

Spotsylvania County Planning Commission

DRAFT

Holbert Building Board Room, 9104 Courthouse Road, Spotsylvania VA 22553

MINUTES: September 18, 2019

Call to Order: Mr. Newhouse called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Mary Lee Carter	Lee Hill
Howard Smith	Livingston
Jennifer Maddox	Berkeley
Michael Medina	Salem
C. Travis Bullock	Battlefield
Gregg Newhouse	Chancellor
Richard Thompson	Courtland

Staff Present:

Paulette Mann, Planning Commission Secretary
B. Leon Hughes, AICP, Assistant Director of Planning
Alexandra Spaulding, Senior Assistant County Attorney
Jacob Pastwik, AICP, Planner III
Jay Cullinan, Fire Chief
Kevin Brooks, Director of Parks & Recreation
Darrell Holladay, Parks & Recreation Department

Announcements: Mr. Hughes advised the Commissioners of the items coming up at Technical Review.

Review & Approval of minutes:

Motion and vote: Ms. Carter made a motion, seconded by Mr. Medina to approve the minutes of August 21, 2019. The motion passed 5-0-1, with Mr. Thompson abstaining due to his absence.

Unfinished Business:

CPA17-0002 Comprehensive Plan Follow-up on Transportation & FREM.

Mr. Pastwik stated the item is being presented as an informational item with no formal presentation, a follow-up from a previous worksession and no comments are needed at this point. He stated that he would take any questions that the Commissioners may have.

Mr. Newhouse inquired if the document has been sent to VDOT.

Mr. Pastwik stated that it should be sent to VDOT for review by Friday. He advised that Mr. Cullinan is present for any questions they may have.

Mr. Newhouse stated that he hasn't had much time to review and will do so. He stated that he would email any questions he may have.

Worksession(s):**CPA17-0002 Comprehensive Plan Parks & Recreation Facilities**

Mr. Pastwik presented the worksession. Planning staff in collaboration with the County Parks and Recreation Department have reviewed and proposed updates to the draft Parks and Recreation Section of the Comprehensive Plan's Public Facilities Element. He stated that Kevin Brooks and Darrell Holladay are also present for questions should Commissioner have them.

As part of this process staff proposes to review, update, and consolidate critical information from the adopted 2009 Spotsylvania County Parks and Recreation Master Plan (updated in 2011 to reference the Trailways Master Plan) into the Parks and Recreation Section of the Comprehensive Plan. The 2009 Plan has been a standalone document without a major update since its adoption. This is a similar proposal to one presented to the Planning Commission on November 7, 2018 at work session where staff proposed consolidating the Trailways Master Plan into the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission was supportive of that concept. Like the Transportation Element proposal, staff feels abandoning the standalone and currently outdated 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan in favor of the Comprehensive Plan better positions it for continued monitor, implementation, and review and update consistent with the five (5) year update cycle. Rather than maintaining separate plan documents with a variety of goals and different planning periods, staff believes creation of a centralized “one stop shop” Plan for Parks and Recreation is more efficient and easier to follow from an interested stakeholder and/or public standpoint. Otherwise staff has found there tends to be little impetus and limited resources available to update separate standalone plans that may become outdated.

The draft update was presented to the County Parks and Recreation Commission initially on December 20, 2018. Following that meeting staff was able to respond to questions received and make additional edits. Responses to the Parks and Recreation Commissions questions were compiled and have been provided as an attachment here for reference. Staff feels this information may provide more background concerning the draft. With further updates in place the draft was again presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission on April 18, 2019. At that time the Parks and Recreation Commission endorsed the attached draft, sending it forward to the Planning Commission for review.

Substantive updates to the draft have been summarized below:

Existing Parks and Recreation Lands and Facilities Inventory and Activities

Within the draft, staff has proposed adding a new table to track various organized field activities within the most recent fiscal year. This is a gauge to show community usage and demands on some popular Parks and Recreation services (lands and facilities). In fiscal year 2018 there were over 5,000 organized field/ gym rentals through the Parks and Recreation Department including games and practices. Going forward this rental activity for a variety of sports can help gauge growing or declining popularity of certain sports within the County and help guide the County identify where community interest and demands are most notable as new or improved park developments are considered.

