

***AGRICULTURAL AND PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT
RIGHTS COMMITTEE MINUTES
February 28, 2022***

The meeting of the Stafford County Agricultural and Purchase of Development Rights Committee for Monday, February 28, 2022, was called to order at 7:07 p.m. in the County ABC Conference Room in the George L. Gordon Government Center by Kathy Baker, Assistant Planning Director.

Members Present: John Howe, Chad Young, Carlos Bratton, Jeff Adams

Members Absent: Elizabeth Cameron, Benjamin Rudasill, Alandra Simmons

Staff Present: Kathy Baker and Vicki Sowers

1. Call to Order

Ms. Kathy Baker called the meeting to order and confirmed there was a quorum.

2. Welcome New Member – Elizabeth Cameron (Garrisonville District)

Ms. Cameron was not present - welcome was skipped until next meeting when she is in attendance.

3. Organize Committee

- **Election of Officers:** John Howe has served his two consecutive terms which is the max according to the by-laws. Ms. Baker opened the floor to nominations.

Chairman: Mr. Howe nominated Carlos Bratton. With no other nominations, motion to close by Jeff Adams. Vote was unanimous – 4-0. Ms. Baker turned the meeting over to Mr. Bratton as newly appointed Chairman.

Vice-Chairman: Chad Young nominated John Howe. With no other nominations, motion to close by Mr. Adams. Vote was unanimous – 4-0.

- **2022 Meeting Calendar:**

It was noted that none of the meetings fall on a holiday. Mr. Adams motioned to adopt the meeting calendar as is written (4th Monday of each month) and change as or if necessary. Mr. Howe seconded. Vote unanimous (4-0) to accept.

- **2022 Work Plan:**

Ms. Baker provided the work plan document from last year (which was a carry over from 2020).

1. The Farmer's Market is still an annual part of the committee's agenda. Rules and regulations are reviewed in the fall for any updates or changes.
2. PDR application round with the revised process. There are currently two PDR applications submitted under to 2017 round. A new round may be open this year.
3. Education/Outreach- still applicable. More discussion with staff updates.
4. The Board's Healthy Growth initiative- Ms. Baker will send out the Board's goals and recommendations for the next two fiscal years.
5. Land Conservation update which will be discussed in more detail with staff updates.

6. Tracking of proposed legislation in the General Assembly – keep members apprised of activity. Mr. Adams agreed that this should remain to stay up to date with changes. Ms. Baker said this category can include anything agriculture related that should be taken to the General Assembly for consideration.

Ms. Baker asked if anyone had any additional thoughts or recommendations for the work plan. She asked for any questions or thoughts to be emailed to her within the next month to be able to finish by next meeting.

- **By-laws:**

Ms. Baker advised that changes are not mandatory. They were last updated in 2016. Mr. Howe advised that the by-laws say that a Secretary is to be elected for the committee. Ms. Baker explained that staff typically serves as the secretary and it was decided to keep in the by-laws for future use if needed. Ms. Baker asked for any updates or changes to be sent to her so that a vote can be considered at next meeting.

4. Public Presentations

Mr. Adams made a motion to move the Farmers Market Applications up in the agenda (before Public Presentations) so the applicants would not have to sit through the other parts of the agenda. Mr. Howe seconded. Mr. Bratton called for a vote. Approved 4-0.

(After Staff Update and parts of New Business)

Mr. John Harris requested to make his presentation after the Staff Update as it relates to his remarks. Mr. Bratton called for vote to move the agenda item. Unanimous 4-0 vote approved.

Mr. Bratton introduced and welcomed Mr. John Harris.

Mr. Harris made a presentation to the committee regarding his experience and education with the PDR program. He has two approved applications and wanted to share his first-hand knowledge of the process.

1. 100 acres (Hartwood) Dodd's Corner/Farm
2. 125 acres Spotted Tavern Farm and Huffman Tract.

Mr. Harris shared his recommendations and suggestions for how to improve the process for the applicants and ways to enhance the overall program and the role of the PDR committee.

1. Long term planning = long term return
2. Use certified Open Space Appraisers (not just lowest price)
3. Convey to the Board – use appropriate sources
4. Conduct work sessions to educate the BOS and applicants– Need better understanding and active communication with the Board (Comprehensive Plans specific to Open Source and PDR)
5. Cost to develop rural areas – transportation, infrastructure, schools
6. PDR Funding Sources – include businesses in the conversations. Opportunity for Corp. America to participate in Open Space programs.
7. General Fund – investment in savings
8. Timing – Streamline processes for quicker turn around. Mr. Adams joined in agreement regarding this issue. Mr. Bratton also agreed to expedite the process – 3-4 years is too long.

Mr. Harris thanked everyone for their work and is appreciative for the opportunity he has had to use his land in the PDR program. Mr. Bratton thanked Mr. Harris for coming and said the information he presented was very helpful and informative.

5. Staff Update

- **Purchase of DRP Funding and Apps**
- **Land Conservation Program Improvements**

Ms. Baker advised that funding as of this meeting is \$834,000 (and some change). By the end of the fiscal year, another \$134,000 will be added making total funding by July = \$979,000 in the program and should be enough to open a new application round. She said \$150,000 has already been received from state funds – Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services which the committee has three years to use on any project, and then will have opportunity to ask for the matching funds from other matching funds organizations. On April 5th, the Community Economic Development Committee (CEDC) will be meeting to discuss the Ordinance changes and recommendations so it can be sent to the Board for approval. Once that is done, the Ordinance can be included with the new appraisal process where every property will have to get an appraisal which will be used by the Board to determine PDR values. Ms. Baker also advised that in the upcoming April meeting, they will review and formalize the Northern Virginia Trust Partnership for FY23 – beginning July 1st. Ms. Baker reviewed a list of 7 total items, derived from the BOS retreat, that they will be considering at this time:

1. Name Change – Agricultural Land Conservation Committee (Committee already voted on this last year)
2. Ordinance Amendments
3. Developing the Conservation and Easement Appraisal Process
4. Establish Formal Partnership with NVTP. If partnership established:
5. Development of the donated Easement process (Committee reviewed last year)
6. Education Outreach Strategy
7. Create a sustained funding source (a year from July 2022 with rollback tax) and hiring a Land Conservation Administrator to facilitate the PDR and Donated Easement programs.

