

STAFFORD COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Traditional Neighborhood Development Special Meeting
September 12, 2007

The Special Meeting of the Stafford County Planning Commission of Wednesday, September 12, 2007, was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman William Cook in the Board of Supervisors Chambers of the County Administrative Center.

Members Present: Cook, Kirby, Pitzel, Rhodes, Mitchell, Carlone, and Di Peppe

Staff Present: Harvey, Stepowany, Gregori, and Schulte

Members Absent: None

Mr. Harvey stated Jamie Stepowany would provide a brief overview of the Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) Ordinance.

Mr. Stepowany stated baseball stadiums were built in the towns and communities so the patrons could walk or take the trolley to the games. He stated eventually baseball stadiums were built in the outskirts or suburbs of the town. He stated prior to World War II people lived in towns and then after the war citizens moved to the suburbs. He stated like baseball stadiums today, which were revisiting the idea of locating in the town or city; developments would like to get back to the town center. He stated Stafford County's Zoning Ordinance does not permit a town center. He stated the past year was spent working on the Planned Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) Ordinance. He stated the Ordinance was approved by the Board of Supervisors on June 17, 2007.

Mr. Cook stated the Planning Commission had to consider the four items sent from the Board of Supervisors, as well as any other amendments as needed. He stated this was the time for public comment and members of the public could come forward.

Patricia Kurpiel, Stafford Citizens for a Sustainable Future, stated she had passed out a colorful "TND Checklist" She stated the green area covers four important Comprehensive Plan issues, while the pink area covers the zoning issues. She stated on the back of the handout was a proposed Land Use Map prepared by the Steering Committee on the tops, as well as a current Land Use Map on the bottom. She stated the proposed Land Use Map was the only one to show concentrations of water and slope resources that we should protect, which were highlighted in the medium green color. She stated the County should protect green space permanently and put a Transfer of Development Rights policy in place. She stated the TND should not be a floating zone. She stated the proposed Land Use Map shows areas of purple and red, which were intended to be the mixed use areas, she stated the Comprehensive Plan Steering Commission did not discuss the maps for four months thinking the TND could be placed anywhere in the Urban Services Area. She stated the current Land Use Map had no areas designated for mixed use and she stated there was a note in the plan which says TND's were the preferred method of residential development, which could lead to legal battles if a TND application was denied. She asked how Stafford County could plan for the next 20 years without a definitive number on the map. She stated the existing map builds out at 71,000 units, but if TND's were allowed inside of the Urban Services Area than what were the buildout numbers. She asked what size pipes Utilities should plan for if they do not know where the TND's would go. She asked how a road system could be laid out for the next 20 years, if the location of TND's was not determined. She stated the Planning Commission should select a Land Use Map which showed the exact locations for TND's.

*Planning Commission Minutes
Traditional Neighborhood Development
September 12, 2007*

Dana Brown stated, in her opinion, the language “except for a P-TND” should be removed from Section 28-56B-1. She stated this Section of the County Code should include TND’s, not exempt them.

Jim McMath stated zoning was used to control growth and the TND would not be effective in doing that. He stated the TND was more defined in the Smart Code. He asked if the market would take care of the growth because Fortune 500 companies plan for their growth. He stated, in his opinion, the County was not effectively planning for growth. He stated as a tax payer, he was not happy with the approach to planning. He stated the County needed to have specific growth targets.

Mr. Di Peppe stated a TND could only go in 3% of the County and it was not true that a TND could be placed anywhere. He stated the Board of Supervisors could change land designation. He stated a TND had to be located near a transportation hub. He stated the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee was not looking for a plan which was market driven. He stated, in his opinion, the County had never written a perfect Ordinance.

Shawn Lawrence, Disability Resource Center, Spotsylvania County, City of Fredericksburg, and Caroline County all have developments similar to the TND Ordinance. He stated much of the income of Stafford County residents was from Washington, D.C. He stated Stafford resident’s income was more than the state average. He stated the TND would give everyone a chance at the American dream. He stated the TND would allow residents to walk, bike, exercise, shop, attend church within a convenient location.

Becky Reed asked what the definition of non-residential was. She stated, in her opinion, the maximum residential density should be deleted on Table 3.5A of the Ordinance. She stated in March of 2007 a consultant sent a memo concerning the General Fund balance and the consultant was concerned about the declines. She asked why the maximums in the TND Ordinance were listed and why the Smart Code minimums were used in some of the transect zones, but not all of them.

Mr. Stepowany stated the Smart Code was a reference. He stated the Ordinance was first brought to the Planning Commission in November 2006. He stated the pedestrian sheds would have to have civic uses.

Mrs. Kirby asked why the maximums were listed.

Mr. Stepowany stated to gain residential in the T-5 zone and to increase the maximum in the T-2 zone.

Mr. Harvey stated increasing the maximum in the T-2 zone was one of the issues the Board of Supervisors wanted the Planning Commission to discuss.