One of the most crucial elements of the Parks and Recreation Facilities update involves an update of County Parks and Recreation Park Acreage (Lands) and Facilities inventory information from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan within the Comprehensive Plan. This inventory update includes: existing County Park acres (lands) and their facilities (ball fields, tennis and basketball courts, etc.); County School Shared Use Recreational Spaces (land and facilities); community centers (land and facilities); acknowledgement of future County Park sites not yet developed or accessible as public parks; acknowledgement of complementary parks and recreation related facilities not managed by County Parks and Recreation such as HOA open space areas or privately owned and operated recreational facilities; acknowledgement of parklands managed by Federal, State, historic preservation entities. The existing inventory is the basis for determining whether surpluses or deficits exist based on the County's adopted level of service standard based on current and projected future populations. In order to maintain a consistent level of service for County residents, as population grows so too would available parks and recreation services (land and facilities).

In the interest of enhancing the Comprehensive Plan Parks and Recreation Facilities, staff has expanded and infused the draft with additional descriptive language and inventory tables from the 2009 adopted Parks and Recreation Master Plan in order to "paint a clearer picture". Throughout the inventory, Planning staff worked closely with the Parks and Recreation Department to provide a current comprehensive inventory. Planning staff also reached out to Federal and State Agencies, and historic preservation organizations like the Civil War Trust to acknowledge and report on their complementary Parks and Recreation contributions within the County.

Parks and Recreation Level of Service Standards

The existing County Park Acreage (land) and facilities (ball fields, community centers, swimming pools, etc.) inventory noted above was then input into the Levels of Service standards tables and identification of any surpluses or deficits was realized looking at existing populations and future projected populations through 2040. County Parks and Recreation Levels of Service Standards were established as part of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan and the 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. With set levels of service standards, the only variables to change from prior plans are based on current and future populations. In consultation with the Parks and Recreation Department, staff has identified no need to further amend the adopted standards with the exception being proposed removal of the 9-hole golf standard (considered a niche facility), addition of pickle ball courts, and accommodation of specialized or niche facilities. As part of this update, due to increasing popularity of pickle ball, staff has proposed adding a new level of service standard to address pickle ball courts. The draft acknowledges that pickle ball can be added exclusively or by dual purpose courts that can also provide facilities for tennis. There are instances within the County where tennis courts with added paint striping already serve such a dual game purpose. Lesser known or more niche parks facilities that may not be expected or found widely among County Parks such as golf courses, disc golf, skate park, climbing walls, etc. have been acknowledged as part of the Levels of Service standards table but due to their specialization have been found not to warrant specific level of service standards. Instead staff recommends considering warrant for such facilities on a case by case basis considering uniqueness and demand. This approach has gained favor with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation recently with the development of the Virginia Outdoors Plan as opposed to a strictly level of service based model. Staff feels this is appropriate for specialized or niche Parks and Recreation Facilities.

In order to achieve adopted LOS, an identified deficit serves as warrant and Comprehensive Plan support for future CIP additions. CIP projects also correlate to the calculation of Parks and Recreation related proffers as a means to offset demand increases resulting from development. Proactive identification of capital projects is a key element of the function of the Comprehensive Plan when considering the Code of Virginia Sect. 15.2-2232 (attached for reference). Additionally, identified needs lend support for various other funding sources such as grant applications.

