

BLAND COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes for February 1, 2021

Members Present:

Adam Kidd, Jim Baker, Elmer Chewning, Steve Hermansen, Jerry Mercer, Wade Hall

Members Absent:

Guy Boone, John Dodson, Meagan Bradshaw

Others Present:

Joel K. Cagle, Planning Commission Secretary
Dr. Eric Workman, County Administrator

CALL TO ORDER

At 6:00 PM, Chairman Mercer called the meeting of the Bland County Planning Commission to order at the Bland County School Board Office; Bastian, Virginia. The Invocation was given and allegiance was pledged to the flag of our country by everyone present.

ROLL CALL

Planning Commission Secretary Cagle took the roll call and announced that a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Mercer invited a motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 11, 2021. Commissioner Hermansen made the motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 11, 2021; Commissioner Hall provided the second, and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING

-An application for CUP (Recreational Facility) from Mr. Hussein Mrad, Tax Map 54-A-4 was discussed. Dr. Workman spoke briefly on the application, stating that it is planned to be an extension of the existing Ceres Eupepsia Wellness Center. This site will cater to a more family unit than just the adults. It will be centered around learning, not just school studies, program is to include diet, exercise, agricultural, etc.. The current model is to build 10 cabins upon the property to house the families during their stay. There are many contingencies to this property purchase, CUP approval, new/improved entrance, new bridge constructed to property.

Secretary Cagle demonstrated this proposed use to comply with the current Bland County Comprehensive Plan by citing several sections of it that stated the use was in

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line with our goal of expanding existing businesses, while supporting tourism related attractions.

Mr. Mrad spoke on his proposed plan for this facility.

Chairman Mercer opened the public hearing.

-Jim Lesile provided a written statement to the Commission (attached at part of these minutes), stating that he was in opposition to the application citing, there was not enough information contained within the application for approval. He asked if there will be any local/state and government oversight, permits, inspections, certifications, certified staff or licensing. He voiced his concern for the well-being of the children that will be present; would there be adequate and approved supervision? He also stated that the proposed use would impact our facilities, personnel and resources (fire, EMS, police, inspectors, etc.) It would increase traffic, losing our quiet countryside living and atmosphere.

- Kenneth May thanked the staff for notifying them of this application and stated he agreed with Mr. Leslie. He stated that there would be no new egress provided across his property to access this land.

-Kevin May stated there would be issues with the creek and egress/ingress when it flooded with the present driveway and bridge.

-Cameron Burton spoke on the beauty of the county in general, and this spot in particular. She has met and worked with Mr. Mrad, using her experience with him and her interaction with the current facility, Eupepsia, stated he and his staff are great stewards of the land. She is in favor of this project.

There being no more registered speakers, Chairman Mercer closed the public hearing.

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The Commission discussed the application and asked a few questions of Mr. Mrad. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Hermansen to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the application with the following conditions:

- 1) All local, state and federal regulations shall be complied with.
- 2) Construction shall be started within one year of the Board of Supervisors action or CUP is null and void.
- 3) Facility shall be at a minimum, partially operational within 18 months of the construction start date.
- 4) CUP is contingent upon purchase of land, if land is not purchased, CUP is null and void.
- 5) An approved entrance permit shall be obtained from the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Commissioner Hall provided a second. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

-None

OLD BUSINESS

-None

ITEMS TABLED FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

-None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission at this time, Commissioner Baker made a motion to adjourn; Commissioner Hermansen provided the second, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joel K. Cagle- Secretary
Planning Commission
County of Bland