

Northumberland County Planning Commission
August 17, 2023
Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Northumberland County Planning Commission was held on August 17, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in person at the Northumberland Courts Building and using Zoom (telephonic meeting) with the following attendance:

Chris Cralle	Present	Garfield Parker	Present
Vivian Diggs	Present	Roger McKinley	Absent
Alfred Fisher	Present	Heidi Wilkins-Corey	Present
Ed King	Absent	Charles Williams	Present
John Kost	Present	Patrick O'Brien	Absent
Richard Haynie	Present		

Others in attendance:
Stuart McKenzie (County Planner)

RE: CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Cralle gave the invocation, and Mr. Fisher led the commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

RE: AGENDA

Mr. Kost made a motion to accept the agenda, and Mrs. Diggs seconded the motion. All voted in favor of accepting the agenda.

RE: MINUTES- July 20, 2023

Mr. Kost made a motion to accept the July 20, 2023 minutes, and Mr. Parker seconded the motion. All voted in favor of accepting the minutes.

RE: COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Chairman Fisher inquired about the meeting room table set up (spaced apart 6 ft.). Mr. Fisher stated that the tables are still set up like there is a pandemic. Mr. Fisher asked staff if the tables could be returned to the pre-pandemic setup. There was discussion amongst the members as to what type of set up that was. Mr. Parker suggested putting the tables in a "V" pattern, others suggested putting all the tables together to form a large conference table. The members stated that we can try it the latter way, and modify it if need be.

RE: STAFF MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Staff members did not have any comments.

RE: CITIZENS' COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

RE: PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no public hearings scheduled.

RE: WORK SESSION ITEMS

There were no work session items scheduled.

RE: DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. McKenzie stated he wanted to review the battery energy storage zoning ordinance, however, Mr. Marston was not able to attend the meeting, due to a family emergency. Mr. McKenzie stated that he wanted Mr. Marston's input on how he feels about the ordinance, and staff stated we could revisit this next month.

Mr. McKenzie then began to discuss the county owned property review, that had been started previously by the Planning Commission. Staff had created two maps for each county property, one with a recent aerial photo, and another USGS map showing topography. The aerial photos show how much of the property is in farmland vs forest (or marsh), and the topographic maps show flat areas, drainageways, streambeds as well as steep slopes. Mr. McKenzie started by reviewing the properties where the commission left off at the July 2023 meeting. Mr. McKenzie stated the acreage, physical constraints, whether there is access to road frontage for each county owned properties, as well as the historical use of the property and the commission discussed potential future uses of the properties to the county. Some members wanted to investigate selling the Poor House Tract on Dodlyt Road, while others argued that selling it just for selling it is not good enough, it needs to be a reason for selling it. Mrs. Wilkins-Corey stated that the Board of Supervisors will make the decision to sell or not to sell, as they have that authority, the Planning Commission is only making a recommendation to the Board. In discussing the county owned property near Dameron's Marsh, Mr. McKenzie informed the commission that the Virginia Department of Conservation has made it known that they are looking to purchase properties inland from their Natural Area Preserves (of which Dameron's Marsh is one), to offset land lost due to sea level rise. Mrs. Wilkins-Corey asked the hypothetical question, is the county going to protect the shoreline of the county owned property near Dameron's Marsh? If not, then Mrs. Wilkins-Corey stated that we might as well as sell it to the State, they may have the funds to protect the shoreline of Dameron's Marsh. There was some discussion of the appraised value of properties, the value of timber on properties, any revenue generated from cell phone and FM radio tower leases, as well as the cost incurred in order to bring a property to the real estate market (such as surveys, etc.) The commission also reiterated that they would like to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the proceeds from any sale of county owned land would be set aside in a dedicated fund to improve and expand public water access within Northumberland County. After reviewing the 58 county owned properties, the Planning

Commission recommended five (5) properties to investigate selling. The Planning Commission wanted to make sure that the Board knows that they are not recommending selling the properties, but to assess how much income any of these properties are producing (if any), and an assessment of costs associated with putting properties on the real estate market. The Planning Commission members stated that only after you know the income being produced by the property and do a cost benefit analysis of the cost to put the property on the market, then would you really know how much profit the county would receive. The estimated profit would need to be balanced with future needs that the property could provide before making a decision to sell. The county owned properties the Planning Commission recommended to the Board to investigate selling were: 1) The property between Belles Cove Rd and Lodge Rd, 2) The Poor House Tract, Dodlyt Rd., 3) The property West of Dameron's Marsh, 4) The property on left side of the entrance to Indian Creek Estates, and 5) The waterfront lot on Ute Rd in Indian Creek Estates.

RE: PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

RE: ADJOURNMENT

At 8:52 pm, Mr. Kost made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Wilkins-Corey. The adjournment vote was as follows:

Chris Cralle	Aye	Garfield Parker	Aye
Vivian Diggs	Aye	Roger McKinley	Absent
Alfred Fisher	Aye	Heidi Wilkins-Corey	Aye
Ed King	Absent	Charles Williams	Aye
John Kost	Aye	Patrick O'Brien	Absent
Richard Haynie	n/a		