Recommendations

Updated recommendations are based on a 20-year Comprehensive Plan horizon and are based on warrant for need established by the level of service standards based on population over time. Specifically identified short and long term recommended projects are tied to level of service warrants and location based demands or presence of existing infrastructure and opportunities for co-location or expansion. For instance, extension of the existing Virginia Central Rail Trail from its current terminations at Salem Church Road and Gordon Road provides the ability to reduce level of service deficits and expand upon an existing trail system. Cognizant of the Trailways Master Plan, at Salem Church Road a Planning opportunity exists to close the gap between the Spotsylvania VCR Trail and the City of Fredericksburg portion of the trail; could be paired with Harrison Road improvements. This gap closure would greatly enhance the usability and accessibility of that recreational trail in the County. In addition to project specific recommendations there are efforts to achieve efficiencies to achieve two or more goals. Co-location of future schools, community centers, and parks is one example where the Plan seeks to achieve efficiencies as part of the Planning process.

Mr. Thompson inquired if the Parks & Recreation Masterplan would be eliminated.

Mr. Pastwik stated that it would no longer exist as a standalone document.

Mr. Bullock inquired if 51% of the population wanted a golf course, where it would be located.

Mr. Pastwik stated that a demand based warrant for golf courses is not the only determining factor. Detailed study, consideration of other priorities, and ultimate decisions of the Board of Supervisors determine whether such a project will rise to inclusion on the CIP. He stated he would have to defer to the Parks & Recreation staff concerning ultimately where such a facility would be located.

Mr. Newhouse inquired if coordination occurred with the National Park Service.

Mr. Pastwik stated that the federal parks offer something different than county parks. Parks and Recreation acknowledges federal parks and amenities in their inventory.

There was discussion about trailways and that the idea is to ultimately connect all of the trails as development occurs.

Mr. Pastwik stated that ultimately it would be desired to connect to the VCR rail trail with the City of Fredericksburg.

Ms. Carter inquired if Mr. Pastwik is referring to the Spotsylvania Parkway trail also.

The idea is to close the gaps as future development occurs and used Courtland Park as an example.

Mr. Pastwik stated yes, but there are gaps present. One of which is at the corner of Route 1 and Spotsylvania Parkway and the other is located at the corner of Smith Station and Leavells running towards Courtland Park development. He stated that staff is extremely vigilant at looking where we have opportunities to connect.

Mr. Newhouse inquired if the County has adequate ballfields.

Mr. Brooks stated that we meet the needs but teams are now wanting to practice more and more and are always looking for a field that can be utilized.

Mr. Newhouse stated that he's heard from many of his colleagues that they come to Patriot Park that it's a great facility and he feels it a win, win for the County.

Mr. Brooks stated Patriot Park is a great draw for Northern Virginia and Richmond travel teams. He stated that typically it is used Monday-Friday for league play and then used for travel on the weekends. He stated that the Parks & Recreation Department try very hard to work with the libraries for meeting space and they work in cooperation together.

Mr. Thompson inquired if the ballfields at the schools are taken into account.

Mr. Brooks stated yes.

Mr. Medina discussed the trailhead in Breckenridge and inquired if we are missing the microparks.

Mr. Brooks stated that the area cannot really be used for anything because of the rolling terrain.

Mr. Medina suggested it could be graded out. He inquired if there are other micorparks like that.

Mr. Brooks stated no.

Mr. Pastwik thanked the Commission for their feedback.

CPA17-0002 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Update

Mr. Pastwik presented the worksession. The Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Element exists to establish the County-wide vision and guide for development and corresponding land uses and land use intensity considerate of numerous factors including but not limited to: land use interactions and transitions, transportation systems, population trends, provision of housing, economic development efforts, historic and environmental resources. Maintenance of the Future Land Use Element within the Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the Code of Virginia Sect. 15.2-2223 (attached for reference). As per the existing 2013 Comprehensive Plan (last updated in

May, 2018), “Land use designations on the Future Land Use Map do not change a parcel’s zoning classification, nor do they impact continuation of existing legal land uses or other uses permitted by existing zoning.” The land use element and its corresponding policies are consulted as part of Comprehensive Plan analysis’ associated with rezoning and special use permit application reviews involving a public hearing process. The land use element serves as a guide to help determine whether such proposals positively contribute to the established land use vision or may conflict with it.

