

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

ABSENT: C. Foschini  
T. Jennings  
K. Leonard

VIRGINIA: At the Called Meeting of the Augusta County Planning Commission held on Tuesday, May 10, 2016, at 4:00 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. Patrick Morgan, County Attorney, briefed the Commission on recent changes to the State Code regarding proffers. Mr. Morgan indicated that the changes impact the Commission's ability to obtain on-site and off-site proffers on residential rezonings but does not apply to business and industrial requests. He stated that local government attorneys are still discussing the ramifications of the Code changes and he will provide additional information to the Commission as it becomes available.

The Planning Commission traveled to Berry Farm to obtain background information prior to the review of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan update. The Commission also traveled to the following site, which will be considered by the Commission:

1. Mary Ann Heerschap – PUO

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Chairman

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Secretary

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

ABSENT: C. Foschini  
T. Jennings  
K. Leonard

VIRGINIA: At the Regular Meeting of the Augusta County Planning Commission held on Tuesday, May 10, 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 four (4) members present, there was a quorum.

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**MINUTES**

Mr. Curd moved to approve the minutes of the called and regular meetings held on April 12, 2016.

Mrs. Shiflett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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**Mary Ann Heerschap**

A request to add the Public Use Overlay to approximately 9.5 acres owned by Mary Ann Heerschap located at 87 Reeves Road, Mt. Solon in the North River District.

Mrs. Earhart explained the request as presented on PowerPoint. She reviewed the additional proffers that were submitted by the applicant with the Commissioners.

Mary Ann Heerschap of 87 Reeves Road, Mount Solon stated she is the administrator of the School of Our Lady Queen of Peace and Reconciliation. This is a non- Diocese school that uses Catholic curriculum. The school is for adolescents from the ages of 12 to18 and in grades 7 through 12. The students attend school year round and meet the 180 day State requirement. The day begins at nine o'clock and the students work for an hour on an occupation, such as cracking walnuts, repairing chicken netting and preparing items for the farmers market. They have also repaired fencing and worked in the orchard. After Occupations, they have traditional classroom subjects which are integrated using a Montessori teaching method. They learn business skills and basic farming skills. The students receive periodic evaluations and all educational and legal requirements have been met. Currently there are four students. This is the first year the school has been full-time. She stated she will be working with the Old Rite Russian Orthodox Church which is planning on bringing in 18 Estonian families. They will be incorporating the children of these families into the school. One of the priests will be an instructor for Humanities, Theology, and Literature. There is currently one full-time teacher and one part-time teacher, as well as herself.

Mr. Shipplett stated it sounds like the students will be receiving very limited instruction in math and language. He asked how they will be prepared for adulthood.

Mrs. Heerschap stated she homeschooled her own children for 20 years. All of her children but one have attended college and have received degrees. They have been successful in college, they have successful careers, and some of them hold high positions within their jobs. She feels she will have the same success with these students.

Mrs. Heerschap stated she started the school in 2011 as a hybrid school with only one student. That student is still attending her school, but was only attending one day a week. She doesn't feel the student was being properly educated by only attending one day a week and thought there would be interest from others, if she opened the school full-time.

Mr. Shipplett stated he was assuming by her presentation that the school would be focused more on learning occupations.

Mrs. Heerschap stated she uses the Montessori program and has gone through training through the National Association for Montessori Teachers. Students have been very successful with the program. The specific program she is teaching the younger students is basically reviewing their math levels for the first year and is finding deficiencies in students who have attended public schools. She is using a program called Right Start, which has also been tested and used in Finnish schools and has proven to be successful.

Mr. Shipplett asked if he understood correctly that 18 families will be coming from Estonia.

Mrs. Heerschap stated that is correct, although the families are not here yet.

Mr. Shipplett asked if they would be taught English skills.

Mrs. Heerschap stated according to the law they have three years to teach the students English and then transition them into schools. These students do not do well in public schools and the smaller environment of the private school seems to be better suited to them.

