

PRESENT: S. Bridge, Chairman
K. Shiflett, Vice Chairman
J. Curd
T. Jennings
K. Leonard
E. Shipplett
R. L. Earhart, Senior Planner and Secretary
J. Wilkinson, Director of Community Development

ABSENT: C. Foschini

VIRGINIA: At the Called Meeting of the Augusta County Planning Commission held on Tuesday, March 8, 2016, at 3:30 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Conference Room, Augusta County Government Center, Verona, Virginia.

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The Planning Commission assembled in the Augusta County Government Center.

The Planning Commission traveled to Deerfield Park and Natural Chimneys to obtain background information prior to the review of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan update.

Chairman

Secretary

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R. L. Earhart, Senior Planner and Secretary
J. Wilkinson, Director of Community Development

ABSENT: C. Foschini

VIRGINIA: At the Regular Meeting of the Augusta County Planning Commission held on Tuesday, March 8, 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. Leonard moved to approve the minutes of the called and regular meetings held on February 9, 2016.

Mrs. Shiflett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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NEW BUSINESS

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Mrs. Earhart stated the Planning Commission had traveled to Deerfield Park and Natural Chimneys facilities as part of the review prior to considering Parks and Recreation Master Plan update. The Planning Commission will be considering a recommendation for adopting the Master Plan as part of the County's Comprehensive Plan later this summer. She introduced Andy Wells, Director of Parks and Recreation who gave a presentation on the Augusta Springs Park facility.

Mr. Wells stated the park consists of 24 acres. Trees that were gifted to the park by residents of the area have been planted, soccer goals and a basketball court have been installed, as well as a playground, and a picnic shelter and restroom facility were constructed. A one mile walking trail is located in the park and is heavily used by local residents. There is a caretaker on site who is responsible for keeping the park and bathrooms clean. The residents have asked for ballfields to be placed in the park, but because of the close proximity to the Craigsville and Buffalo Gap ballfields, ballfields are not a priority at this time. There are currently no projects or plans to expand facilities in the park.

Mr. Jennings asked how long the park has been in existence.

Mr. Wells stated the park was finished in 2012. The picnic shelter was completed in 2013 and was the last improvement made.

Mr. Shipplett asked if permits were needed to use the trails at Berry Farm.

Mr. Wells stated Berry Farm, which consists of 350 acres in the western tract in the North River District, and 200 acres in the eastern tract in the Beverley Manor District, is not currently opened to the general public for recreational use. Permits are needed to use the walking trails and to bow hunt. Bow hunting permits are given in the fall as part of a controlled hunt and there have been phases where permits have been given for walking and hiking. The Service Authority is conducting a source water protection study on the property. Once the study is complete, a Public Use Overlay will be pursued in order to include and define the type of recreational uses for the property. Over the years there has been controversy as to what type of uses should be allowed on the property. There are those who believe the property should be developed into a park and athletic facility. Others are opposed to a park and athletic facility and believe such facilities would harm the water source and influence the adjacent aquifer. Without a Public Use Overlay, only passive recreation would be allowed. Passive recreation may include, but not be limited to, enhanced trail networks for walking and bicycling, natural style amphitheaters, picnic tables along the trails, and disc golf. It may be possible to partner with Project GROWS to have a rustic learning center. Passive use would not allow athletic facilities. With passive uses, it is expected the site would get a high amount of usage, and possibly frequently used by City of Staunton residents looking for easy access to walking and

biking trails, which are not available within the city limits. Dr. Marshall Pattie, County Supervisor, has indicated he is in favor of, and would support, passive recreation uses for the property.

Mr. Shipplett asked if walking trails have been established.

Mr. Wells stated there are fire and service roads that have been put through the property mainly for accessibility. The roads are bush-hogged once a year, but are generally not accessible for foot travel due to limited resources to maintain them. The County is hoping to partner with certain mountain biking groups that give assistance in maintaining the trails by donating labor and materials.

Mr. Shipplett stated he would like to see the Berry Farm.

Mr. Wells stated he would be glad to provide a letter to Mr. Shipplett stating he has permission to be on the property.

Mr. Jennings asked how the County acquired the Berry Farm.

Mr. Wells stated it was gifted to the County in order to protect the water source in the Verona area, but he is unsure who gifted the property.

Mrs. Earhart stated research is currently being conducted on this property, and she will provide more information at the April meeting in regards to the previous owners.

STAFF REPORTS

Code of Virginia – Section 15.2-2310

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

16-19 Fishersville Realty, LLC

The Planning Commission is concerned about the possible impact of this use on adjacent residential development, as well as planned residential development in the area. Mr. Shipplett moved to recommend to the BZA, if they permit the crushing operation, that there be limits placed on the amount of time the use is allowed and suggest that it be allowed for no more than 1 year from the time the permit is issued.

Mr. Jennings seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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Mrs. Earhart informed the Commissioners in addition to the proposed rezoning site, they would also be touring park facilities on the eastern end of the County as part of the April meeting. She asked the Commissioners if they would prefer to break up the park viewings into two separate tours. The majority stated they would prefer to tour the parks all at the same time.

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Mrs. Earhart informed the Commissioners the new signs have arrived that will be placed on sites advertising pending zoning actions, either by the BZA or the Planning Commission. The Commissioners may receive calls from the public inquiring about the pending zoning action.

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Mrs. Earhart briefed the Commission on action taken by the General Assembly passing a bill that will significantly curtail the County's ability to accept proffers on residential development. She encouraged the Commissioners to refrain from speaking with developers regarding pending development, until further information is obtained by the County Attorney.

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

Chairman

Secretary