

PRESENT: S. Bridge, Chairman
K. Shiflett, Vice Chairman
J. Curd
C. Foschini
K. Leonard
E. Shipplett
R. L. Earhart, Senior Planner and Secretary

ABSENT: T. Jennings

VIRGINIA: At the Called Meeting of the Augusta County Planning Commission held on Tuesday, January 12, 2016, at 4:30 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Conference Room, Augusta County Government Center, Verona, Virginia.

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The Planning Commission traveled to the following sites which will be considered by the Commission:

1. Cynthia Roberts and Wendell Alexander and Maury Mill Townhomes, LLC– Rezoning
2. DWS Properties, LLC and DJS Properties, LLC – Rezoning

Chairman

Secretary

PRESENT: S. Bridge, Chairman
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J. Curd
C. Foschini
K. Leonard
E. Shipplett
R. L. Earhart, Senior Planner and Secretary

ABSENT: T. Jennings

VIRGINIA: At the Regular Meeting of the Augusta County Planning Commission held on Tuesday, January 12, 2016, at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room, Augusta County Government Center, Verona, Virginia.

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DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Mr. Bridge stated as there were six (6) members present, there was a quorum.

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MINUTES

Mr. Foschini moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on November 10, 2015.

Mr. Curd seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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Mountain Shore Investments, LLC

A request to amend the proffers on approximately 5 acres owned by Mountain Shore Investments, LLC located on the north side of Jefferson Highway (Rt. 250) approximately 0.6 of a mile east of the intersection with Tinkling Spring Road (Rt. 285) in Fishersville in the Wayne District. This is the site of the Staunton Montessori School.

Mrs. Earhart explained the request as presented on Power Point. She stated the request is to amend the proffer to change the limitation of students from 100 to a 200 maximum student capacity.

David Brown, a member of Mountain Shore Investments, LLC stated the Staunton Montessori School has been at this location for five years. Previously, Genesis School was at this location for seven or eight years, so the use has been continuous for about 13 years. The school would like to expand into the building behind the main building in order to allow for an increase in students by adding a middle school.

There being no questions from the Commissioners, Mr. Bridge opened the Public Hearing.

There being no one to speak in favor of or against the request, Mr. Bridge closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Curd moved to recommend approval of the amended proffer.

Mr. Foschini seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Cynthia Roberts and Wendell Paul Alexander and Maury Mill Townhomes, LLC

A request to rezone from General Agriculture to Attached Residential with proffers approximately 5.6 acres owned by Cynthia Roberts and Wendell Paul Alexander and Maury Mill Townhomes LLC, located on the north side of Maury Mill Road (Rt. 813), less than 0.1 of a mile west of the intersection with Rolla Mill Road (Rt. 1930) in Verona in the North River District.

Mrs. Earhart explained the request as presented on PowerPoint and the proffers presented for this request. She stated the vinyl fencing that will be installed per the proffers will be permanently maintained.

P.J. Wright of 1449 Laurel Hill Road and owner of Maury Mill Townhomes, LLC, with his partner David Smith, stated that Wendell Alexander is one of the current owners of the property. Someone had approached Mr. Alexander about buying the property and expanding it for agriculture uses. Mr. Alexander had contacted him regarding selling the property for him to develop it. The property is currently zoned agriculture, which is not an appropriate zoning because of the residential housing surrounding the property. There is a demand for housing in the Verona area and the demand will increase if the Augusta County Courthouse is relocated to Verona and also with the completion of the FedEx facility. There are currently no townhomes in Verona and there is no property that is slated for attached-residential, although Verona is declared a growth area. Mr. Wright stated he told Mr. Alexander he would purchase the property if the majority of the adjacent property owners would agree to townhomes being constructed on the property. He obtained written support from 12 adjacent property owners, which he had displayed on a map. One property owner was not in favor of the rezoning and another property owner did not respond. He stated he promised the adjacent property owners he would demolish the existing barns and construct a 6' vinyl privacy fence around the development. Some of the neighbors indicated they may even sell their homes and purchase a townhome, if the development is approved. Green space would be included within the development. He wants to take care of the nutrients on the property, so he agreed to reduce the density to a maximum of 42 units. The development will be built in two phases.

There being no questions from the Commissioners, Mr. Bridge opened the Public Hearing.

Larry Curry of 132 Rolla Mill Rd., Verona stated his home place is the Lola S. Curry property that adjoins the Alexander property. His family has been friends with the Alexanders for years. He supports the idea of multi-family units and stated the Verona area is in need of townhomes. He feels certain Mr. Wright will construct nice townhomes and will properly maintain the property. He thinks it would be a good addition to the Verona area.

Richard Dodson stated his property adjoins the Alexander property. He has lived in his home for 42 years. He is not in favor of the townhomes and would rather see single-family homes built that are comparable to homes already in Rolla Mill.

There being no one else to speak in favor of or against the request, Mr. Bridge closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Foschini stated he has looked at the property and he appreciates the effort Mr. Wright has put into talking with, and seeking approval from, the adjacent property owners. He is concerned about the impact the project would have on Maury Mill Road, but feels the request is compatible due to the age of the surrounding properties.

