



TOWN OF WARRENTON

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**MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
TOWN OF WARRENTON
March 18, 2014
7:00 PM**

The regular meeting of the Town of Warrenton Planning Commission convened on Tuesday, March 18, 2014 at 7:00 PM in the Municipal Building.

The following members were present: Ms. Elizabeth Scullin, Chairman, Mr. Ali Zarabi, Mr. Lowell Nevill, Ms. Susan Rae Helander, Dr. John Harre, Mr. John Kip, and Ms. Brandie Schaeffer. Mr. Yakir Lubowsky, Town Council Ex-Officio member was not present. Ms. Sarah Sitterle, Director of Planning and Community Development, attended the meeting as Staff support. Town Attorney Mr. Whitson W. Robinson, Esq. also attended the meeting.

Chairman Scullin called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and a quorum was determined.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the Feb 18, 2014 meeting were not available as staff had been out for family medical issues. Staff noted that the minutes would be made available by the next meeting.

Presentation by County Recreation Committee

Mr. Bob Kravetz, Town Councilman, Ward 4 was present and provided an update on the Recreation Committee and stated that contrary to what has been said or what the Town Planning Commission has been told, the Recreation Committee has not just been sitting on their hands. Last year the Commission recommended that the extension of the Timberfence Trail be included in the CIP and Mr. Kravetz stated that it was lot more complicated than just identifying it in the CIP.

Mr. Kravetz informed the committee that in August he and Mr. Martella met with the new school Superintendent, Dr. Jeck, and Ms. Janice Bourne, the Assistant Superintendent and put before them the push for a trail extension to the WARF, which would require crossing school property. They did not express objections but were not totally in favor and were non-committal. They had recommended a joint meeting with the County Parks and Recreation Committee and the School Board Committee. The members of the two committees met and did not dismiss the idea nor did they say they were in favor of it and initially stated safety concerns for not having trails through the woods. A couple of weeks later, Mr. Kravetz was contacted by Ms. Bourne who said the committees thought about it some more and they were not opposed to the trail going there but would like to know about different options.

Mr. Kravetz stated the Town Council passed a motion in late summer to allocate up to \$15,000 for a consultant study. Mr. Bo Tucker engaged a consultant and their scope of work was to identify the best way to get the trail to the WARF and provide options and costs.

The consultant's draft report has recently been received and two options were identified. One option required about 3,300 linear feet of trails and option two required 2,710 linear feet of trails. The cost estimate for the longer one is approximately \$564,000 and the shorter one \$434,500.

Mr. Kravetz indicated the consultant's report will go to the Recreation Committee and that he, as well as Mr. Martella and all the staff members of the Recreation Committee will be meeting in the near future to discuss the draft and options. Mr. Kravetz indicated a meeting would also be scheduled with the joint Town Parks and Recreation and School Board Committee to present the options, and make a proposal. Mr. Kravetz noted that the Recreation Committee did not think the Town should bear the entire cost and an agreement for some type of cost sharing with the County and School Board needed to be developed.

Mr. Kravetz indicated that the Recreation Committee was inclined to focus on issues for the upcoming years and have consensus with the Town Council to include monies for trails in the 2015 and future CIP. The Recreation Committee has also recently passed a proposal to the Town Council to install restrooms at the WARF playing fields because there are thousands of kids that use those fields in the spring, summer and fall. At the same time, a restroom facility at Eva Walker Park was also passed. Councilman Norden designed both of the facilities gratis and construction will start soon.

Ms. Scullin stated that the Commission did not believe the Recreation Committee was not doing anything, the members just did not know what was being done and when the CIP came to the Planning Commission without anything noted for trails or sidewalks, it was questioned. Ms. Scullin asked if sidewalks were included with trails.

Mr. Kravetz indicated there is at least one sidewalk project in the CIP for next year from Old Gold Cup to Broadview Avenue.

Mr. Kravetz indicated that sidewalks and walkability would be considered as part of trails projects.

