

12-12-14 Roundtable Stakeholders Discussion Meeting Discussion Summary

Staff: Becky Burns, Engineering Department; Jennie Brockman, Planning and Zoning;
Alexandra Beaulieu, Planning and Zoning;

Planning Commission: Steve Stolipher; Gary Phalen, and Peter Fricke;

Public: Dave Hartley, Eastern Panhandle Homebuilders Association; Carla Coffey, Arcadia Development; Lee Snyder, Snyder Environmental and Jefferson Utilities, Inc.; Paul Raco, consultant, PJ Raco Consulting; Mike Shepp, Allegheny Surveys, Inc.; Karen Brill, Allegheny Surveys, Ins.; Lisa McCauley, Allegheny Surveys, Inc.; Matt Powell, Dan Ryan Builders; Matt Knott, River Riders, Inc.; Danny Lutz, County resident.

- Concern for length of processing time for building permits for new homes and requested a streamlined process or mechanism for improved communication with builders (e.g.: 7 weeks for a project in 2013; BB confirmed that during that time frame the office was particularly busy and they were informing applicants that it would take 14-21 working days to process).
- Request for clarification on fire protection of floors – sprinklers or drywall under floors vs dimensional lumber.
 - Recommends providing additional options to meet requirements. Alternatives may include pre-treated I-joists or fire retardant paint, or 1 ½ x 11 7/8 LBL that meet requirements.
- Impact fees – concern about new land costs for schools (BB said this will be addressed within the first quarter of 2015).
- Request to consider shortening the Major Subdivision process. Recommended considering the following options:
 - Eliminate public hearing at preliminary plat stage.
 - Simplify the Concept Plan phase; cut down on public hearing advertising time; Concept Plan stage is too detailed.
- Economy is improving and activity may pick up – staff should be prepared to handle processing quickly.
- Consider amending Subdivision Regulations which require Planning Commission review of utility easements for water and sewer as these requirements are cumbersome and unnecessary (multiple comments).
 - Public utilities are not exempt from review as per the Subdivision Regulations.
 - Other easements are not required (Frontier or cable, etc.) to process through Planning and Zoning
 - What is the benefit to the public with water and sewer easement being reviewed by P&Z staff? Cost burden to landowner – lawyer, surveyor, consultant, etc.

- Timing: County defines “day” as work day; state defines “day” as calendar day. (Staff will review state code to confirm)
- State Code 8-A(5) mentions one step with two 45 day periods for major subdivision review – completeness review and final review. The Subdivision Regulations require 45 days for Concept Plan; 90 days for preliminary plat and 90 days for Final Plat.
 - Review state code and amend Subdivision Regulations to more closely align to the required process.
 - Consider eliminating the Public Hearing for Final Plats – it is possible that state code would allow without legislative amendment.
- Section 24.300 (page 75) of Subdivision Regulations:
 - “No process or procedural waivers shall be granted.” This requirement is only in the Subdivision Regulations and is not in State Code.
 - Previously, a small project could request to advance to final stages.
 - Staff will review/discuss with Legal staff.
- Noted that there have been positive changes related to merger/boundary line adjustments
- Recommends that municipal and County agencies work together to create a central database to include a GIS layer with zoning, tax map, floodplain data and topography, water and sewer line locations and providers, etc. (e.g.: Loudoun County website).
 - Digitize documents for ease of access.
 - Parcel clickability with all parcel data accessible to the public.
- Recommends including recreational use along the river as a principal permitted use.
 - Recommended looking into Virginia and Maryland rural categories that allow recreational uses to see what language is used.
 - Amend current Zoning Ordinance to allow recreational uses in non-commercial zones (i.e.: Rural).
- Recommends that campgrounds should be permitted in rural zones because a campground in a commercial zone is not conducive to type of business. County should amend Campground regulations.
- Reduce residential impact fees (Engineering is working on drafting a recommendation to reduce and hopeful to have accomplished in the first quarter of 2015).
- Amend required setbacks next to unusable property or easements. BZA always approves this type of variance request. In the interest of time and simplicity, modify the Zoning Ordinance to allow a reduced setback for structures abutting an easement or greenspace lot.
- Consider expediting approval process for historic preservation sites and eliminating other barriers to historic preservation efforts, including eliminating overhead utility lines.
 - Consider provisions to allow historic and accurate camping scenarios in addition to the proposed recreational camping in non-commercial areas
- Questioned the change in the depth of gravel for parking lots (now 6” vs 9”) – what bearing capacity is required

- Facilitate estate transfers
- Review County Regulations to ensure someone with High School education can understand them and eliminate conflicts within the regulations.
- Review Agriculture Technology policies and make changes to ensure that activities such as “controlled environmental production” are considered agricultural (not commercial) and therefore permitted in the Rural zone.