The Future Land Use Element and corresponding mapped land use designations have their origin in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan. Both were reviewed and updated as part of the 2013 Comprehensive Plan update in conjunction with input from County Citizens, efforts of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Group, Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. The County has tracked actively in review and approved rezoning activities going back to March, 2009 (See attached Rezoning Activity map for reference). The rezoning activity map identifies rezoning project sites in relation to the future land use map designations of their surroundings. Overall rezoning activity has been consistent with the corresponding land use designation and their descriptions. Denser development (including mixed use projects) can be found within the Primary Development Boundary, and rural large lot rezoning activity can be found around the periphery of the Primary Development Boundary and in the Lake Anna area. From a Land Use perspective, consistency with land use designation and their intended uses as described has not left all projects without controversy or concern however. Through project review there are efforts made to identify and mitigate impacts as much as possible, however over the course of time it appears there may be added value in providing greater depth and vision concerning land use designations and how they interact with one another physically, especially considering newly proposed development adjacent to existing development and density transitions. Another major concern involves the mixed use areas and how they are intended to develop and their ultimate development mix upon build-out, and how and when various phases and uses will build-out. A number of large mixed use projects have been approved with an extensive array of proposed uses but appear to be one dimensional residential projects, especially during initial phasing. Concerns about overbuilt commercial without adequate “rooftops” to support are a legitimate concern locally. Staff would like to avoid advocating for the construction of commercial space if its inevitably going to be vacant, leading to long term concerns about financial sustainability of such properties, vacancy, abandonment, deferred maintenance, etc. Staff would like to consider introducing a tiered approach for mixed use and employment center areas specifically where primary and subordinate land uses can clearly be identified and envisioned. In this way, residential may be limited as subordinate in intended Commercial and office core areas of mixed use areas, preserving developable acreage for non-residential development. Peripheral mixed use areas, or areas located off main transportation corridors may be best suited for residential as a primary use with commercial subordinate. The City of Richmond draft land use plan includes a table of tiered land uses (attached for reference). Instead of a “broad brush” one size fits all land use designation for mixed use, the draft Richmond model identifies varying degrees of mixed use and suggests their intended development pattern (uses and intensity). A Spotsylvania County version of this need not carry the level of detail as described in the Richmond example and leave the zoning ordinance to establish building heights, parking, etc. Additionally, staff acknowledges Spotsylvania County is

not the City of Richmond and the size and scale of land use descriptions would likely differ. However, a Spotsylvania version could help identify the intended uses and intensity while identifying complementary zoning designations that would “fit” that vision. Upon rezoning, the zoning ordinance and design standards manual would regulate development specifics like height and parking.

Creation of a clearer land use vision is expected to occur with a greater emphasis placed on economic development efforts and opportunities. Planning and Economic Development staff have already started reviewing a variety of areas throughout the County in an effort to ensure land use designations are better positioned “on the pulse” of economic development trends and opportunities. The goal is to reduce land use conflict and loss of land that may be better suited for alternative uses.

Staff has identified a number of considerations for the land use element update, as follows:

- Identify zoning designations that may complement the intent of the corresponding land use designation;
- Provide greater parity between area based land use designations, their intended development, and Economic Development Zones (Tourism Zone, Technology Zone, HUB Zone, Opportunity Zones, etc.);
- Note Virginia scenic byways (River Road, Guinea Station Road) within the County with land use insights and corridor proximate design considerations complementary to those designations;
- Expand open space land use designations to include added conservation lands since last update (ex. DGIF Oakley Plantation) and sensitive wetlands and resource protection areas throughout the County;
- Reduce transitional density conflicts between proposed and existing developments (with similar land uses) via vegetative screening/buffer that can also establish or preserve wildlife corridors throughout the County;
- Clearly acknowledge the importance of utility, internet connectivity, and telecommunications networks throughout the County. In order to effectively provide service coverage, such infrastructure must bridge land use designations;
- Remove dark sky lighting policy. Outdoor lighting is now effectively addressed county-wide through the Zoning ordinance;
- Scale back Institutional Land Use designation to apply only to governmental operations. This designation is not forward looking and reflects existing land uses
 - Institutional land uses such as churches, country clubs, private golf courses are not governmentally owned or managed, land and proposed use can change, difficult to track and comprehensively reflect (place of worship inside a commercial retail strip)
- Consider assigning Agricultural/Forestal Land Use areas to include designated Agricultural/Forestal districts, PDR sites, and areas outside of the PDB identified by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Virginia Agricultural Model, Forest Conservation Values for very high or outstanding value;