Mr. Zarabi asked Mr. Kravetz if the responsiveness could have been expedited.

Mr. Kravetz indicated that he did not believe the delay was unreasonable because there have been many things going on in Town and now that other things have been done, this will move up on the priority list. In addition, the high cost estimates reflect how difficult this would be to accomplish because the terrain was difficult and would require taking out many trees. There are safety issues and it has been suggested that lighting and call boxes be installed along that trail when it was extended and that would result in a cost increase.

Ms. Scullin asked if other sidewalks/trails had been considered that would give more bang for the buck.

Mr. Kravetz indicated that has not been done but it will be.

Mr. Nevill stated that last year Mr. Tucker mentioned the recent work that was done to improve the sidewalks that go in front of the high school and behind the stadium, and asked if there were any parcels along the cul-de-sacs that have easements that would help with inter-connectivity. Mr. Nevill said that the folks that came last year before the Commission were looking towards Rady Park that has high activity. Because of the higher degree of use, they were seeking possible ways to ease inter-connectivity issues without having to do an urban navigation exercise. He wondered if signage could be an interim bang for the buck concept.

Mr. Kravetz stated there was signage from Rady Park to the existing trail. Mr. Martella met with the Trails Coalition and their priority was the extension of the Timberfence Trail and a possible trail from Whites Mill to Blackwell Road and repaving of the Rady Park trails.

Mr. Tucker stated that the Whites Mill to Blackwell Road trail was in the County.

Mr. Kip asked if the school objected to anything specific about the proposed trail.

Mr. Kravetz stated that the trail might have an impact on their practice fields. The big issue was to get their buy in and if they did not accept either one of the proposals, then the Committee would have to go back to the drawing board because it was their property.

Ms. Scullin stated that the Commission was well aware that it was out of our hands.

Ms. Helander asked if the Depot Park proposal had been scaled back.

Mr. Kravetz stated that it was being reconsidered and the idea of building a stage will not occur.

Mr. Tucker pointed out that the CIP Phase II projects at the Depot, and the WARF trail and fishing pier projects probably will be deferred. The Depot Park has money approved but if it were scaled back then it would free up dollars for other recreation projects.

Mr. Kravetz stated the Timberfence Trail extension came up last summer and he was getting calls and emails, and there were a lot of mixed feelings about this project. Many people were saying do not build a trail and extend the road.

Mr. Nevill asked about the parking space at the end of the Greenway, which was maintained by the County. He wondered that if the Greenway was extended and linked into Lord Fairfax Community College whether a bathroom could be located on that site.

Mr. Tucker indicated there was a current arrangement (Memorandum of Agreement) between the County and the Town and when the Greenway was built, the County maintained it at that time as well as Rady Park. Under that agreement, the County maintained the Greenway and the little park. When the Town established a Parks and Recreation Department, the County turned over maintenance of both Rady Park and Academy Hill Park.

Mr. Nevill stated the Timberfence trail goes towards the Comprehensive Plan vision and

Greenway interconnectivity is one piece of a long term vision. The long-term vision of the Greenway at one time was for it to go to Catlett and more recently to Lord Fairfax.

Mr. Kravetz stated that if the Planning Commission feels these items were necessary that they be placed in the CIP for Council consideration.

Presentation by Fauquier County Planning Commission

Mr. Bob Lee and Mr. Ken Alm from the Fauquier County Planning Commission gave a presentation to the Commission on the function of the County's Commission. The purpose of the presentation was to inform the Town's Planning Commission on what they do and how to best communicate between the two groups. Mr. Alm indicated that he hoped this meeting between the two Commissions would start a dialogue.

Mr. Lee indicated the County refers to the Warrenton Service District as the Town and a lot of building and development has occurred, and there was opportunity for more. In order to serve the County and Town better, the four C's needed to be followed because we have an effect on each other: (1) communication, (2) coordination, (3) cooperation, and (4) collaboration.

