

Meeting Minutes of the Bland County Planning Commission for June 6th, 2005.

Members Present:

Jerry Mercer, Elmer Chewning, Allen Newberry, Henry Blessing, John Dodson, R.B. Anderson, Jim Baker, Stephen Kelley, and Deborah Looney

Members Absent:

Guy Boone, Robert Trobaugh

Others Present:

Jonathan D. Sweet - Planning Commission Secretary, Carol Hall - Deputy County Administrator, Randy Newberry – Applicant, Linda Bradshaw – Executive Director, Wolf Creek Indian Village, Molly Thompson, Diane Smith, Barbra Laban – Historical Society.

CALL TO ORDER

At 7:00 PM, Planning Commission Chairman, Jerry Mercer called the meeting of the Bland County Planning commission to order at the Bland County School Board Office, Bastian, Virginia.

ROLL CALL

Planning Commission Secretary Jonathan D. Sweet took the roll call and announced that there was indeed a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Mercer requested a motion to approve the minutes of the May 2nd, 2005 meeting. Vice Chairman Chewning made the motion to approve the minutes of the May 2nd, 2005 meeting as presented; Commission Member Newberry provided a second to the motion, and it passed as written by acclamation.

ITEMS TABLED FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Contractor Storage Yard with a Conditional Use Permit as an allowed use in an Agricultural District.

Chairman Mercer requested Secretary Sweet to provide the Commission with a recap of the previous meeting (refer to the May 2nd meeting minutes). Per the Commission's request, Secretary Sweet walked the Commission through the information ascertained from Montgomery County regarding the definition and specific verbiage of "Contractor's Storage Yard". The recommendation for the proposed definition of Contractor's Storage Yard is as follows:

The proposed addition:

ZONING

ARTICLE I. IN GENERAL

Sec. 62-1. Definitions.

Storage Yard, Contractor's means an area used for the storage of equipment and/or materials used for providing construction-related contracting services, including but not limited to flooring, heating, plumbing, roofing, landscaping, and excavation.

DIVISION 2. Agricultural District (AG)*

Sec. 62-222. Uses Permitted.

(43) Storage Yard, Contractor's, with a conditional use permit.

The Commission was asked why we were looking at making changes/additions to the zoning ordinance. Secretary Sweet stated that the purpose for such proposals to the zoning ordinance is per the Commission's request for the Zoning Administrator to address gaps in the ordinance that prevent progress, and voids that limit citizens from locating and conducting, reasonable operations and or establishments.

Chairman Mercer requested a motion to recommend to the Bland County Board of Supervisors, Cottage Industry with a Conditional Use Permit as an allowed use in an Agricultural District.

Commission Member Anderson made a motion to recommend to the Bland County Board of Supervisors, Cottage Industry with a Conditional Use Permit as an allowed use in an Agricultural District. Commission Member Looney provided the second and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING ON REZONE

Randy Newberry's Application to Rezone from Agriculture to Industrial

Chairman Mercer officially opened the public hearing to receive public comment on Randy Newberry's application to rezone 16.58-acres (Tax Parcel #: 49-1-2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10 & 11) from agricultural to industrial for the purpose of inducing economic development by collocating and enlarging available acreage for industrial recruitment.

(Mr. Newberry had not yet arrived) Chairman Mercer requested Secretary Sweet to address the

Commission and public on the proposed application. Secretary Sweet stated that this request to rezone 16.58 from agriculture to industrial would increase the available acreage at that location to over 20-acres and provide a suitable sized site for industrial recruitment and economic development. Sweet also added that it is the County's intent to look at this property as the County's next industrial location due to its proximity to the interstate, its access to water and sewer, its logistic within the county, and its road frontage. Sweet concluded that this was the County's best option for an economically feasible industrial park and most conducive to the County's comprehensive plan.

Chairman Mercer then opened the floor to the public for comment and presented the floor to Molly Thompson, Bland County Historical Society. Ms. Thompson addressed the Commission and conveyed her thoughts regarding the intricate role the Indian Village plays in our county. She stated that what is good for the Indian Village is good for the county and vice/versa. Thus, we must be careful and do the right thing for the Indian Village and insure that we protect this asset.

Chairman Mercer concurred that Bland County's greatest asset is our natural beauty and the Commission intends to preserve it.