- Aside from by-right potential, proliferation of rural residential subdivisions, development for non-agricultural or forestal uses, or further fragmentation of large rural lots would be discouraged in these areas;
- Consider adding a land use overlay in Rural Residential areas considerate of Ecological Cores of Very High to Outstanding Value identified by the Virginia Natural Landscape Assessment. These areas would be considered valuable candidates for land and environmental conservation efforts, cluster development, preservation of natural areas;
- For all land uses outside of the Primary Development Boundary, establish County policy to secure groundwater hydrology studies for development proposals increasing density or intensity of development via rezoning or special use permit;
- Remove open space preservation percentages identified in agricultural and forestal land use and residential land use policies. The County zoning ordinance establishes open space requirements and cluster provisions are option;
- Add major electric corridors map to the Element consistent with the Code of Virginia;
- Consider Mixed Land Use tiers based on intended intensity (transect-type model) with greater description and visioning detailed for various mixed use areas (Lake Anna vs Thornburg vs Exit 126 vs Lafayette Blvd area infill);
- Provide greater detail regarding infill mixed use areas such as the Lafayette Blvd area;
 - Infill mixed use may entail designating commercial corridors and lower intensity residential areas off the “main drag”;
- Consider designating employment center tiers. Presently “broad brush” employment centers range from warehousing and manufacturing facilities, recycling centers, flex space industrial parks to office parks;
- Consider providing greater description of intended uses and intensity within different employment center areas (for instance aside from agriculture, forestry or mining, logistics heavy operations may be more appropriate in close proximity to I-95, Rt 2 & 17 and RF&P Rail versus a site well inland);
- Aside from the Crossroads Mixed Use area paired with the VRE station, protect and promote employment center type development along the rail corridor;
- Protect and promote expansion of industrially zoned acres, especially within employment center designated areas;
- Expand commercial or a commercial and employment center hybrid land use designation to the Caroline County line along the Rt 1 corridor outside of the Primary Development Boundary
- Proactively seek to improve development health, safety, welfare provisions through added goals and strategies;
 - Dry hydrants, water collection cisterns outside the PDB, power generation backup systems for critical facilities, emergency management plans associated with high risk facilities;
 - Discourage development footprints within dam break inundation areas.

The future land use map is an integral part of the future land use element and in addition to identifying land use categories for various areas within the County, it establishes the County Primary Development Boundary, guiding the provision of public utility (water and sewer) infrastructure reach in the County. Per the existing Comprehensive Plan:

Land within the boundary is intended to develop with higher residential densities and more intensive non-residential uses than outside of the boundary. By maintaining the Primary Development Boundary, the County encourages the most efficient use of the land while preserving the rural character and agricultural viability of those portions of the County outside the boundary. This boundary is not permanent and may be adjusted when conditions warrant through the amendment process...