Mr. Lee noted there were nine service districts in the County. He added that some were small and others were substantial. Some had utility infrastructure and some were lacking infrastructure. In preparation of this meeting, the Warrenton Service District plan was reviewed. The plan was outdated and was substantively done in 2005. Before an update was done, Mr. Lee stated he was hoping that the Town and County could work on it together. The Warrenton Service District plan included a division statement that called for the Town and the service district that encircles it to consist of a hard edge of parks and open space. The plan includes a long-term 2050 objective to provide open space and a park system of 770 acres within a five-mile circumference of the Town with radial system of sidewalks, and trails extending out from the core of Warrenton. Members of the Council were involved in the development of the 2005 Warrenton Service District plan.

Mr. Lee indicated that there had not been much collaboration and one of the things that inspired him was what happened to St. Leonard's Farm. That was a situation where an exercise of transfer of development rights resulted in St. Leonard's farm being bisected by Route 211 and all development was put on the north side. It created a gateway into Warrenton that makes a transition from a rural environment into a Town atmosphere.

He noted that the biggest challenge for both the County and the Town was how to develop the most attractive entrance corridor and how to work together to revere the heritage and surrounding countryside and the County seat.

Mr. Lee indicated the County has been working on the Arrington Farm subdivision. The Warrenton Service District plan called for it to be a rural gateway with open space configuration, and they used the St. Leonard's farm as an example. He noted that the County was in court with the developer relating to that approach to determine if it was reasonable.

Mr. Lee used the example of Berryville, Virginia and mentioned that it is the County seat for Clark County and is smaller than Warrenton. The County seat has a place of substance just like

Warrenton but there was no communication or cooperation and it took a judge to tell the Town Council and Board of Supervisors why they were not cooperating and they developed the Berryville Area Development Authority (BADA). It allowed for a joint planning Commission that was made up of three members from the County and three from the Town, which handles the planning and regulations. Mr. Lee suggested that a meeting with representatives from Berryville be considered to see what may or may not work for Warrenton.

Mr. Lee stated that the Warrenton Service District Plan demographics and population was based on the 2000 Census and it did not make sense to reference a population and data that is so out of date and suggested working together to update the perspective and combined plans.

Mr. Lee indicated that another area of collaboration between the County and the Town are the major road entrance corridors into Town. He stated that the Marshal Service District Plan calls for the zoning overlay and tree design, which is something the County does not have that perhaps, could be another area of collaboration with a form based code approach.

Mr. Lee identified tree planting as an area where the Town and County could work together, with Warrenton being the leader. He indicated that some of the folks working on the Opal plan had stated they did not want trees, but flashy signs so people would stop and spend money. Mr. Lee stated signs were not as important as visual amenities and that may be another area where the Town and County can work together.

Mr. Alm stated that the Warrenton Service District Plan and the Warrenton Comprehensive Plan should not be separate. He noted that the Town and County needed to look 10, 25, and 50 years out and evaluate what the greater Warrenton area should look like. The topics that should be looked at together include:

- Demographics
- Infrastructures
- Resources
- Priorities

Demographics – Mr. Alm noted that normally this was not considered as significant but that has changed. Demographics for the Warrenton Service District Plan were being rewritten and Chapter 3 was based on the 2010 census, and the following is what was found:

- Aging Population
- Increased Ethnic Diversity
- Migration
- 40 Plus Miles from the Core
- Increased Dwelling Units
- People Born after 1980 (approximately 60 to 70 million) want to live near their work
- Need density in service districts to protect the rural areas

It was noted that Brandie Schaffer did a great job presenting at the Rotary Club luncheon and she had made the point that different generations look at the world differently and awareness was needed that the County has both young and old residents and they wanted different things.

Mr. Alm indicated that the older residents in the County want patio homes but there were none.

He identified Portland, Oregon as someplace that started 30 years ago making a more walkable city and spent about \$30 million by adding bike lanes and trails. The Census shows that 50% of college graduates and 64% of the Millennial's decide where they want to live and then look for a job and they are very pro walkable communities. Baby boomers want the same thing, a walkable city. As the Planning Commission, the County needed to look at 10, 20, and 30 years out and identify what was wanted.

