

***AGRICULTURAL AND PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT
RIGHTS COMMITTEE MINUTES
January 23, 2017***

The meeting of the Stafford County Agricultural and Purchase of Development Rights Committee for Monday, January 23, 2017, was called to order at 6:58 p.m. by Kathy Baker, Assistant Director for the Department of Planning and Zoning in the County Administration Conference Room of the George L. Gordon, Jr. Government Center.

Members Present: Jeff Adams, Thomas Hale, John Howe, Robin Long, Marty McClevey and Benjamin Rudasill

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Kathy Baker, Joe Fiorello and Denise Knighting

Guests Present: None

1. Call to Order

Ms. Baker called the meeting to order and asked Ms. Knighting to call roll.

Ms. Knighting called roll and stated there was a quorum present.

2. Organization of Committee

- Election of Officers

Mrs. Baker opened the floor for nominations for Chairman.

Mr. Adams made a motion to nominated Mr. Howe.

Mr. Rudasill seconded.

Ms. Baker asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none she asked Mr. Howe if he would accept the nomination.

Mr. Howe stated yes.

Ms. Baker called for the vote.

The motion passed 6-0.

Ms. Baker turned the meeting over to Mr. Howe.

Mr. Howe opened the floor for nominations for Vice-Chairman.

Mr. Rudasill made a motion to nominate Mr. McClevey.

Mr. Adams seconded.

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Mr. Howe asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none he called for the vote.

The motion passed 6-0.

- 2017 Meeting Calendar

Mr. Howe stated the meeting schedule noted December 25, 2017 as a regular meeting day and the County offices would be closed. He asked if any of the members had any suggestions for modifying the December meeting.

Mr. Adams made a motion to accept the proposed meeting dates, the fourth Monday of the month, and in November the Committee will make a decision about the December meeting based on applications for PDR or Farmer's Markets.

Mr. Rudasill seconded.

The motion passed 6-0.

- 2017 Work Plan

Mr. Howe stated he would review the 2016 work plan in sections, with the first section concerning Farmer's Markets. He stated they would review the applications as they are received. He stated the rules and regulations for the Farmer's Market were reviewed and updated. He asked if there was a need to review the rules for 2017.

Ms. Baker stated typically a cursory review is done in January but the latest rules and regulations were adopted in September, so it would be up to the Committee if you would like to revisit.

Mr. Adams asked if Mr. Marshall had a permit to operate now.

Ms. Baker stated he has not resubmitted an application for 2017.

Mr. Adams stated Mr. Marshall indicated that he did not have to apply until March or April.

Ms. Baker stated typically the zoning permit is good for the year, but he got a later permit. She stated she would check with zoning to see if his permit was extended.

Mr. Howe stated since there were no comments concerning reviewing the rules and regulations, he would suggest if something came up in May or June that would require the Committee to revisit, it would be revisited then. He stated the last item was to promote current markets and encourage new markets on the County webpage. He asked if there was something about Farmer's Markets on the web page.

Ms. Baker stated yes and it was anticipated that it would be improved, but the webpage has been going through an upgrade since summer and everything has been put on hold at this time. We are not allowed to make changes at this time. She asked the Committee to provide suggestions to her on how list the markets.

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Mr. Howe suggested just a simple listing of each Farmer's Market with the location and dates of operation and provides a link to their website if applicable.

Ms. Baker stated that currently the web had information concerning locally grown produce which will take you to that webpage and if markets are linked there, it would show up. She stated they would need the applicant's permission to put it on our webpage and then decide what information would be posted.

Mr. Howe suggested just having it go to the Locally Grown Produce site and encouraging the market owners and operators to link to that.

Ms. Baker stated staff could put general information, location and hours and a contact on the webpage and link their website if they desire. She stated when the applications were submitted she would talk with the applicant at that time.

Mr. Howe stated they would continue to keep that item in the work plan. He moved on to the PDR program which listed the Jones and Harris properties, which have both been completed.

Ms. Baker stated yes.

Mr. Howe stated there were none pending at this time.

Ms. Baker agreed, and stated later on the agenda, the Committee would be discussing a potential application round later this year. She stated at the last meeting there was discussion concerning reviewing the ranking criteria, the modifications have been made and sent to the members. She stated if there were any additional changes, now would be the time.

