

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2007**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Walter L. Alcorn, At-Large
Frank A. de la Fe, Hunter Mill District
James R. Hart, Commissioner At-large
Nancy Hopkins, Dranesville District
Kenneth A. Lawrence, Providence District
Rodney L. Lusk, Lee District

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Timothy J. Sargeant, At-Large

OTHER PLANNING COMMISSIONER PRESENT:

Peter F. Murphy, Jr., Springfield District

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT:

Barbara J. Lippa, Executive Director, Planning Commission Office
Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk to the Planning Commission

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICES STAFF PRESENT:

Michelle Brickner, Director, Site Development Services

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING STAFF PRESENT:

Noel Kaplan, Senior Environmental Planner, Planning Division (PD)
Pamela Nee, Chief, Environment and Development Review Branch, PD
John Bell, Planner III, PD

OTHERS PRESENT:

Kambiz Agazi, Environmental Coordinator, Office of the County Executive
Michael Rolband, President, Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc. (WSSI)
Mark Headly, WSSI
Thomas Robertson, Public Affairs Specialist, Northern Virginia Building Industry Association (NVBIA)
Emily English, Program Manager, Green Building, Energy and Green Building Department, National Association of Home Builders
Jon Lindgren, Fairfax Chapter President, NVBIA/Pulte Homes
Jennifer Gilbert, Christopher Consultants, Ltd.
Randy Melvin, Winchester Homes, Inc.
John Matusik, The Engineering Group, Inc.
Arjay West, West Properties
Lou Sagatov, Sagatov Associates, Inc.

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Chairman James R. Hart called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. in the Board Conference Room at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia. He noted that the first item on the agenda was approval of minutes.

Commissioner de la Fe MOVED THAT THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES OF APRIL 19, 2007 BE APPROVED.

The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

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Noel Kaplan, Senior Environmental Planner, Planning Division, Department of Planning and Zoning, said this meeting would continue the Committee's discussion on green building practices. He noted that at the end of January, the Committee had received a draft Policy Plan Amendment to strengthen air quality guidance and also incorporate concepts related to green buildings. Mr. Kaplan stated that the Committee had received presentations from representatives of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and the ENERGY STAR Program and had also taken a tour of the Wetlands Studies and Solutions, Inc.'s (WSSI) "green" building in Gainesville. He indicated that representatives of the Northern Virginia Building Industry Association (NVBIA) and the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) would provide their perspectives on green buildings to the Committee this evening.

Thomas Robertson, Public Affairs Specialist, NVBIA, explained that NVBIA's Board of Directors had recently adopted the NAHB's Model Green Building Guidelines as their formal green building program, and had also established a Green Building Committee, composed of production builders, custom builders, and NVBIA associate members, to adapt the newly adopted guidelines to Fairfax County. He noted that the committee planned to develop an education program to help NVBIA's members learn and apply the green building tools.

In response to a question from Commissioner Alcorn, Mr. Robertson stated that the USGBC's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Homes (LEED-H) program was a pilot program and had not been adopted by any jurisdiction. He pointed out that the LEED-H mandates were very costly for consumers, only served the interests of the people directly associated with USGBC, and were not designed to be adaptable to different regions across the country.

Responding to another question from Commissioner Alcorn, Jon Lindgren, Fairfax Chapter President, NVBIA/Pulte Homes, said the LEED-H program was a one-size-fits-all approach to green building and based on a program originally designed for commercial building. He stated that the NAHB guidelines had been developed with consideration to residential housing and offered builders the flexibility to choose which tools to incorporate on a project-by-project basis.

Emily English, Program Manager, Green Building, Energy and Green Building Department, NAHB, delivered a PowerPoint presentation on the NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines, a copy of which is in the date file. She said NAHB had 235,000 members involved

in residential and commercial construction. She reported that by the end of 2007, 50 percent of NAHB's builders would incorporate green building practices and with housing representing 16 percent of the nation's gross domestic product, this would help support the preservation of natural resources and the environment.

Ms. English noted that in 2006, there had been a 20 percent increase in builders dedicated to incorporating green building practices and another 30 percent or more increase was expected for 2007. She reported that by 2010, an estimated 10 percent of new homes would be "green," up from just 2 percent in 2006. She said that green building was vastly becoming mainstreamed because more home consumers were aware that green homes operated more efficiently and resulted in savings in utility costs.

Ms. English stated that in 2005, a group of 64 stakeholders, including builders, environmentalists, manufacturers, and other industry representatives collaborated to create principles to guide builders on how to construct green homes with three rating levels: bronze, silver, and gold.

