

MINUTES

LOUDOUN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION

February 25, 2023

At a work session of the Planning Commission of Loudoun County, Virginia, held at the County Government Center in the Board of Supervisors' Meeting Room, 1 Harrison Street, S.E., Leesburg, Virginia on Saturday, February 25, 2023, at 9:00AM.

Present: Michelle Frank, Chair, Broad Run District
Eric Combs, Vice-Chair, Ashburn District
Ad Barnes, Leesburg District – Arrived at 11:09AM
Forest Hayes, At-Large – Arrived at 9:55AM – Departed at 2:35PM
Jane Kirchner, Algonkian District – *Remote Participation*
John Merrithew, Sterling District
Mark Miller, Catocin District
Roger Vance, Blue Ridge District

Absent: Madhava Madireddy, Dulles District

Webcast of this meeting is available via the following link:

https://loudoun.granicus.com/player/clip/7198?meta_id=224686

Call to Order

Chair Frank called the meeting to order.

Pursuant to Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3708.2 and the Planning Commission Remote Participation Policy, Commissioner Kirchner requested to participate in this work session by electronic communication from a remote location that is not open to the public.

As required by law, a physical quorum of the Planning Commission was present in the Board Room and the Commission arranged for the voice of Commissioner Kirchner to be heard by all persons in the Board Room.

Commissioner Kirchner made the request within the timeframe required by policy and the County Attorney's Office determined that the request met the requirements for remote participation.

The Chair's full opening remarks are available at the following link:

https://loudoun.granicus.com/player/clip/7198?meta_id=224687

Work Session Items

1. ZOAM-2020-0001, Zoning Ordinance Rewrite (Countywide)

Judi Birkitt with the Department of Planning and Zoning presented the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite project topics prepared for Commission review during the Work Session and the potential path forward for finalizing the Commission-recommended draft Zoning Ordinance. Ms. Birkitt also reviewed the County's strategy for receiving, documenting, and making public comments publicly available, as well as identifying and addressing public comment themes.

This Work Session item included three companion memorandums, numbered 1a through 1c, with each memorandum focusing on a specific topic or chapter from the draft Zoning Ordinance.

Item 1a – Chapter 8: Signs

Mark White, a consultant for the Department of Planning and Zoning provided the Planning Commission with an overview of signs within the Rural Policy Area and Rural Villages.

Planning Commission Requests/Comments:

Rural Residential Signs

The Commission expressed support for staff's recommendation to allow rural residential signs as "Incidental Signs, Generally".

Commissioner Merrithew moved that the Planning Commission direct staff to modify the incidental rural residential sign category as follows:

- Reduce the number of signs from 6 to 2
- Reduce the cumulative sign area from 50 square feet to 32 square feet
- Reduce the height from 12 feet to 6 feet
- Reduce the individual sign area from 25 square feet to 16 square feet

Seconded by Vice Chair Combs.

Commissioner Merrithew and Vice Chair Combs accepted Commissioner Miller's friendly amendment for the maximum individual sign area be modified from 16 square feet to 20 square feet.

The motion passed: 7-0-2. Commissioners Barnes and Madireddy absent for the vote.

Rural Nonresidential Signs

The Commission supported staff's recommendation to allocate the number of nonresidential ground and pole signs in the Rural Nonresidential sign group based on a property's linear road frontage. A nonresidential property would be allowed

one sign per 500 linear feet of road frontage, with a minimum of 500 linear feet of separation.

The Commission requested that staff clarify the 500 linear foot separation applies on the same parcel, not between properties, and that if a property has less than 500 linear feet of frontage, one sign is permitted.

Commissioner Merrithew moved that the Planning Commission direct staff to modify the rural nonresidential individual sign area for ground and pole signs as follows:

- Ground Signs – Rural: Nonresidential
 - Arterial frontage from 100 square feet to 40 square feet
 - Collector frontage from 40 square feet to 20 square feet
- Pole Signs – Rural: Nonresidential
 - Arterial Frontage from 75 square feet to 30 square feet
 - Collector Frontage from 30 square feet to 20 square feet
- Reduce the maximum permitted sign height for ground signs from 12 feet to 6 feet.

Seconded by Vice Chair Combs. The motion passed: 8-0-1. Commissioner Madireddy absent for the vote.

Rural Village Signs

Vice Chair Combs requested staff eliminate halo lit illumination for murals and walls signs and eliminate external illumination for wall signs in Rural Villages.

Commissioner Kirshner requested staff revisit the electronic signs digital percentages in the Suburban policy area.

Commissioner Merrithew requested that staff delete the mural location text pertaining to murals facing side or rear parking lots and rely on the text prohibiting a mural from being located on the front building elevation [murals in general in all zoning districts].

The Commission requested staff revise the sign tables to include Rural Villages in a separate column and to clarify that for the purposes of signs, Village refers to properties within the Planned Development-Rural Village (PD-RV) zoning district or the Village Conservation Overlay District (VCOD).

The Commission requested that staff revise ground and pole sign provisions for rural village signs to:

- Reduce the maximum number of allowed ground and pole signs from 4 to 1.
- Reduce the maximum individual sign area for ground or pole signs as

follows:

- Arterial road frontage – from 100 square feet to 15 square feet
- Collector road frontage – from 75 square feet to 15 square feet
- Allow 1 sidewalk sign per building entry. The sign may be up to 6 square feet and up to three feet in height.
- Reduce the number of permitted wall signs from 4 per building plus 1 per building entry to 2 per building plus 1 per building entry.
- Revise the maximum sign area for an individual wall sign from “one percent of the building façade up to 120 square feet” to “five percent of the building façade up to 100 square feet”.
- Allow 1 mural per building up to 50 square feet in sign area.