Mr. Adams asked when someone from the Commissioner of Revenues office would be coming to the meeting.

Ms. Baker stated they would be at the next meeting.

Mr. Howe asked if there was anything in the ranking that may have lowered a property, where people thought the property may have been higher in the priority for purchasing.

Ms. Baker stated nothing out of the ordinary. She stated as staff were going through the 2013 round, there were a couple of properties that were basically residential properties. They were in land use but were not actively being farmed, so they were not as desirable. She stated currently the Board of Supervisors has the ability to turn properties down they don't find viable for the program. She asked if there was a cut off for a certain number of points or do you want to take every property that was in. Currently any 20 acre parcel that meets the eligibility requirements and gets ranked would be purchased if there was enough money. She asked if there were any defining factors that the Committee may not want to consider properties.

Mr. Adams gave an example that any applicant that scored less than one hundred points would not be eligible.

Ms. Baker stated maybe they could be eligible and the Committee could discuss it to see if it was desirable property. She gave an example of a property did not have much road frontage and was very

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narrow with no active farming. She stated if it met the criteria, was it something the Committee wanted to spend money on to preserve.

Mr. Rudasill asked if an application was put in for that property.

Ms. Baker stated yes.

Mr. Rudasill stated the objective was to take the land out of development.

Ms. Baker stated it had a very low score.

Mr. Adams stated in 2013 the Committee ranked the properties. There was not another round and it kept going until the money was exhausted. And if the property only had 10 points it would still have been funded if the money had lasted. He stated if the property can't meet the sixty percent threshold on points...

Mr. Rudasill asked if the number of developable lots played a role in the points.

Mr. Adams explained that a five hundred acre parcel would get more points because it would have more rights than a hundred acre parcel. But the hundred acre parcel could come above the threshold assuming other factors were met.

Ms. Baker stated the 2013 round continued for three years, perhaps the application round should only be good for two years. She stated the cost per development may change and three years may be too long. Maybe it should be revisited. She stated if you are looking at a property that scored 60 points out of 270, do you still want that property or do you want to open a new round that may bring in higher potential agricultural properties.

Mr. Adams asked if this was the time to discuss the minimum cut off.

Ms. Baker stated she was bringing it up for discussion. The Board of Supervisors have that prerogative under the ordinance. She asked how do you make that distinction.

Mr. Adams stated he liked the idea, but did not know what the point value should be. He stated there may come a point where he would rather have new application rather than fund something just because they have the money.

Ms. Baker stated she could reach out to other localities with the program and see what they do.

Mr. Adams stated if there was a budget, people would put parcels in that were adjacent, if the money could be turned over in a reasonable about of time.

Ms. Baker stated nothing had to be decided tonight, because that is more of a procedural item. The revised ordinance with the 20 acre change does have to go before the Board of Supervisors for adoption before it opened a new application round.

Mr. Howe asked where a clause concerning unfunded applications having to reapply after a 24 month period.

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Ms. Baker stated currently if a property was not chosen they would automatically be eligible for the next application round.

Mr. Howe asked how or where a sunset clause would be inserted.

Ms. Baker stated under the Purchase of Development Rights procedure it states in the event available funding is insufficient, that is when we rank them and prioritize them and make the recommendation for what to purchase. The last round we kept moving down the list and the Committee agreed to go to the next parcel. It would then go to the Board of Supervisors and they would agree. Somewhere in the general area of Section 5, is where you might think about it. Maybe it is on a case by case basis and as you move down the list you evaluate as you are going or just leave it alone. Or recommend opening a new application round and the remaining applications can go into the mix.

Mr. Adams asked if advertising for a future round was approved tonight, how much time would be needed to get the applications out and notify people. He asked if a presentation list time would be done and send letters to the landowners.

Ms. Baker stated yes, that information was in one of the handouts she passed out earlier. She stated it goes through the entire process.

Mr. Adams asked if June was possible to open a new round.

Ms. Baker stated yes, if there was money.

Mr. Howe stated rather than ranking the plan of work, he would submit it to the Board of Supervisors for their approval.

Ms. Baker agreed. She stated there was never any conclusion concerning target PDR zones, so it is just a matter if the Committee would want to readdress that again this year or not.

Mr. Howe moved on the Chesapeake Bay TMDL. He stated he was sure Stafford was under potential scrutiny for farmers and the adoption of best management practices to reduce agricultural run-off into the watershed.