Ms. Baker said she will send final versions and information after the April 5th CEDC meeting.

Mr. Adams asked about approaching the Board regarding on-going funds to support purchases and programs. Ms. Baker said the Board has been briefed on requests (\$500,000 - \$1M) and reminded the committee that once the CEDC makes their recommendations, these items will go in front of the Board. At that point, anyone can make a presentation to the Board at the public hearings. She also recommended each member to speak with their direct Board Member to let them know thoughts.

Mr. Young asked about the appraisal process. If they go to this, will it be solely based on the appraisal? Ms. Baker explained – Yes. Most of the funding organizations require an appraisal, so we want to include that in the formal process. More discussion ensued with Mr. Adams, Ms. Baker and Mr. Young.

Mr. Adams asked about the application process in September – same as previous years? Send letters to possible eligible applicants, hold meeting with presentations? Ms. Baker advised yes and last time there were about 600 eligible letters that went out with about 30-40 people who showed up for the meeting.

There were 12 applications which has taken 5 years to get through them all. Currently there are 2 left to complete the process – the Jones and Moore properties.

6. New Business

New Business voted to move up – before Public Presentations.

- **Farmers Market Application – Long Family Market**

Ms. Baker advised that the Long’s application is basically the same as submitted last year and turned the floor over to Ms. Robin Long. She explained that their market averages about 62 small businesses each week and use the marketplace as a platform to launch food-based businesses. To date, they have had about 23 local small business that have taken advantage of the opportunity to get out in front of customers and build their customer base.

Ms. Baker passed out a map to show location of the markets at the Staffordborough Commuter Lot. She explained that the County has submitted the permit with VDOT and waiting for the approval before the end of March.

Mr. Howe asked about the location/distance between the Long Family Market and the other applicant – Locklear Market. He asked, being in close proximity, if there were any conflicts or issues with parking. Mr. Marshall Locklear explained details of access and both applicants agreed that there are no issues. Mr. Adams said that it is the same layout they have had for the last 3-4 years.

Mr. Howe motioned to approve the Long Family Market. Mr. Young seconded. Mr. Bratton called for a vote – APPROVED (3-0-1) – Mr. Adams abstained.

- **Farmers Market Application – Locklear Market**

Mr. Howe motioned to approve with the understanding that the distance [for locally-grown produce] is to be 125 miles, not 150 miles as is written in the application. Mr. Adams said it is a typo. Regulations do say 125. Mr. Young seconded the motion. Mr. Bratton called for a vote – APPROVED (3-0-1) – Mr. Adams abstained.

The applicants, Mr. Marshall Locklear and Ms. Robin Long left the meeting.

- **Appraisals for PDR Application Properties** (discussed after and along with Staff Update)

Ms. Baker advised that the Appraisal Process would establish an Appraisal Committee in the revised new Ordinance. The committee would include a member of the Commissioner of the Revenue, Land Appraiser, and a member of this committee that would review each appraisal that comes through. There is no current process in the Ordinance. Ms. Baker will send out what is proposed before the next CEDC meeting so everyone can see it in writing.

7. Approval of Minutes (moved after Public Presentation)

- November 22, 2021

Mr. Howe moved to approve minutes. Mr. Young seconded. Mr. Bratton called for vote. Minutes approved. 4-0.

8. Member Comments

Mr. Adams had several issues to bring before the committee.

1. He advised that within the last three months, he spoke to the BOS in a public meeting to advised them that \$50M is not = to \$50M with regard to PDR/Open Space. \$50M will cost another \$50M in the next 10 years when these funds are spent on schools and other infrastructure whereas, \$50M for PDR program is in fact \$50M – it's for Open Space.
2. Tri-County member resigned due to moving out of state. He said that he has recommended Mr. Howe (an affiliate member for years) to fill the position. His name will go to the sate to be voted on.
3. In January, a slave cemetery was found on his property. NAACP is looking into it – along with other lost/forgotten cemeteries.
4. Cluster Developments – Developer should give 5-10 acres – or % of overall size of the property - for farm lots as part of the deal. Would be for the community and include horses and gardens.
5. He said he has been speaking to the Board of Supervisors regarding the lack of Ag education within the county and even brought his goat in for a visit. There is only one Ag teacher in Stafford County who has three classes per day -allowed no more than 20 students per class/per semester (60 kids in the entire county).

Mr. Bratton chimed in to advise that he too has been speaking with Ms. Tinesha Allen regarding education and said she is interested in what we can do. What can she bring to her counterparts and present to the Board. Mr. Adams suggested Ag Labs. He said he will be suggesting that the new high school should have two Ag Labs with 2 ½ teachers. He said, in his presentation to the Board tomorrow night, he will explain how the Ag Labs can generate \$.5M per year. Mr. Bratton also agreed to the need for Ag Labs and said he wants to see the labs and education also assist the Veteran community.

9. Next Meeting

- March 28, 2022 (Discussed possible location change)

10. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss Mr. Bratton adjourned the meeting at 8:27pm.