Ms. English reported that NAHB had established a partnership with the International Code Council (ICC) to further define green building and bring uniformity to sustainable building practices by developing an American National Standards Institute (ANSI)-approved residential green building standard. She said the entire process, including consensus committee meetings, public review, and final ANSI approval, was expected to be completed by the end of 2007 and published in early 2008 for reference in legislation.

Ms. English stated that NAHB planned to make a substantial investment in the National Green Building Program to support local organization programs based on NAHB's guidelines and also new programs based on the National Green Building Standard in order to raise the visibility of the existing programs and encourage industry participation in the consensus process. She said that NAHB's guidelines had been thoroughly reviewed by industry representatives and the public and thousands of homes had been built in accordance with the guidelines since their inception two and a half years ago. She noted that NAHB's standard and guidelines would apply to all residential construction types, including single-family, multi-family, low- and high-rise, remodeling, and land development.

Ms. English explained that the NAHB Research Center planned to establish certification protocols that would transform NAHB's Model Green Home Building Guidelines and the National Green Building Standard into a national program for all NAHB builders and develop a quality assurance program that would allow existing HBA green building programs that meet stringency and certification criteria to be eligible for co-branding. She noted that NAHB had been working with the largest construction builders to determine criteria that would be appropriate and cost-effective. Ms. English said a competitive market process enabled standards to continually improve by promoting growth, innovation, and cost-effectiveness and making green housing an affordable choice to more people. She reported that the Senate Environment Committee had been investigating green building for federal facilities, including military housing and other residential types. She pointed out that NAHB's goal was to ensure that all viable green

building programs were referenced in legislation. Ms. English noted that in the April 15, 2007 issue of *The New York Times Magazine*, Thomas Friedman had written that “Green is the new red, white, and blue.” She concluded her presentation by saying that NAHB had been involved in green building since the term had been coined in August of 1991 and as an organization for about a decade now.

In response to questions from Commissioner Lawrence, Ms. English noted that the NAHB guidelines went beyond building code requirements and that building code compliance was a prerequisite. She stated that the consensus committee, of which approximately one-third consisted of code officials, had been collaborating with ICC on developing educational materials, which would include a green building guide for code officials.

Responding to a question from Chairman Hart, Ms. English pointed out that builders would be required to obtain a permit to incorporate green building into their homes if their jurisdiction did not have a building code.

In response to a question from Commissioner Lusk, Ms. English said the savings from the average single-family, green home depended on the baseline level of green building and the measures that had been incorporated into the home. She explained that a recent survey had suggested that the average cost increase to build green was between 2 and 10 percent, but builders who regularly incorporated green building practices had recorded the average cost to be only 2 to 3 percent because they purchased fewer materials and produced less waste.

Responding to questions from Commissioner Alcorn, Ms. English stated that NAHB’s guidelines had been developed to assist the mainstream homebuilder in incorporating green building principles into homes at any level, with the flexibility to exceed the gold level if desired. She said the energy efficiency principle required the greatest number of green building measures. She noted that the bronze level of green building was the equivalent of ENERGY STAR certification.

In response to questions from Chairman Hart, Ms. English indicated that in New Mexico, builders could receive up to \$11,000 for each gold-level building as part of the Sustainable Building Tax Credit program. She pointed out that another green building initiative provided builders access to land that they would otherwise not be accessible because green building required fewer resources. She said one such example would be a density bonus given to builders who planned to construct water efficient houses on land with limited water availability.

Commissioner Alcorn congratulated Ms. English on NAHB’s progress and leadership in the green building industry. Ms. English said there had been an increasing amount of interest in green building from HBAs.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Lawrence, Ms. English indicated that public education was part of the National Green Building Program.

Chairman Hart thanked Mr. Robertson and Ms. English for their presentation and said Committee members would contact them if they had further questions.

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Chairman Hart announced that the Committee would meet again on Thursday, May 31, 2007, and on Wednesday, June 27, 2007, to further discuss green building issues.

Mr. Kaplan noted that the draft staff report on the proposed Out-of-Turn Plan Amendment, which addressed air quality and green building issues, had been distributed to the Committee in January, and staff sought the Committee's feedback and suggestions for further changes. (A copy of the draft Amendment is in the date file.)

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.
James R. Hart, Chairman

For a record of this meeting, reference may be made to the file which can be found in the Planning Commission Office.

Meeting taken by: Linda B. Rodeffer
Minutes by: Kara A. DeArrastia

Approved: June 27, 2007

Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk
Fairfax County Planning Commission