Ms. Baker stated there was no additional guidance.

Mr. Howe stated since there was no guidance then it could be addressed. He then moved on to education outreach. He confirmed the conservation plan was method by homeowners or agricultural producers to manage the properties to reduce run-off. He stated the Soil and Water Conservation District, Extension and NRCS were the three logical partners. He stated Soil and Water and NRCS have just gone through leadership changes.

Mr. Adams stated if something was done it would have to be after hay season, which was the middle of June.

Mr. McClevey stated that he looked at education outreach, he would like to suggest inviting someone from the Farm Bureau to see if they were doing anything that the Committee could piggyback with. They

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have the school projects that this Committee likes to participate in. He suggested talking with the Farm Bureau to see if there were any projects the Ag/PDR Committee could support.

Mr. Adams stated Fauquier County has an AG program in all three high schools. In October the FFA students in the high schools have a program at each school with animals and farm equipment. They set up approximately 40 different stations and had fourth grade students throughout the county visit as the high school students explained each station. He stated it was very successful.

Ms. Baker suggested identifying partners to assist in the education outreach.

Mr. McClevey stated he felt education outreach was necessary and thought helping others who have the programs would work.

Ms. Baker recommended making a list of what other agencies do for education outreach and how can the Commission partner with them.

Mr. Howe stated perhaps NRCS would like to co-host a field day in the County and perhaps open it up to more than just Stafford County.

Ms. Baker suggested everybody do a little homework by the next meeting few meetings and present some suggestions.

Mr. McClevey stated some of the books for the AG literacy program are not age appropriate and suggested the moving in the direction of getting a book or information that the Committee would like to see in the classroom that would be relevant to Stafford.

Ms. Baker asked if the Committee wanted to leave number 4, as is for now or make language changes as to the goals for the year.

Mr. Howe stated the Committee has already suggested communication with NRCS and other sources for partnerships in events.

Mr. McClevey suggested contacting NRCS and other sources for input on agricultural education, projects and outreach efforts.

Ms. Baker agreed and stated examples such as Conservation Plan Workshop or Farm Day if the Committee wanted to list suggestions. She stated she would rework it and send it out to the Commission for review and concurrence.

- By-laws

Ms. Baker reminded the Commission the by-laws were revised last year to add a clause concerning the time limit for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. She stated nothing else would need to be changed unless the Committee had other suggestions.

Mr. McClevey made a motion to approve the by-laws as they stand with no amendments or changes.

Mr. Adams seconded.

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The motion passed 6-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

- November 28, 2016

Mr. Howe stated he would entertain a motion to amend or approve as printed.

Mrs. Long made a motion to approve the minutes as printed.

Mr. Rudasill seconded.

The motion passed 6-0.

4. Staff Update

- PDR Program and PDR Funds

Ms. Baker stated during the finance mid-year review, there are currently no roll-back funds accumulated. She stated \$80,000 goes into the roll-back tax program, with anything above that amount going to the PDR program. She stated the funds were currently short of the \$80,000. She stated if there were funds in the account it would be easier to think about moving forward with another round.

Mr. Adams asked how many people have called about another round.

Ms. Baker stated seven or eight landowners over the last six months.

Mr. Howe asked if the cash flow on roll-back taxes is less than in previous years.

Ms. Baker stated it varies.

Mr. Howe stated the general fund balance has a claim on the first \$80,000 and the PDR program gets the remainder.

Ms. Baker agreed and stated she would continue to monitor. She stated the acquisition of 125 acres for Crow's Nest from developer contribution funds is underway and could be complete by the end of February. That property will be added to Crow's Nest Natural Area Preserve. She stated she finally heard from the REPI program, which is the Federal Program to buffer properties against Quantico. They are underway and hope to have the projects complete by January 2018.

5. New Business

- Next PDR Application Round

Ms. Baker asked if the Committee members had the print out of the ordinance. She stated she was going to review Section 9, which was the procedure the Committee went through. She briefly went through the procedure. She suggested the Committee wait until the third quarter to see if any funds were available or

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go forward with an application round, get the applications in, rank them and see how much money was available at that time. She stated the downside of that was, getting people's hopes up.