Chairman Mercer presented the floor to Linda Bradshaw, Executive Director- Wolf Creek Indian Village. Ms. Bradshaw made mention of the painstaking efforts the Indian village has endured to preserve the aesthetics and beauty of the Indian Village. She also noted that it is required that the Indian Village is to build a turning lane per VDOT, and if an industrial park is located across from the Village, they would be required to do the same. Additionally, Ms. Bradshaw was concerned about a buffer. She stated that a buffer was lost to the sewer line along the interstate and now the traffic can be heard.

Commission Member Anderson asked how many visitors the Indian Village receives. Ms. Bradshaw stated that just today they received 28 parents, 100 2nd graders, and 30 visitors. She also made claim that the Indian Village receives over 40,000 visitors a year. She concluded by surmising that the village introduces many people to Bland County who wouldn't ordinarily be exposed.

Chairman Mercer asked the question of the Historic Society and Indian Village, what business would be acceptable at the Bastian interchanges. Ms. Thompson responded that she was unsure, but she trusted the Commission and the Board of Supervisors to be selective and do what is within the best interest of the community.

Chairman Mercer then presented the floor to Diane Smith. Ms. Smith asked of the commission why we need another industrial park when we can't fill the one we already have. Secretary Sweet addressed the question by providing the facts that the County has sold the last county owned parcel in the industrial park and a new business is currently beginning construction of their new facility as we speak. The County does not possess any industrial property, and it is imperative that we acquire property in order to successfully market our product to new and/or expanding businesses and industries.

Ms. Smith then stated that this is a speculative action and asked how we could answer questions regarding the rezone if we don't know what is coming in. Commission Member Anderson responded by explaining the zoning process and how CUP work. Secretary Sweet provided further explanation by stating that it is the county's intention to own this property, and thus the county has ultimate control over what locates on it.

Chairman Mercer presented the floor to Barbra Laban. Ms. Laban wanted to reiterate that they have a lot of school busses that come in when they have 100 or more children. The Historic Society conducts a substantial amount of genealogical research in the building, and people come from all over to the village. She stated that what ever goes in across from the village needs to have beautiful frontage to impose a positive image to all the visitors.

Chairman Mercer presented the floor to Randy Newberry to address the concerns and answer question related to the public's comments. Mr. Newberry explained that he wishes to convey the property to the county to create jobs and economic prosperity for the community. He further explained that conservation and recreation was still primary concern for him and would like to define a right-of-way for a trailhead connection from the Indian village to the National Forest (Round Mountain Trail Network), as well as retain +/- 2 acres for recreation purposes. Randy stated that he had already flown over the site and identified a feasible route to run the trail and enhance the county's existing tourism asset. He also noted that a berm could be retained to decrease any unattractiveness caused by industrial development.

Chairman Mercer presented the floor to Mr. Laban. Mr. Laban stated to the Commission that when he moved to Bland County he was promised a clean and quiet community. He stated that anything that detracts from that promise hurts him. Mr. Laban was asked who made such a promise to him. His response was that it was personal in nature and he failed to provide the Commission with the answer.

Chairman Mercer officially closed the public hearing and thanked the public for their input and participation.

Chairman Mercer sought discussion from the Commission. Commission Member Dodson stated that he trusted Mr. Newberry and his intentions to work with the county.

Commission Member Looney asked why we would consider this rezone application prior to knowing what we are going to do with it or what application it would be used for. Secretary Sweet provided a response by explaining that product is needed to be identified and made available prior to marketing. These actions are needed to make this property an acceptable location option for new businesses looking to invest in Bland County.

Chairman Mercer requested a motion to recommend to the Bland County Board of Supervisors, the approval of Randy Newberry's request to rezone 16.58-acres in Bastian Virginia, Tax Map Parcel #(s): 49-1-2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10 & 11, from agriculture to industrial for the purpose of inducing economic development.

Commission Member Baker made a motion to recommend to the Bland County Board of Supervisors, the approval of Randy Newberry's request to rezone 16.58-acres in Bastian Virginia, Tax Map Parcel #(s): 49-1-2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10 & 11, from agriculture to industrial for the purpose of inducing economic development. Commission Member Kelly provided the second and the motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Reschedule Next Meeting Date Due to Holiday

Due to the first Monday of the month falling on a Holiday (4th of July), Chairman Mercer requested a motion to move the meeting date and advertise the selected date.

Commission Member Looney made a motion to reschedule the July 4th meeting to the subsequent Monday, July 11th, 2005. Commission Member Dodson provided the second, and the motion passed with all but Chairman Mercer voting yes.

ADJOURNMENT

Commission Member Dodson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Vice Chairman Chewning provided the second.

Chairman Mercer obliged – the meeting was adjourned.