

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION HELD IN THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, 150 SOUTH MAIN STREET, LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA FEBRUARY 12, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M.

PRESENT: LEE MCLAUGHLIN, JR – CHAIR, DAVID WHITMORE, ROBERT LUCAS
ABSENT: KIMBERLY HINES, MELISSA HENNIS-VICE-CHAIR
SECRETARY: CHRIS SLAYDON
STAFF: BRANDY FLINT AND SAM CRICKENBERGER
COUNTY ATTORNEY: VICKIE HUFFMAN
OTHERS: WALT JOHNSON, MIKE RAKES, KEITH JARVIS

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Mr. McLaughlin convened the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

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The second agenda item was the election of officers.

Upon a motion by Mr. Lucas, seconded by Mr. Whitmore, the Commission voted unanimously to reappoint Mr. McLaughlin as Chair, Ms. Hennis as Vice-Chair, and Mr. Slaydon as Secretary.

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The third agenda item was the approval of the yearly meeting schedule.

Upon a motion by Mr. Lucas, seconded by Mr. Whitmore, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the schedule as presented with the November meeting being moved to November 12th at 7 p.m. due to a holiday on November 11th.

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The fourth agenda item was Citizen Comments.

There were none.

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The fifth agenda item was the review of the December 11, 2019 meeting minutes.

Upon a motion by Mr. Lucas, seconded by Mr. Whitmore, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the minutes with one correction on page four.

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The sixth agenda item was the Board of Supervisors' Report.

Mr. Slaydon advised that the Board of Supervisors approved the Special Exception applications for Holocene and AMC Pet Grooming per the Planning Commission's recommendations.

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The seventh agenda item was the public hearing for Byers Technical Institute to amend proffers in B-1 as follows:

Notice is hereby given per Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia and Section 802.03,04 and 05 of the County of Rockbridge Land Development Regulations public hearings will be held by the Rockbridge County Planning Commission on Wednesday, February 12, 2020, at or after 7:00 p.m. in the Meeting Room in the County Administrative Offices, 150 South Main Street, Lexington, Virginia 24450, followed by public hearings by the Board of Supervisors on Monday, February 24, 2020, at or after 6:00 p.m. at the same location to consider the following application: Byers Inc. (Byers Technical Institute), 2694 Glasgow Highway, Buena Vista, Virginia, applying to amend proffers associated with an earlier conditional rezoning of their property in the General Business (B-1) to remove the restriction as to hours of operation. Property owned by Byers Inc is located on the west side of Glasgow Highway approximately .45 miles north of its intersection with the Glasgow end of River Road in the Natural Bridge Magisterial District and further identified as Tax Map 108B1-1-A8.

Mr. Slaydon reviewed the application as submitted, the location, and zoning for the proffer amendment. He discussed the history of the property and noted that the current proffers stipulate that the business could not operate during funerals and limited the hours of operations. He then reviewed the new proffer, which states that the property will only be used for purposes related to the technical school.

Mr. Walt Johnson, Director of Byers Technical Institute, asked if the Commissioners had any questions. There were none. He advised that he is not a resident of Rockbridge County, and has been pleased with the ease of working with the County. He stated that Mr. Crickenberger and Ms. Flint were able to obtain a grant that was a tremendous help in facilitating the first expansion of the school. He then quoted facts and figures on the number of students and the amount that have been employed with an average employee wage of 45,000. He noted that hours of operation are currently Monday to Thursday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for the daylight classes and 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. for the night classes, with Friday being an open shop day and nothing on the weekends.

Mr. McLaughlin asked age range.

Mr. Johnson responded 16 with supervisor or parental permission. He noted dual enrollment with schools. He advised there is a hobby program as well with someone under 16 with an adult.

Mr. McLaughlin opened the public hearing at 7:17 p.m.

There were no comments.

Mr. McLaughlin closed the public hearing at 7:17 p.m.

Mr. Crickenberger noted that the property was initially zoned with proffers for a car lot when the church was in operation, and that is no longer the case.