Mr. Alm noted that processes and procedures were being evaluated to streamline some applications and make others more user friendly for applicants.

Sketch Plan Process

- Incentive Based on Zoning
- Make Sure Ordinance & Zoning Easy for Applicant
- Design in All Service Districts
- Walk with Developer to figure out rivers and migration.

Jamison's Farm was identified as an example of dense development that saved land, it was a collaborative effort, and all agreed it was better way to go. Mr. Alm stated goal was to have traditional neighborhood designs and that was something the County was trying to achieve in all the service districts. They needed to make sure that our Ordinances and zoning made it easy for the applicant to do the right thing. It was easier for a developer to build outside by right in a rural area than it was to come in where we want them to do it.

Mr. Alm stated that the County Planning Commission has not done much in terms of the CIP and have tried to insert themselves more in the process but were kicked back. The Commission was looking at it in terms of land use and if it complied with the Comprehensive Plan. Statements from all departments outlining how they were complying with the Comprehensive Plan will be coming in.

Following publications were identified and suggested that the Planning Commission review

- The End of the Suburbs – Fortune Magazine
- Reshaping of Metropolitan America
- Pocket Neighborhoods
- Rural by Design
- New Urbanism Best Practices
- Envisioning Better Community

Mr. Alm stated that Chris Granger told his fellow Board of Supervisors that time was being spent discussing Opal and the economic engine and the future for Fauquier County was Warrenton not Opal.

Mr. Zarabi asked Mr. Lee and Mr. Alm how did County make the resources available to the people that expect transportation, emergency management, clean air, clean water, and better schooling. He wondered who would fund that and where the mechanisms were to offer those continuing services in this community.

Mr. Alm indicated that a number of communities have found that if the community was

attractive enough the brightest and best would be attracted and they would insist on all of the good amenities. The key to having the amenities was to reduce the density that justified the amenities. High density was about 35 people per acre, that was what Arlington County has, and it was self-sustaining. The goal was to have the density and services.

Affordable housing was at 138% percent of a median salary of \$80,000 and homes were needed that were small but with high quality. The younger generation was more interested in smaller homes than the older generation.

Mr. Alm asked the Commission if they would be interested in participating in a joint meeting with the County Planning Commission, some Supervisors and members of Council to see how that County seat has collaborated.

Ms. Scullin indicated the Commission was talking about a lot of work and the Berryville example would provide structure and a direction to go forward. The Commission needed to talk about schedules. She suggested working through Ms. Sitterle and perhaps setting it up during one of the Town's meetings or a County meeting.

Mr. Ken Alm indicated County staff was willing to meet with Town authorities.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Scullin indicated the Telecommunications Facility had requested another delay and asked at what point did the Commission say no.

Ms. Sitterle indicated they needed to withdraw their Special Use Permit (SUP) and Commission permit, because the first site was no long being considered.

Mr. Zarabi made a motion that the request for deferral be denied. Mr. Kip seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

Mr. Nevill indicated he was uncomfortable having a motion of deferral being made without the applicant being present and they had been asked to look at other sites.

Ms. Scullin said normally applicant would come back within 30 days and they have not.

Ms. Schaeffer asked if the applicant would have new fees.

Mr. Whit Robinson indicated that in the future, it was a possibility that the fees would be in line with the County fees and the way the County has done it in the past. In the past, most of the time applications were for facilities on the water tower and a new area was being considered. The Town spoke to the County's Deputy Attorney, fees would include a study, and perhaps the new fee will be different.

Ms. Scullin stated the problem was that the applicant submitted a fee with a plan and the staff reviewed it and spent that money. Then the applicant would bring in another plan and they have not provided fees for that resubmission. The staff would look at the same plan and make minor changes, but to look at a new plan every time without receiving any monies is unfair to the

Town.