Mr. Shipplett stated he has viewed the property with Mr. Wright and while he likes the idea of the project, he wonders if the location is wrong. He agrees that townhomes would be an asset to the Verona area and agrees that Mr. Wright will do a good job in developing this type of project, but does not feel this location is suitable for townhomes.

Mrs. Shiflett stated the property is surrounded by single family development and it is more appropriate for single-family housing. As the planners and recommending body charged with planning for Augusta County, she does not feel townhomes are a good fit for this property even with the adjacent property owners support. She agrees the property needs to be rezoned, but feels single-family zoning would be more appropriate. While she appreciates the time and effort Mr. Wright has put into the project, she cannot support the request.

Mr. Leonard agrees with Mr. Shipplett's and Mrs. Shiflett's comments. He agrees the property does need to be rezoned but feels the density proposed for this project is too high considering the surrounding properties and the impact on the road and the school system.

Mr. Shipplett moved to recommend denial of the request.

Mrs. Shiflett seconded the motion, which carried on a vote of 4-1-1, with Mr. Foschini being opposed and Mr. Curd abstaining.

DWS Properties, LLC and DJS Properties, LLC

A request to rezone from Single Family Residential and General Business to Multi-family Residential approximately 19.2 acres owned by DWS Properties, LLC and DJS

Properties, LLC located on the east side of Lee Highway (Rt. 11) approximately .25 of a mile north of the intersection with Confederate Street (Rt. 915) in Verona in the North River District.

Mrs. Earhart explained the request as presented on PowerPoint and the proffers presented for this request. She stated the property was zoned single-family residential in 1966. The existing apartments were built under the single-family zoning and are now a non-conforming use. She stated as the proffers state, there will be no more than 200 units on the 19.2 acre tract. Currently there are 86 units that are part of Blue Ridge Apartments, so the net increase would be 114 units.

David Surratt, managing member of DWS Properties, LLC stated the property is currently zoned single-family residential, but is developed multi-family and he would like to bring the property back into legal conformity. There is a need for apartments in this area, especially a shortage of three bedroom apartments in Augusta County and surrounding localities. The existing apartments are staying occupied 99% of the time.

Mr. Shipplett asked if the rents will remain as market rents.

Mr. Surratt stated that is correct as they are not government subsidy apartments.

Mr. Shipplett asked if the units will be built all at one time.

Mr. Surratt stated they will be built in phases. The plan is to build three apartment buildings and when they become occupied they will begin to build more. This could be a long range project depending on demand and growth.

There being no further questions from the Commissioners, Mr. Bridge opened the Public Hearing.

Josh Sprouse stated he is in the process of purchasing the property on the other side of Verona Elementary School, which will adjoin the DWS property (the Armstrong property). He is opposed to the rezoning. He feels an apartment complex would reduce property values. The adjacent property to this request is zoned single-family residential and he wants this property to remain under the current zoning. He is also concerned about the water run-off that would be created by a new complex.

Larry Curry of 132 Rolla Mill Rd., Verona stated he spent 29 years working with the Little League and getting the ballfields developed behind the school. He does not understand how the Commission could turn down the request for 42 townhomes to be built but will consider increasing the apartment complex to a total of 200 units.

Mr. Surratt stated the request is in compliance with the County's Comprehensive Plan. Brasil Hamrick, the engineer for this project, will design the development to accommodate the storm water.

There being no one else to speak in favor of or in opposition to the request, Mr. Bridge closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Shipplett stated there are already apartments located on this property, therefore, the use will stay the same. In his line of business, he has found that apartment buildings do not lower housing values. He is in support of the request.

Mrs. Shiflett stated this project has a number of differences from the earlier request made by Mr. Wright. The property is slated for multi-family zoning in the Comprehensive Plan. 114 units will be added to an already established apartment complex. The road capacities are different. School capacity, however, is a concern in both requests. The surrounding area and the Comprehensive Plan are two big factors that can influence the Commission's votes and probably will in this case.

Mr. Shipplett moved to recommend approval with proffers.

Mr. Leonard seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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STAFF REPORTS

Annual Report

Mrs. Earhart discussed the 2015 Annual Report with the Commissioners.

Mr. Leonard moved that the report be presented to the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Foschini seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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Additional Notifications

Mrs. Earhart informed the Commissioners that a letter was written, as they had requested, to the Board of Supervisors expressing concern regarding how advertising for public hearings is done. The Board of Supervisors is confident that the current method of advertising meets the State Code provisions, but is open to additional ideas. Plans for placing notification signs on properties under consideration for rezoning will be considered by the Board of Supervisors at their January 25th Staff Briefing.

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Code of Virginia – Section 15.2-2310

Mrs. Earhart reviewed with the Commissioners the requests coming before the BZA.

The Planning Commission took the following action on the BZA items:

16-6 Augusta County Company, LLC

Mr. Leonard stated he is concerned about the traffic flow in this area and the ability of the existing road system to handle the additional truck traffic generated by a second truck stop. He moved that the BZA, if they permit the travel plaza/truck stop, require a second entrance to the site be constructed and open for use prior to the opening of the travel plaza/truck stop.

Mrs. Shiflett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.

Chairman

Secretary