Mr. Adams stated as much as he wanted another round, he did not want to be in a position where someone qualifies for 20 or 25 lots but there is only enough money to fund 18. He would rather wait until there was a minimum dollar amount before advertising a round.

Ms. Baker stated once there is PDR money, she looks for matching funds to double the money. Most of the matching fund applications through the State are in September through November. She stated the Farm and Ranch Land Program through the Federal Government have ongoing application rounds throughout the year but that is a very onerous and lengthy process. She suggested looking at summer, to see if there is money to go for another application round and then apply for the additional matching funds in the fall. She stated if the funds received were not enough for a round this year the money would be carried over until there was enough to do another round.

Mr. Adams stated we could roll our money over but the money received from VDACS has a sunset clause.

Ms. Baker stated it was typically a two year window. She suggested going to the Board of Supervisors to amend the ordinance to include the change made, discuss the possibility of another application round in the summer and deciding the per development cost. Currently it is \$25,000 and the first round in 2009 was \$30,000. The Commissioner of Revenue is willing to come to the next meeting to discuss the per development cost. She stated conversations she has had with that office that they indicated \$25,000 was still a good value. They will also give an evaluation of how they arrived at that number but they cannot make recommendations, they can only give information concerning per acre land values in the A1 and A2 zones.

Mr. Adams asked how long it has been since the Committee revisited the numbers.

Ms. Baker stated 2012 for the 2013 round.

Mr. Adams stated it would not hurt to review the numbers even if it stays at the current amount.

Ms. Baker stated it was difficult to make definitive choices until there was a better idea concerning the money. She recommended waiting until there was money flow, but she would send out the procedure to the Committee members.

- Cost per Development Right

Mr. Howe stated since nothing could be done about the cost per development right at this meeting he moved down to PDR Recognition Ceremony.

- PDR Recognition Ceremony

Ms. Baker stated the Adams, the Jones and the Harris properties have not been recognized before the Board of Supervisors. She stated all three would be done at one time. She stated they would come to the Board of Supervisors meeting where a plaque would be presented along with a sign to post on the property. She stated the presentation was approximately 5 minutes where a little information about the

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PDR program and each of the farms would be made. Since the Board of Supervisors meetings are televised and there is an audience present, this helps to get the word out about the PDR program. She stated in the past they had a little reception in the ABC Conference Room before the Board meeting with cake and a few refreshments. She stated if they Commission wants to do the recognition at a Board meeting, it has been recommended that it be done at the March 21, 2017 meeting. It could be done at 3 o'clock in the afternoon or 7 o'clock in the evening. She asked the Commission for their thoughts concerning the reception or just the presentations at the Board meeting.

Mr. Adams stated 7 o'clock would work best for him, but because there may be a conflict he was going to abstain from the discussion and left the meeting.

The Commission members agreed on the presentation and the reception.

Ms. Baker stated she would confirm with the property owners to make sure the date worked for them and would send out more details as she has them. She stated if the Commission wanted to add the recognition for Gail Clark the same night that could be done also.

The Commission members agreed.

Ms. Baker asked the Commission members for feedback on the proposed proclamation.

Mr. McClevey stated March 21st was also National Agriculture Day.

Ms. Baker stated that would be mentioned also.

Mr. Adams stated Tri-County City was presenting Steve Druitt with a Clean Farm Award for Stafford County tomorrow night at 7 o'clock in the Board Chambers. He stated Mr. Druitt's farm was located on the corner of Poplar Road and Shackelfords Road.

- Artisan Trail Network

Mr. Howe stated the idea was to partner with Fauquier County and Prince William County and make a day of it visiting two or three different farms. He stated he had a favorable impression and local farmer's markets, winery's or bee keepers could also be listed. It is another way to get the face of agriculture in a community to other people.

Mrs. Long stated it may be someone to partner up with about an education opportunity also.

Ms. Baker asked who was leading this network.

Mr. Hale stated Sue Henderson.

Mr. Howe stated it was through the Virginia Department of Agriculture. He stated it was started in southwest Virginia as one of the responses to the reduction of the coal mining and the economics of the area as one of the ways to attract tours.

Mrs. Long stated Ms. Henderson was tied in with Economic Development.

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Ms. Baker stated she would contact Economic Development.