Upon a motion by Mr. Whitmore, second by Mr. Lucas, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the proffer be amended, to remove the restriction as to hours of operation and with acceptance of the new proffer to utilize the property for a vocational school and associated activity per Section 605.02-33 of the Land Development Regulations, to the Conditional Rezoning to the General Business District (B-1), of the parcel on the West Side of Glasgow Highway, identified as Tax Map #108B1-1-A8, be approved.

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The eighth agenda item was for Byers Technical Institute to rezone from A-2 to B-1 as follows:

Notice is hereby given per Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia and Section 802.03,04 and 05 of the County of Rockbridge Land Development Regulations public hearings will be held by the Rockbridge County Planning Commission on Wednesday, February 12, 2020, at or after 7:00 p.m. in the Meeting Room in the County Administrative Offices, 150 South Main Street, Lexington, Virginia 24450, followed by public hearings by the Board of Supervisors on Monday, February 24, 2020, at or after 6:00 p.m. at the same location to consider the following application: Byers Inc. (Byers Technical Institute), 2694 Glasgow Highway, Buena Vista, Virginia, applying to conditionally rezone an adjacent one-acre parcel from Agricultural and General Use (A-2) to General Business (B-1) to expand a vocational training school per Section 605.02.33 of the Land Development Regulations. The one-acre parcel adjoins the existing technical school. Property owned by Byers Inc is located on the west side of Glasgow Highway approximately .45 miles north of its intersection with the Glasgow end of River Road in the Natural Bridge Magisterial District and further identified as Tax Map 108B1-1-A8.

Mr. Slaydon reviewed the application as submitted, the location, the zoning, and noted this is a conditional rezoning with proffers. He stated the proffer would be the same as what was just approved on the BTI property adjoining the recently purchased church property.

Mr. Johnson advised that the church has not been in operation in over four years. When the opportunity came, the school purchased the property. He noted the first area that was the sanctuary and back to the baptism room would be renovated into a large classroom. He said he has 28 daytime students and does not have enough classroom space or break room space in the current school building. He advised he could hold up to 30 students in the church and that this room would also be used to teach the CPR and First Aid training for the students. He indicated that he would be making that course available to the public as well. Mr. Johnson then advised that the rear of the baptismal area where the church office space and Sunday school rooms are will be turned into dorm room space to accommodate out of town students. He noted that he had requests for housing because there was a lack of affordable housing available in the area for those students. The conversion of the back rooms into dorm rooms will alleviate that problem. He noted the plans are for nine dorm rooms and bathrooms. He advised they will be purchasing the adjoining property with the trailer. The trailer will be instructor housing, and there will be someone on-site to keep an eye on the student housing. Additional parking spaces will be added as well.

Mr. McLaughlin opened the public hearing at 7:27 p.m.

There were no comments.

Mr. McLaughlin closed the public hearing at 7:27 p.m.

Mr. Lucas asked if this site is on public water and sewer.

Mr. Crickenberger advised that it is not on public water and sewer and that the Health Department will need to approve the well or wells and drainfield or new drainfield.

Upon a motion by Mr. Whitmore, second by Mr. Lucas, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the Conditional Rezoning of the 1-acre parcel on the west side of Glasgow Highway, identified as Tax Map #108B1-1-A7, owned by Byers Inc., from Agricultural and General Uses District (A-1) to General Business District (B-1), with acceptance of the proffered condition, be approved.

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The ninth agenda item was the comprehensive plan review for VMI's parking.

