget that is established on a yearly basis.

Mr. O'Connor stated that he and Mr. Krapf have examined design guidelines in other localities and noted that the City of Norfolk has a pattern book that is based on individual neighborhoods.

Mr. Basic inquired if applying architectural guidelines to the County would tie the hands of architects or developers.

Mr. Krapf stated that he is not advocating the same standards for the entire County, but instead to identify unique neighborhoods that would benefit from the standards.

Mr. Basic inquired if these standards would be specific to each area.

Mr. Krapf confirmed.

Mr. Richardson noted that, for example, Lightfoot Marketplace will echo the style of the Thomas Nelson Community College and Police Department buildings.

Mr. O'Connor stated that he believes this is an extension of the conversations the Planning Commission is currently having regarding the architecture along commercial corridors.

Mr. Basic stated that he wants to ensure that applicants will know what to expect during the process.

Mr. O'Connor agreed.

V. Other Items

Mr. Krapf noted that the next Working Group meeting will cover Housing and potentially the Transportation section.

VI. Public Comment

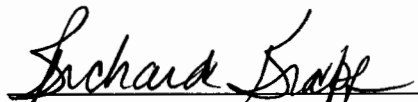
Mr. Krapf opened the public comment.

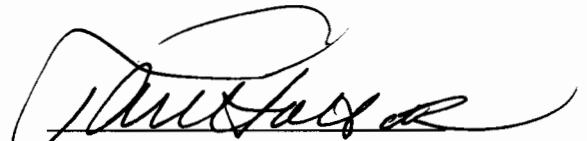
There being no one else wishing to speak, Mr. Krapf closed the public comment.

VII. Adjournment

Mr. Basic moved to adjourn until to the next Planning Commission Working Group meeting scheduled for September 18, 2014.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:15 p.m.


Richard Krapf, Chairman


Paul D. Holt, III, Secretary