Commissioner Miller moved that the Planning Commission direct staff to revise Chapter 8: Signs to be consistent with the motions and direction provided during the February 25, 2023, Planning Commission Work Session and forward to a future Planning Commission Work Session. (Seconded by Vice Chair Combs. The motion passed: 7-0-2. Commissioners Barnes and Madireddy absent for the vote.)

Item 1b – Chapter 2: Zoning Districts

Kate McConnell with the Department of Planning and Zoning provided the Planning Commission with an overview of staff recommended revisions to the draft Chapter 2: Zoning Districts.

Planning Commission Requests/Comments:

Chair Frank and Commissioner Miller suggested staff consider a minimum acreage triggering the requires mix of uses.

Vice Chair Combs requested staff provide additional information regarding the mandatory mix of product types and consider an acreage tiering approach. Vice Chair Combs also suggested that staff look for other opportunities where SCN may be appropriate and reconsider the SCN unit mix requirements.

Commissioner Kirshner suggested revising the alternative location criteria for the Suburban Compact Neighborhood to ensure adequate community parks and amenities.

Commissioner Merrithew requested staff look at existing lots for incremental additions to count towards the mix of uses for infill projects, bring back the SCN locational criteria for review by the Commission, including the policy guidance, research existing lots for the incremental addition proposals versus new lots and potentially differentiating the lots by the dates of the ordinances. Commissioner Merrithew also suggested that staff change the name of “Countywide Zoning Districts”.

Commissioner Miller suggested defining and broadening “mix of housing” to include number of garages and front or rear-loaded garages.

The Commission requested information regarding vesting, grandfathering, and nonconformities. The Commission also requested that staff work on the required mix of uses to prevent making smaller infill parcels undevelopable.

Charles Yudd asked the Commission to consider whether they want to include the minimum height requirements from the 2019 General Plan for new Transit Related Center (TRC) and Town Center (TC) rezonings. Chair Frank suggested that staff clarify how the reduced Floor Area Ratio for new rezonings to TC would apply.

Commissioner Merrithew moved that the Planning Commission direct staff to proceed with the additional staff recommended revisions to Chapter 2: Zoning Districts as presented at the February 25, 2023, Planning Commission Work Session as directed by the Commission at the meeting. (Seconded by Vice Chair Combs. The motion passed: 5-0-4. Commissioners Barnes, Hayes, Kirchner, and Madireddy absent for the vote.)

Item 1c – Chapter 3: Uses, Chapter 4: Use Specific Standards, Chapter 13 Definitions

Teresa Miller and Brian Wegener with the Department of Planning and Zoning provided the Planning Commission with an overview of staff recommended revisions to Chapters 3: Uses, Chapter 4: Use-Specific Standards and Chapter 13: Definitions.

Planning Commission Requests/Comments:

Chair Frank expressed concerns for parking for certain uses and the need for archery to be further discussed with the subcommittee in regard to recreational uses permitted.

Commissioner Merrithew recommended that staff not delete the Farm definition and keep the draft definition as a component of other terms. Commissioner Merrithew also requested that staff provide the uses subcommittee information regarding what the Code of Virginia says about limited distilleries.

Commissioner Miller requested staff provide additional information regarding parking in flex industrial uses.

The Commission discussed forming a subcommittee to review uses and recognized the subcommittee's work would have some overlap with Chapter 2: Zoning Districts, Chapter 3: Uses, Chapter 4: Use-Specific Standards, and Chapter 13: Definitions.

Commissioner Miller moved that the Planning Commission form a subcommittee to review the uses relative to the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite.

Seconded by Vice Chair Combs.

Commissioner Miller amended his motion to state Chair Frank to designate the subcommittee members.

The motion passed: 5-0-4. Commissioners Barnes, Hayes, Kirchner, and Madireddy absent for the vote.

Commissioner Merrithew moved that the Planning Commission direct staff to permit Data Centers as a use permitted in the MR-HI zoning district subject to Use-Specific Standards, as presented in the February 25, 2023, Planning Commission Work Session Memo. (Seconded by Vice Chair Combs. The motion passed: 5-0-4. Commissioners Barnes, Hayes, Kirchner, and Madireddy absent for the vote.)

Commissioner Merrithew moved that the Planning Commission not direct staff to delete the Farm definition as presented in the February 25, 2023, Planning Commission Work Session Memo and forward to a Planning Commission Uses Subcommittee Work Session for further discussion. (Seconded by Vice Chair Combs. The motion passed: 5-0-4. Commissioners Barnes, Hayes, Kirchner, and Madireddy absent for the vote.)

The full discussion can be viewed at the following link:
https://loudoun.granicus.com/player/clip/7198?meta_id=224693

Administrative Items

There were no administrative items.

Adjourn

Commissioner Miller motioned to adjourn the Work Session. Seconded by Vice Chair Combs. The motion passed unanimously.

(These minutes include a summary of the discussion on matters proposed, deliberated, or decided at this meeting. For a complete and detailed record of the discussions, please consult the video webcast for the meeting, available on the County's website, www.loudoun.gov.)