

UTILITIES COMMISSION

July 8, 2008

7:00 p.m.

The Stafford County Utilities Commission met for its regular meeting on July 8, 2008, in Conference Room A,B,C in the Stafford County Administration Center. Commission members present were Rick Carroll, Lloyd Chittum, Patricia Kurpiel, Bob Hunt, Wendy Surman, Bill Tignor and Clarence Young. Steve Crosby, Dale Allen and Susan Fitzgibbon were present for the Utilities Department. Mike Zuraf attended as a guest speaker representing the Planning Department.

1. Public Presentations – There were no public presentations.

2. Approval of Minutes – Minutes of the June 10, 2008 meeting were reviewed. Patricia Kurpiel requested the inclusion of her comments regarding a proposal discussed at the previous BOS meeting. The proposal, which was introduced by Mr. Milde and Mr. Brito, involved potentially assessing the Utilities Fund for lost real estate revenue associated with properties that will eventually be under water once the new reservoir is completed. The minutes were approved with the agreement that Patricia's comments would be added. Patricia agreed to send a paragraph summarizing her comments to staff to be included in the minutes.

3. Deletion of Master Plan Projects – Dale Allen introduced Mike Zuraf from the Planning Department. Mike provided background information and a brief update regarding the status of the land use and comprehensive plan. He indicated that some specific changes to the land use plan would reduce the size of the current urban service area. He also stated that the proposed urban service area would be able to accommodate 20 years of projected growth. The Planning Commission is still working on the comprehensive plan.

A Public Hearing has been scheduled by the Planning Commission for Wednesday, July 16th and would cover three specific elements of the land use plan as follows:

- 1) Incorporate the new urban service area growth boundary onto the current land use plan,
- 2) Repeal the current Widewater plan, which recommends a higher density growth and
- 3) Revise the current Water and Sewer Master Plan to remove 21 specific water and sewer projects that are outside the services area. (These projects do not include Widewater projects.)

The Water and Sewer plan that was formally adopted by the BOS dates back to 1990. The 21 projects that are being recommended for elimination are originally from the 1990 plan. Following the 1990 plan, there was the Widewater plan and the updated 2005 'unapproved' plan that the Utilities Department has been using for planning purposes.

Wendy Surman asked why the Planning Commission is holding a Public Hearing before there is a comprehensive plan. Mike Zuraf commented that the Planning Commission is moving forward certain issues incrementally because the comprehensive plan is such a big project.

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Bob Hunt questioned whether all of the Wadewater projects would be cancelled if the Wadewater plan is repealed. Dale Allen and Mike Zuraf indicated that they would.

Rick Carroll stated that the Utilities Department is a profit center. He was concerned that the County is excluding a lot of people/customers from whom the Utilities Department can get Revenue. Customers outside the service area may need water and sewer at some point.

Wendy Surman was concerned that if the Utility Commission works this issue "piece meal", then they would have to evaluate a plan without having the proper engineering behind it. She would not recommend having a Public Hearing until a full comprehensive plan is available.

Clarence Young agreed that the County needs one plan before a recommendation can be made.

Patricia Kurpiel stated that Water & Sewer management is one way to manage growth and that a Utilities Public Hearing would provide consistency. She suggested that if staff has any objections, those objections could be presented at the public hearing.

Dale Allen presented the individual projects that fall outside the urban service area and therefore, are proposed to be deleted from the Comprehensive plan.

This presentation was for discussion purposes only, as the Board did not refer this item to the commission. Staff recommendation were presented on each of the 1990 Sewer Master Plan projects that are shown in the part of the Urban Services Area recommended by the Planning Commission for removal from the Comprehensive Plan. A summary of the discussion is included in the attached table.

There was some discussion regarding a situation in which a developer could get a permit to build a pumping station in an area that currently falls outside the urban service area. Steve Crosby explained that the County can not deny the permit at this time because (until the new plan gets approved) the location is still in the existing plan.

It was requested that the Utilities Department submit a recommendation to the Planning Department regarding the list of projects proposed to be deleted. The recommendation should identify any projects that the Utilities Department feels need to be maintained in order to guarantee the long term health of the water and sewer systems.

Patricia Kurpiel emphasized the importance of the Utility Commission to move in lockstep with the Planning Department's effort and motioned for a Public Hearing in August to review the plan and obtain public input on the issue. The motion was not seconded.

Clarence Young asked for clarification about what would be presented at the Public Hearing. Patricia Kurpiel suggested that the map, staff report and recommendations should be presented before opening the discussion up for comments from the public. Patricia commented that the Utility Commission should obtain public input and make a recommendation regarding this issue before the Board of Supervisors takes action.

Wendy Surman motioned that no action be taken by the Utilities Commission until a land use plan is available. Lloyd Chittum seconded the motion. The motion passed by a 5:2 vote. Those in favor included Rick Carroll, Lloyd Chittum, Wendy Surman, Bill Tignor and Clarence Young. Those opposed included Patricia Kurpiel and Bob Hunt.

4. Public Information for Water Rate Increase - Susan Fitzgibbon provided an update on the implementation of the new conservation ordinance. Customer communications were mailed directly to residential customers in the form of postcards, letters were mailed to all irrigation meter customers, notices were included on customer bills mailed during July and information was released to the press, which resulted in a front page article within the Free Lance Star and information being reported on local radio stations. The intent of the public information campaign was to proactively inform the customers of the rate change to both encourage conservation and to minimize the chance of customers being 'surprised' by the increased rates.

5. Utilities Director's Report – Steve Crosby mentioned that, in the past, the Utilities Commission has taken a field trip to one of the facilities during the month of August. Members of the Utilities Commission indicated that they participated in a field trip at the beginning of the year and therefore, one was not recommended at this time.

6. Commission Members Comments – Bob Hunt asked for more information regarding the advantages/disadvantages of operating as a Commission vs. a Water & Sewer Authority. A request was made to provide the Commission with information so that they could better familiarize themselves with the specifics of each alternative before speaking to their individual Supervisors. Steve Crosby agreed to provide them with some research.

Patricia Kurpiel recommended that each of the Commissioners read the lawsuit regarding the new drain field requirements. She indicated that the Commission may need to provide a clarification to the ordinance.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Tignor
Recording Secretary