Mrs. Long stated there was a marketing opportunity to be listed in their brochures and on their webpage for a fee, and they would advertise on your behalf. It was also an opportunity to network with other agriculture people in the area.

6. Unfinished Business

- Agricultural Support of Microbreweries

Mr. Howe stated Mrs. Long was going to speak with the breweries and ask what support was needed.

Mr. McClevey asked if he could insert some new business.

Mr. Howe stated yes.

Mr. McClevey stated since they have been talking about the 20 acre properties for the ordinance. He stated he has drafted a revised insert line under 22-A-(6) under criteria on page 4. He suggested making it B.1 and read *“A property owner who has a parcel of land currently designated as a Stafford County PDR easement, may apply through the PDR application process to move additional acreage into the current easement. If the acreage meets all other criteria for inclusion in the PDR program the County Board of Supervisors and the PDR Committee can waive the minimum 20 acres restriction. The additional acreage must be capable of supporting a least one development unit. Any additional acreage of less than one development unit may be voluntarily donated by the property owner for the purpose of accruing tax credits”*. He stated he felt it added clarity.

Mr. Adams stated for obvious reasons he would not vote for it, but felt it was exactly where the Committee was headed. He stated he would abstain for any voting on that, but he liked it.

Ms. Baker stated currently there was the section about requirements that may be waived. She stated she would send Mr. McClevey’s language to the County Attorney for review.

Mr. McClevey stated under the same section what had been amended was under B it said *“...except that a property may be less than twenty (20) acres if adjacent to an existing PDR easement”*. He stated it would need to have a development unit in order to purchase it. But if it were a development unit, we could purchase it with the idea that the property owner would donate the remainder and the landowner would get tax credit.

Mr. Rudasill stated in his opinion the way the original change was written, you can’t go next to a property that had an easement, it would have to be the property owner.

Mr. McClevey stated that was exactly what was discussed in the past meeting, but after thinking it over he thought it would help clarify.

Ms. Baker asked Mr. McClevey to send the language to the Committee members and it could be discussed at the next meeting.

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Mr. McClevey stated he had one other thing. In getting information on Gail Clark, they have an issue with tractor safety in Stafford County. He stated Mr. and Mrs. Clark won an award at the State Fair for their display on tractor safety. He suggested to partner with them on education outreach but also suggested the Committee support the issue. Contact Farm Bureau to see in there are any issues that the AG/PDR Committee can help by supporting the issue. He stated he would be happy to make contact to get a status and report back to the Committee.

Mr. Howe stated he thought it would be appropriate to contact the Farm Bureau to get specifics on what was being done and how this Committee might be able to assist. He felt it may be more appropriate to go to the Board of Supervisors.

Ms. Baker stated it was something the Committee could recommend to the Board.

Mr. Howe stated he thought it was worthy of consideration because people are not alert or aware of tractors because it is a hazard to both the vehicle operator and the tractor operator.

Mr. McClevey felt it was an issue and if the Committee wants to promote agriculture, we should help them get from one place to another.

Mr. How stated now we can discuss microbreweries.

Mrs. Long stated she went to three breweries, Adventure, Red Dragon and Spencer Devin, and the only one interested was Spencer Devin. She stated they currently partner with farms and try to purchase as much local as possible. She stated they were interested in finding out more of how we could help support, than in helping to have more grains that they have a use for in the area.

Mr. Rudasill asked if they mentioned what types of grains.

Mrs. Long stated yes, she forgot her notebook but there were several different types of hops and another malt. She stated they did not do much with barley or rye. She stated they did use local honey and local fruits.

Mr. Howe stated they used Snead's farm and brew a squash beer.

Mrs. Long stated yes and it was quite tasty.

Mr. How stated he had tried it and thought it was surprisingly good.

Mrs. Long stated they also have a full restaurant and prepare meals with locally bought products for that as well.

Mr. Howe stated he knew of three farmers that are supplying them items.

7. Next Meeting

- February 27, 2017

Mr. Howe stated the next meeting was scheduled for February 27th.

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Ms. Baker stated she forgot to mention she handed out the paper showing how they currently calculate the ranking and the \$25,000 per development right. He stated he did have a Chairman's Comment. He felt he should inform the Committee that he would be retiring as the extension agent in Spotsylvania effective March 1st. He asked if there was any other business to discuss. Hearing none he adjourned the meeting.

8. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.