As part of this update cycle, staff has received a number of requests from citizens and/or landowners seeking Primary Development Boundary expansions to enable eventual provision of public water and sewer service. Such changes inevitably drive up the development potential of such areas for added density or more intensive land uses. Requests received thus far have generally “hugged” the existing Primary Development Boundary, east of Massaponax Church Road. There are additional requests in the Five Mile Road area just north of Route 3. Staff is also looking at opportunities to “clean-up” the existing boundary in the Five Mile Road area where existing development, approved development, zoning designations, and topography are favorable for the expansion of sewer services and the resulting build-out of the area is much more consistent with the character of the PDB than areas outside of it. Staff is still working with the County utilities department to determine areas where expansion may be feasible and will present at a future work session focused on the PDB. Favorable topography and distance to existing infrastructure and the ability to gravity feed sewer from the proposed expansion areas into the existing Primary Development Boundary are expected to be the only scenario where County utility and Planning staff would be supportive of expansion at this time. The effect of any expansion would complement Primary Development Policy 1.a. within the Future Land Use Element that provides the ability via exception to extend utilities beyond the limits of the Primary Development Boundary in cases where topography is favorable and a new pump station would not be required. “Cleaning-up” the boundary in certain areas would effectively eliminate the need for the Policy exception referenced in the Policy. Otherwise staff does not see a strong need to further expand the Primary Development Boundary. In August, 2018 at work session with the Planning Commission, staff found that roughly 1/3rd (13,426 acres) of the existing Primary Development Boundary remained in vacant and/or underdeveloped status. The PDB was last expanded as part of the 2013 Comprehensive Plan update, adding more than 3,000 acres. Per the Planning Department’s Future Development analysis spreadsheet, county-wide there is an inventory of over 13,000 approved and yet unbuilt residential units including single family detached, attached, multi-family, age restricted. The vast majority of these future units are located within the Primary Development Boundary. There are significant areas intended for commercial, employment center, and mixed use development that remain undeveloped at this time. The Jackson Gateway area of the County that has historically been intended as an employment hub and economic development driver is still in early stages of development. Simply, the existing Primary Development Boundary is not “bursting at the seams” to warrant any expansion beyond minor expansions that may “clean-up” the boundary and/or have favorable topography.

Staff intends to return to the Planning Commission at a later date to focus on the Primary Development Boundary.

Mr. Thompson stated that he is very interested infill development and should be developed like the others.

Mr. Newhouse thanked staff for their work and stated that as we talk about land use and zoning, it's important to consider the existing character of the neighborhood. He stated that he has concerns about the balance and a person's ability to maintain property value.

Mr. Medina inquired about tree buffer and whether it needs to be in the comprehensive plan in order to change the ordinance.

Mr. Pastwik provided an example with night sky friendly lighting. He stated that because it was advocated in the comprehensive plan that it was then converted into an ordinance amendment for rezonings. The way to get to these goals outlined in our plan is to adopt ordinances. This is not always the case though as it is sometimes best to leave as guiding policy to allow flexibility. Comprehensive goals and objectives do provide for rezoning and SUP comp plan analysis and can be a factor in recommendations.

Mr. Hughes explained that if these items are laid out in our plan, it reduces the negotiation time at TRC and makes it easier and more clear for the development community.

There was discussion about groundwater hydrology studies.

Mr. Hughes stated that a few cases have been submitted where these studies were done.

Mr. Newhouse stated that he is not convinced it is a problem. He also inquired if interparcel connections are a VDOT requirement. He stated that he has an issue with them. He stated that he believes them to degrade the existing community and would like to advance that conversation somehow.

Mr. Pastwik reiterated this is a comprehensive plan item to be requested in cases of residential rezonings to allay community concerns about water supply.

Mr. Hughes stated interparcel connections are a VDOT requirement.

Mr. Medina inquired about Lafayette Blvd and whether staff will meet with the City of Fredericksburg and the other adjacent localities.

Mr. Pastwik stated that staff typically coordinates and meets with our adjacent localities.

He also stated that in meeting with the Economic Development department, they advised that office parks and industrial zoned lands do not always go hand in hand.

The Planning Commission showed support for tiered approach for mixed use and employment center designations.

Mr. Pastwik thanked the Commission for their input.

Public Comment: None

New Business: None

Adjournment:

Motion and vote: Mr. Thompson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Medina to adjourn. The motion passed 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Paulette L. Mann

Date