Mr. Stepowany stated currently there were two Planned Development Zoning Districts, PD-1 and PD-2. He stated the proposed Stafford Town Station development had 750,000 square feet of commercial use and The Town Center at Aquia proposed 1.25 million square feet of commercial space. He stated without commercial uses, the development would not be considered a TND.

Mr. McMath asked if it would be feasible to be more precise about the type of commercial development. He stated retail facilities would generate sales from inside and outside of the TND, therefore just relocating the sales which would take place in other areas of the County. He stated there

*Planning Commission Minutes
Traditional Neighborhood Development
September 12, 2007*

would not be that much added benefit for commercial use if the County was just duplicating what was already here.

Lou Ellen Whitefeather stated she wanted some assurances. She stated the proposed TND was 50% in the Urban Services Area and 50% outside of the Urban Services Area. She stated she was concerned about what type of proffers would be associated with a TND. She stated, in her opinion, if she had her figures correct, for every TND built in Stafford County there would need to be one new elementary school, half a middle school, and one-third of a high school. She stated there would be 1 school child per house, which would mean there, would need to be more schools for every TND with 2000 units or more. She asked if the developer would contribute a 90 million dollar proffer for schools or ask the taxpayers to pay for the schools. She stated she was concerned about the jobs which were traditionally located in Stafford County like waterman, farmers, and fisherman. She stated citizens down river would be affected by sludge from the development. She asked what would happen if there was a Hazardous Material spill or a plane crash and the TND needs to be evacuated. She stated people would leave the TND to go to places outside the County and there was still a lot of concern about the Falmouth intersection. She asked how the firefighters would get up 9 or 10 stories in a building. She stated, in her opinion, the residents in the proposed Stafford Town Station would be living in a "smelly zone" next to the landfill.

Mr. Lawrence stated the County could not pave its way out of gridlock. He stated the TND would provide a community and people look out for each other in a community. He stated, in his opinion, 5 story buildings would be a good compromise.

Alane Callendar stated she had lived in a number of TND's. She stated the Ordinance could be a tool to manage growth. She stated, in her opinion, a TND should have residential. She stated she was concerned that a TND did not necessarily guarantee affordable housing.

Harry Crisp stated he lived in a rural area. He stated he enjoyed the open space and it was vital to the County. He stated 25% open space was not enough. He stated the most desirable areas for a TND should be indicated on the Comprehensive Plan. He stated, in his opinion, the Ordinance needed to be tidied up.

Mr. Di Peppe stated a TND would have a much smaller foot print with open space included, but there has to be higher density and taller buildings.

Mrs. Kirby stated Fredericksburg did not have 10 story buildings and Stafford County fire trucks reach 7 stories.

Mrs. Carlone asked what was traditional about the TND. She stated 9 or 10 stories were not traditional development. She stated residents would still build on 1 to 3 acre lots.

Mr. Di Peppe stated it was cheaper to build by-right in the Agricultural zones.

Mr. Stepowany stated there would be modifications to the PD-1, PD-2, and Urban Zones. He stated Resource Protection Area (RPA) would be required to be in the T-1 zone. He stated a developer would not lose development rights by protecting natural resources.

*Planning Commission Minutes
Traditional Neighborhood Development
September 12, 2007*

Mrs. Kurpiel stated RPA should not be counted as open space. She stated the proposed Stafford Town Station TND had very steep slopes.

Mr. Di Peppe stated each TND application had to stand on its own merits and the Planning Commission did not have to approve the reclassification to a TND.

Mr. Cook stated, in his opinion, he did not see anything wrong with the densities.

Mr. Stepowany stated there would be 10 units per acre.

Mrs. Carlone asked why the TND could not have 4 to 7 story buildings.

Mr. Harvey stated House Bill 3202 required the County to establish . . .

Mrs. Carlone stated, in her opinion, the density was too high.

Mr. Di Peppe asked what are the other alternatives.

Mrs. Kirby stated the other alternative was to raise the density somewhere else in the County and lower it in other areas.

The Planning Commission took a 5 minute recess.

Mr. Cook called the meeting back to order. He stated, in his opinion, the maximum density in the SDC and T-6 zone could be cut in half from 96 dwelling units per acre to 48 dwelling units per acre. He stated the height of buildings could be reduced to 6 stories and the minimum acreage for a TND would be 75 acres for a new application. He stated, in his opinion, there was no TND without residential.

Mr. Di Peppe asked if the Planning Commission could require sprinkler systems.

Mr. Harvey stated sprinkler systems were in the Building Code, which could not be enforced through zoning.

Mr. Di Peppe asked if the Building Code could be changed.

Mr. Harvey stated Stafford County follows the International Building Code.

Mr. Cook stated, in his opinion, the height of the 6th floor should not exceed 65 feet. He asked if there was further discussion. He stated with no further comments, the TND would be discussed at the next Planning Commission Work Session.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.