Mr. Crickenberger advised that this is a State project and is mostly exempt from zoning, but the Commission has to determine if the plan is in line with the County's Comprehensive Plan. He noted that there is language in the Comprehensive Plan to established Institutional Zones, which would eliminate the need for this type of review. Mr. Crickenberger advised that the VMI Cadets currently have to park in shopping center parking lots, and staff is excited to see this parking lot being planned. He noted that this parking lot would be for Cadet vehicles and will allow people to be bused on campus for larger events, which will alleviate issues with parking and traffic near campus. He advised that the plans do coincide with several goals and objectives mention in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Keith Jarvis, with VMI, indicated that this lot would hold up to 300 cars. He noted that only First classman and National Guardsmen are allowed to have cars on campus and this parking lot removes the vehicles from the shopping center parking lot. Mr. Jarvis noted this will allows for a VMI parking lot, which will provide a shuttle service for the vehicle owners to get back and forth to their cars during semester breaks. He advised that it would be the most significant movement of the vehicles from the lot. Mr. Jarvis stated that in late spring to early summer, the project will go out to bid, and construction will occur during the summer with completion scheduled for the summer of 2021.

Mr. McLaughlin asked about additional parking lots.

Mr. Jarvis indicated there is a second one shown in the master plan, but there is no set funding source for that one. He explained the location of the second lot, which is upslope of the proposed one.

Mr. McLaughlin asked about the proximity to residential neighborhoods.

Mr. Crickenberger advised that the site will be visible from residential neighborhoods and that VMI will plant a buffer, and the lighting will be within the County regulations.

Mr. Jarvis advised they will comply with dark sky requirements and will reduce the proposed height of the lights to 25 instead of 30.

Mr. McLaughlin voiced his concerns about the impact on traffic, especially with the high school being here.

Mr. Jarvis advised that the Physical Plant, which is located there now, will still have the traffic coming in and out daily, and he did not feel there would be a significant impact on traffic since the cars would be parked and only moved during times of school breaks or deployments.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that VMI desperately needs this parking, and it will reduce the impact on traffic and parking in Lexington during larger school events.

Mr. Lucas stated that he was in agreeance with Mr. McLaughlin and noted that this complies with the Comprehensive Plan, and he supports it. The Commission agreed unanimously that the Comprehensive Plan supports this project.

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The tenth agenda item was a preliminary discussion for Kelly Peters to rezone from R-1 to A-T.

Mr. Slaydon advised that the owner of the property and the buyer of the property are both present and would like to discuss the option of rezoning. He noted that the adjoining Squires property was downzoned a couple of years ago. Mr. Slaydon pointed out that there is a significant floodplain on the property along Mill Creek. He concluded that access to the property is off Meadowview Road.

Ms. Kelly Peters, the potential buyer, advised that she would like to build her home on this property and move there with more than six chickens. She indicated that she would like to have a hobby farm like she had as a kid that would have a guest cottage and a barn with a horse and other livestock.

Mr. McLaughlin asked if anyone had talked to the neighbors.

Mr. Charlie Hileman, the current owner, indicated that he has, and the responses have been favorable.

Ms. Peters noted that she wants to keep it like it is, and she does not have any plans to build multiple homes like she could if it stayed zoned as R-1.

Mr. Crickenberger advised that up to 13 homes could be built on the property based on the R-1 zoning, but the property does not lend itself to that use unless a bridge is built over Mill Creek. The neighbors were more comfortable with a hobby farm versus a residential neighborhood.

Mr. Lucas, Mr. McLaughlin, and Mr. Whitmore all agreed that they did not see an issue with the rezoning.

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The eleventh agenda item was a continued discussion on Group/Transitional Homes.

Mr. Slaydon advised that Pastor Brown and his organization are no longer looking at the property in Goshen because there was a contract placed on it. Pastor Brown thanked staff and Planning Commission for their time and research. Mr. Slaydon advised that Pastor Brown plans to move forward with his plan, but he did not think that it would be done in Rockbridge County.

The Planning Commission agreed that it did not want to pursue the discussion on group/transition homes any further.

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Mr. Crickenberger advised he is retiring at the end of June.

Mr. McLaughlin thanked Mr. Crickenberger for his many years of service, his guidance, and his friendship. He stated that he hates to see him retire and congratulated him on doing so.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned upon a unanimous vote after a motion by Mr. Lucas, and a second by Mr. Whitmore.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christopher T. Slaydon
Secretary