

***AGRICULTURAL AND PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT  
RIGHTS COMMITTEE MINUTES  
June 28, 2021***

The meeting of the Stafford County Agricultural and Purchase of Development Rights Committee for Monday, June 28, 2021, was called to order at 7:02 p.m. in the ABC Conference Room in the George L. Gordon Government Center by John Howe, Chairman.

Members Present: John Howe, Chad Young, Carlos Bratton, and Benjamin Rudasill

Members Absent: Robert Broxton, Alandra Simmons, and Jeff Adams

Staff Present: Kathy Baker (virtual) and Lindsey Marr

1. Call to Order

Mr. Howe called the meeting to order and asked Ms. Marr to call roll. Ms. Marr called roll and Mr. Howe stated there was a quorum.

2. Public Presentations

3. Staff Update

- PDR 2017 Applications Update

Ms. Baker stated they now had 12 easements with a total of about 1,035 acres of land. They are currently working on the Kevin Jones property on Forest Lane Road, they have applied and received about \$46,000 from Virginia Land Conservation Foundation and an additional \$54,000 from VDACS. VLCF has their new application round opening in August so they are going to try to get the additional \$62,000 needed from there. They are hoping to have all those grant funds by the end of the year, they already have the County funds. The Littlejohn property on McCarty Road with partial A-2 zoning has the appraisal in process and the County is working with the owners on the draft deed. They are hoping that one is ready to submit to the USDA by the end of July. Those are the last two applications from the 2017 PDR round. The Caton property on Dunbar Drive will not be going forward due to all the changes to the application, the County Attorney determined they would need to reapply if they still wanted to be considered. The Moore property at the end of New Hope Church Road also wanted too many changes and could no longer move forward through the process.

4. New Business

- Board of Supervisors FY2022 Recommendations – Overview of Tasks

Ms. Baker stated she sent out information regarding the PDR/Land Conservation program improvements prior to the meeting. She wanted to spell out in this outline what all the Committee really needed to focus on and how they wanted to go through this process. She gave a quick overview of the items and then opened it up for the Committee to discuss.

1. PDR Ranking Criteria – evaluate criteria and determine changes; consider separate categories or separate applications based on property type; consider allocation of funds for different

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- categories; compare to ranking categories from matching fund agencies; add descriptions to criteria
2. PDR Ordinance – revising the Ordinance based on the changes made to the PDR ranking criteria; A-2 zoning inclusion
  3. Property/Easement Appraisals – the Board has requested that the Committee establish an appraisal process instead of the current PDR methodology, they want the Committee to use the actual appraised value of a property and easement
  4. PDR Application Improvements – reflect the changes to the ranking criteria and the PDR Ordinance; making it more user friendly, help land owners to understand the process more easily
  5. Northern Virginia Conservation Trust – Board has requested we work with them to see if we can have a formal MOU with them; NVCT would have a dedicated staff person focused on Stafford County who would work on outreach to property owners; a program for voluntary easements and land donations
  6. Outreach/Education – if NVCT assists they can tie this into the PDR program; making the website more user friendly
  7. Timeline – We should have some recommendations to take back to the Board by the end of the year; there are several Board members leaving, should aim to have a full recommendation to them by January 2022

Ms. Baker asked for any questions and opened the meeting up to Committee discussion.

Mr. Howe asked what specifically they would need to get back to the Board on, the full PDR ranking criteria and Ordinance along with the MOU with NVCT.

Ms. Baker stated they didn't need final documents, just the changes that the Committee would like to see in place. She stated has a meeting scheduled with the Commissioner of the Revenue's office to discuss where it looked like A-1 property values were headed. If property values changed that would be important information to pass along to the Board.

Mr. Howe asked for a refresher on the change that was recently passed regarding A-1 zoning.

Ms. Baker stated that there was a minimum density of one lot per six acres, but the minimum lot size was still three acres. She asked the Committee if they wanted to allow A-2 zoned properties to be permitted to apply for the PDR program.

Mr. Young stated that according to the owners of these properties, he didn't think many of them would be interested in the program due to the majority of them being developers. He stated he also did not feel there would be many A-1 owners interested if property values decrease due to the density change.

Ms. Baker stated this was the type of information to pass to the Board so that they would understand the effect that going by appraisals would have on the program itself. She asked the Committee if they had

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any specific thoughts regarding the ranking criteria, such as should the categories all be equal or should agricultural properties continue to be weighted more heavily.

Mr. Rudasill asked for clarification on the categories.

Ms. Baker stated the categories were agricultural, forest, environmental, and cultural/historical. She stated there is more grant money available depending on the type of property so it could open up more funding opportunities. She stated that so far all their rounds have been mostly focused on agricultural properties.

Mr. Howe stated he could see value in expanding the information the Committee gets during the application process regarding cultural and environmental significance of the properties.

Mr. Young stated he did not see the benefit of splitting the properties into multiple pots, and that he agreed with Mr. Howe that more general information regarding the cultural and environmental significance of each property could help them to find more funding.

Ms. Baker said she would start working something up using that information.

- Committee Name Change

Ms. Baker stated the Board had requested they consider changing the name of the committee to Agricultural/Land Conservation Committee to make it a little more understandable to County residents.

Mr. Rudasill made a motion to recommend changing the PDR Committee's name to the Agricultural/Land Conservation Committee.

Mr. Young seconded the motion.

The motion passed 4-0.

5. Unfinished Business

- PDR Application Process Review
- PDR Ranking Criteria

Ms. Baker stated she would come back with some recommended changes, some more information on the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, more information from the Commissioner of Revenue, and then the Committee can decide whether they want to reach out to property owners or have a public information session to see the viability of the program with these changes in place.

6. Approval of Minutes

- March 22, 2021

Mr. Young made a motion to approve the minutes from March 22, 2021.

Mr. Rudasill seconded the motion.

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The motion passed 4-0.

7. Member Comments

Mr. Bratton stated he spoke with VSU's Small Farm Outreach Program, and that they would provide their agents to any educational opportunity Stafford might want to pursue.

Mr. Howe and Mr. Rudasill commented that they prefer in person meetings to virtual ones.

8. Next Meeting

- July 26, 2021

Mr. Rudasill and Mr. Howe stated they would not be present at the July 26, 2021 meeting.

9. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss Mr. Howe adjourned the meeting at 7:48pm.