

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2009**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Walter L. Alcorn, At-Large
Frank A. de la Fe, Hunter Mill District
Jay P. Donahue, Dranesville District
Earl L. Flanagan, Mount Vernon District
James R. Hart, Commissioner At-Large, Chairman
Kenneth A. Lawrence, Providence District

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

Timothy J. Sargeant, At-Large

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER PRESENT:

Stella Koch, Chairman, At-Large
Robert D. McLaren, At-Large

STAFF PRESENT:

Pamela G. Nee, Chief, Environment and Development Review Branch, Planning Division
(PD), Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ)
Noel H. Kaplan, Senior Environmental Planner, Environment and Development Review
Branch, PD, DPZ
Maya Dhavale, Environmental Planner, environment and Development Review Branch,
PD, DPZ

PLANNING COMMISSION OFFICE STAFF PRESENT:

S. Robin Ransom, Assistant Director
Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mark Headley, Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc. (WSSI)
Ben Rosner, WSSI
Inda E. Stagg, Land Use Coordinator, Walsh, Colucci, Lubeley, Emrich & Walsh, PC

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Chairman James R. Hart called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m., in the Board Conference Room, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

Commissioner Lawrence MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 24, 2009 BE APPROVED.

Commissioner Flanagan seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

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Green Building Policy

Maya Dhavale, Environmental Planner, Planning Division (PD), Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ), stated that the Planning Commission had been directed to review the Countywide green building policy, as set forth in the Policy Plan, two years after its adoption in December 2007. She said the policy had been very successful and had resulted in approximately 50 green building commitments compared to only 2 prior to adoption. She said questions that could be considered during the review were as follows:

- What are the goals of our policy plan – energy efficiency/conservation, water conservation or all emphasis on all green building elements?
- Should certain credits within green building rating systems (e.g., LEED), be emphasized over others as a method of achieving County goals?
- Should the policy make a distinction between the various types of LEED rating systems?
- Should the residential policy be updated to include recently developed programs?
- Should the policy be updated to address multi-family or high-rise residential?
- Should the policy discuss how public-private partnerships should be handled?
- Should we encourage that buildings have not just an initial LEED certification, but that they also be maintained as green?

Ms. Dhavale said staff recommended that discussion of the scope and timeline of the review begin in January 2010.

Responding to a question from Chairman Hart, Noel Kaplan, PD, DPZ, said that there was no deadline for making a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) and that it was possible that no recommendations would be made.

Commissioner Alcorn said he was in favor of looking at green building rating/certification systems that existed elsewhere in the nation to avoid the need for the County to develop its own standards.

Commissioner Lawrence expressed support for Plan language that would recommend documentation demonstrating whether green building goals had been achieved. He also requested information about recovery of builders' costs in other jurisdictions. Commissioner Flanagan said a comparison of the County success to other jurisdictions would be beneficial.

Commissioner Donohue said he would like to see green building standards for the County in general and Tysons in particular and suggested that refinements to national systems may be appropriate to better fit these areas, without having to reinvent the wheel. He also said input from the building industry would be helpful.

Commissioner de la Fe stressed the importance of a green building implementation policy.

Chairman Hart said green building practices adopted by Arlington County, Charlottesville, and Roanoke had been addressed at a seminar he had recently attended, but no mention had been

made of Fairfax County. He asked that staff compare the practices of those jurisdictions with Fairfax County's green building initiatives.

Addressing committee workload over the next few months, Chairman Hart suggested that the committee be briefed on the update to the Tree Ordinance when available.

A follow-up meeting was scheduled for January 28, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Conference Room. Chairman Hart asked Planning Commissioners to forward additional questions to staff in advance of this meeting. Commissioner Lawrence noted a difference between "green building" and "building green," noting that the latter considered locational aspects of the issue – that is, are we looking at the building sites and how they fit in with what is around them and are we encouraging consolidation to support building green?

Commissioner Flanagan noted adaptive reuse as a green strategy, noting the environmental savings associated with the reuse of buildings as opposed to demolition and construction. He asked if there should be policies to encourage the retention and reuse of historic buildings.

Draft Plan Amendment on Disturbances in Environmental Quality Corridors

Noel Kaplan, Senior Environmental Planner, PD, DPZ, said the workshop on the Strawman draft Plan Amendment was scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on January 6, 2010 in the Board Auditorium and would be televised. He said revisions to the draft Strawman Plan Amendment, discussed at the committee meeting held on September 24, 2009, had been distributed and he asked for authorization to proceed with this draft. (A copy of the draft is in the date file.) Mr. Kaplan reviewed all of the changes and explained that the most significant change was the proposed deletion of aesthetics and passive recreation as one of the purposes of the EQC policy; he noted that he had reviewed this change with Park Authority staff and said the Park Authority staff had concurred with this revision.

Mr. Kaplan said stakeholders would be notified of the workshop by email and he would ask Public Affairs to prepare a press release in early to mid December.

Following discussion about the language in the next to the last paragraph on page 19 of the handout concerning a "clear net environmental benefit," Mr. Kaplan said "and substantial" could be inserted after the word "clear."

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ADJOURNMENT

November 19, 2009

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.
James R. Hart, Chairman

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Planning Commission Office, 12000
Government Center Parkway, Suite 330, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

Minutes by: Linda B. Rodeffer

Approved: January 6, 2010

Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk
Fairfax County Planning Commission