Mr. Nevill stated that the Commission agreed to table it in December. Then the applicant requested for a deferral in February, which was given. The applicant asked for yet another deferral after Ms. Sitterle contacted them.

Mr. Zarabi made motion to deny the request for deferral of SUP #13-01 and Commission Permit #13-01 for a new Telecommunications Facility at 287 Alwington Boulevard. Mr. Nevill seconded the motion with all voting in favor and none opposed.

WORK SESSION

2015-20120 Capital Improvement Program

Chief Lou Battle presented information about pedestrian accidents in Town in response to an inquiry by the Commission at their last meeting. Chief Battle did research on pedestrian accidents for the last 10 years and found the average was five per year. He added that if the private properties accidents were taken out, the average was four pedestrian accidents per year. Chief Battle indicated the review did not identify any area or a threat for the community. The review also included where accidents occurred and they were found to be in various locations and as result, he could not identify any specific pedestrian threats in the Town area.

Ms. Scullin stated that was what the Commission wanted to know if there was one area where a number of pedestrian accidents had occurred, such as at the high school or middle school with students crossing Shirley Avenue.

Chief Battle stated that the review for the 10-year period was all-inclusive and in fact, there were more accidents in the earlier years than currently were occurring.

Ms. Helander asked the Chief if he had a wish list.

Chief Battle stated he was comfortable with what the Department has and did not feel the force is lacking and was comfortable with the staff level and performance of the staff.

Mr. Zarabi asked the Chief for his insight on the number of vehicular incidents that occurred in Town.

Chief Battle stated a ten-year study was recently done on left turn accidents on Broadview and the numbers were lower than perception suggested. The study did reflect that something was problematic and needed immediate attention. The department had an aggressive program on enforcement and education and did not see many repeat offenders. Chief Battle stated the community was safe and citizens were responsible, informed and involved.

Mr. Nevill stated that one of the best observers of accidents were the officers looking for accidents to happen and asked if there were areas where officers have expressed concern.

Chief Battle stated that his officers have not relayed to him any one area that was perceived as a traffic problem.

Mr. Nevill stated that Wawa at one time was a concern and asked if that had been taken care of with new mast arms and posts and if there was another place like Wawa that was of concern.

Chief Battle indicated left turns were still being made out of Wawa and thought that with the Comprehensive Plan and the redesign and construction of new traffic barriers, that the concern for that area would be addressed. However, as problems come up, there was an increase in enforcement and seasonal issues exist such as school kids egging, and vehicle theft due to unlocked vehicles. The Police Department puts out press releases about taking responsibility for property and officers have left cards reminding folks to lock their vehicles, but there was nothing that appeared to be a continuing trend.

Mr. Tucker stated that the mast arm at Shirley Avenue and Broadview Avenue would allow signalized pedestrian crossings at Wawa, and VDOT will incorporate some of our pedestrian issues in the design of Broadview Avenue improvements with a protective median.

Mr. Nevill asked if there would be a signal at Old Gold Cup Drive.

Mr. Tucker indicated that it was in the concept and there would be a discussion. VDOT has a complete streets program and criteria have to be met. A discussion about sidewalks and trails will occur and the Timberfence Parkway extension could possibly require sidewalks.

Mr. Nevill indicated another public safety issue was the parking lot lighting issues and he asked if there was room in the CIP to fill dead spots.

Mr. Tucker indicated that if someone decided they wanted a light in their neighborhood or the Town wanted to put in a light in a parking lot and there was an existing power pole, it was not that expensive. Problems occur if no existing poles were in place and Dominion Power had to do a power drop, run cables and install poles. Dominion Power used capital recovery factors for these projects. Mr. Tucker indicated that relighting of old Town parking lots would probably not require CIP funding.

Ms. Scullin stated that cobra heads could be used on existing poles as a temporary fix and put a study in the CIP to look at lighting that is more attractive.

Mr. Nevill asked Chief Battle if there were any other glaring public infrastructure safety issues that could guide the Commission when looking at the Comprehensive Plan and working on it the next few months.