Mr. Shipplett asked Mrs. Heerschap if she was aware of the issues that will need to be addressed regarding the well and septic system and the entrance.

Mrs. Heerschap stated she was very aware of these issues. She is looking at making a circular drop-off and is planning on creating parking in the front and back of the site as well. She is working with an architect to make sure all the requirements are met.

Mr. Curd asked if the school would be opened for twelve months.

Mrs. Heerschap stated they will attend school year round for 180 days as required by the State, Monday through Friday. The typical day is longer than the public schools because the students work on Occupations for an hour, which is not counted as part of the curriculum. The school day is finished around 4:30 p.m. Every month the school closes for several days. It is also closed for three weeks at Christmas and two weeks at Easter. The students also get five weeks off during the summer, come back for four weeks and then get a two week break before school starts on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August.

Mr. Curd asked if Mrs. Heerschap anticipates there will be a lot of carpooling between the parents of the students attending the school.

Mrs. Heerschap stated two of the four students currently carpool, and one student is her daughter. Parents pick their children up at 4:30. During the summer, the school day is shortened to 4:00.

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

The Right Reverend Zaccaria stated he is a Bishop for the Old Ritualist Orthodox Church of North America. Once the Federal Government approves the vetting process for immigration, the church will be bringing 18 refugee Old Ritualist Estonian families to the valley where there is a community of Old Ritualist Orthodox. Families in Estonia are being removed and their land taken away because their fields are needed to build transportation infrastructure and defense positions against their neighbor. In the 200 years of Estonia, no child has received more than an 8<sup>th</sup> grade education. Estonians can be equated with the Old Order Amish in the fact that they do not use modern conveniences. In the past it has been attempted for Estonian children to attend public schools. The attempts have been unsuccessful as the children do not adjust well in the public school setting. All they know is farming and their culture is work, church, and family. They do not aspire to be doctors, dentists, or professional businessmen. They are farmers, tradesmen, and craftsmen. They live a very simple life and just want to raise their families, work the farm, and go to church.

Bishop Zaccaria stated the septic field has been located behind the area where the school is to go. A survey has been done to make sure the septic system will not impede on an existing sink hole on the property or on the wells in the area.

Mrs. Earhart stated septic approval will come at the site plan stage, if the request is approved. A site plan is required when adding the Public Use Overlay.

Mr. Shipplett asked if the families are from the countryside.

Mr. Zacharia stated yes, they are farmers who live far out in the countryside and border Russia.

Mrs. Shiflett asked what kind of jobs the parents will seek when they come here, as well as the children when they have completed school.

Bishop Zaccaria stated they are in the process of negotiating the purchase of a 600 acre farm and a 1200 acre farm. The land will be subdivided into 50 acre lots for each family and they will live there for the remainder of their lives. They raise their own food and make their own furniture. For added income they make crafts to sell in local markets. Most families are small and usually have only 1-2 children. The children will continue to live on the farm when they are grown. They travel to other Old Ritualist communities to find their spouses and marry within.

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

Mr. Shipplett moved to recommend approval of the request with proffers.

Mr. Curd seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

#### **Augusta County Code Section 25-384**

An ordinance to add Paragraph G to §25-384 of the Augusta County Code allowing daycare centers by special use permit in General Industrial Districts.

Mrs. Earhart stated there was a request made to the Board of Supervisors to allow the option of having daycare centers in General Industrial Districts. The special use permit category has been fashioned after existing special use permit categories for daycare centers. This would apply to either adult or child daycare centers. The classifications and standards relate to the designated areas for pickup and delivery of the adults or children. Any playground or gathering areas would be located in the side and rear yards and must be adequately fenced. The use must be compatible with industrial traffic. The applicant will need to demonstrate compliance with State licensing requirements.

There being no discussion by the Commission, 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 amendment.

Mrs. Shiflett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**STAFF REPORTS**

The Planning Commission took no action on the upcoming BZA items.

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

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Chairman

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Secretary