Chief Battle indicated that the lighting replacement program was good and the force has increased patrol of parking lots at midnight and when businesses close. Chief Battle stated that the modern safety designs do not work with historic buildings because of their layout and location.

Mr. Zarabi asked Chief Battle what the retention rate was for police officers.

Chief stated he has two types of employees. The first were young employees that were given an

opportunity to get into law enforcement and they make the most of it by getting their four-year degree. The average tenure for this type of employee was about 5 years. He noted it was a revolving door and the Department was always in the recruitment and hiring mode and it took about 14 months before the individual could go alone. It was costly but worth it. The second type was those that stay 25 years and were content with what they were doing. The force has three and four man squads for safety reasons.

Ms. Scullin stated that a lot of information had been shared, there has been a response to trails, and the Commission can start working on priorities.

Ms. Helander stated the County does an incredible job ensuring connectivity between developments.

Ms. Scullin asked if anyone had any discussion on the existing CIP. Phase II of the Depot Parks has been deferred but there was still \$120,000 for Phase I that has not been expended and the restrooms at the park will not just serve the park but also the trails.

Ms. Helander indicated there were more complaints about lack of public restrooms on the weekends than about parking.

Mr. Tucker stated originally, there were two phases. The first included a trail themed playground with a railroad emphasis and following was the second phase, which identified restrooms and other small projects. The projects were approved, but no money had been spent and was still available.

Ms. Helander indicated it was the perfect location for a small pocket park with passive recreation and public restroom more so than an amphitheatre as had been suggested.

Ms. Scullin stated that if the first phase had not been determined it did not make sense to appropriate money for the second phase.

Ms. Schaeffer stated that having a restroom at the Depot might possibly attract more users.

Mr. Zarabi stated fund raising was done for a running path that a group was attempting to build at Brumfield Elementary School due to a running program before school. The problem was gray water runoff between Taylor Middle and the soccer field and kids were trenching into mud. A committee was formed to raise money for the path and the County was approached to build the path. In discussions with the County, clear lines of communication were never identified and the group could not find out who had authority to make those final decisions and as result, two years later nothing happened because they could not get an agreement from the County.

Mr. Nevill asked Bo Tucker about shared roads with bikers.

Mr. Tucker stated road sharing was not a popular idea and it was not a capital improvement and as result, it was not identified in the CIP.

Ms. Scullin stated that the CIP needed to go to Council with Commission recommendations and

asked Ms. Sitterle for guidance.

Ms. Sitterle indicated that a public hearing would be held next month.

Mr. Nevill stated the presentation from multiple sources was very informative and helpful and asked how the two plans would be combined.

Ms. Scullin stated that initial focus would be Warrenton with the County plan.

Mr. Nevill asked what extent the Town has to include its plans into the County's plan since Warrenton was not an independent city but a Town and asked if the Town needed to adapt to the County more than they needed to adapt to us.

Ms. Scullin stated no.

Mr. Nevill stated the Rappahannock Regional Commission mission was to promote orderly and efficient development of the physical, social and economical elements of the planning district by planning, assisting and encouraging developmental subdivisions to plan for the future. So if the Town needed help with integration, coordination, and collaboration, there was an opportunity to go beyond the County and go regionally. Mr. Nevill stated he planned to talk to Mr. Walker, Executive Director about this.

Ms. Scullin asked Ms. Sitterle what was new.

Ms. Sitterle informed the Commission that another submission for Warrenton Crossing preliminary plat had been received. The first plan was submitted in February and reviewed by staff and was rejected. It had been resubmitted and staff had 10 business days to review it. The first plan submitted did not have any connection to Lee Street, identified a number of new lots being added, and wetlands permitting, traffic mitigation and road connections were some of the issues that needed to be addressed.

Ms. Scullin stated her appreciation to Sarah for the work the staff does and continues to do.

Meeting Adjourned 9:18 p.m.

Minutes taken by Anna Maas and submitted by Dee Highnote