

Planning Commission Meeting  
May 20, 2015  
Verbatim Excerpt

PA 2014-III-DS1 – DULLES SUBURBAN CENTER, LAND UNIT J/AKRIDGE (Sully District)

Decision Only During Commission Matters  
(Public Hearing held on April 15, 2015)

Commissioner Litzenberger: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On April 15<sup>th</sup>, we had a hearing on a proposed Plan Amendment for the Dulles Suburban Center. Bear with me while I read the background prepared by our excellent staff. On May 13, 2014, the Board of Supervisors authorized staff to examine the appropriate amount and placement of planned residential uses on a vacant 50-acre property located in the Dulles Suburban Center in the Sully District. The property is located near the intersection of Route 28 and Westfields Boulevard. The resulting recommendation is to add an option for predominantly residential development at an intensity of 0.50 FAR, with conditions that encourage the creation of a high-quality living environment. The proposed Plan guidance includes flexibility to have a limited office or retail component that could encourage a mix of uses. On April 15, 2015 the Planning Commission held a public hearing on this Plan Amendment, at which time a motion was approved to defer the decision until today. This property has long been planned as a focal point with higher intensity mixed-use development in anticipation of planned transit. In my view this vision is better served with multifamily housing. Townhouses detract from that vision. In view of that and – although not reflected in the Comprehensive Plan – and due to my 43-year career in aviation – I am sensitive to concerns about aviation safety and I'll elaborate. For the past 13 years, I've analyzed plane crashes as one of my lines of work. There have been three plane crashes at that end of airport at Dulles Airport. In 1994, a Mexicana airliner crashed. Everyone on board was killed when it ran out of gas just north of the site in question. In addition, a small commuter airplane bellied in in Westfields on the east side of 28. Also, there was a hot air balloon that crashed in the same vicinity on the east side of 28. In 1978, the Congress passed legislation that was signed by the President mandating quieter jet engines on airliners. The purpose of this legislation was to give people who lived near airports at the time hope that the jet noise would get better over time. And it has significantly. It was not intended to allow homes to be built closer to runways. That was not the intent of that legislation. In 1985, while serving on the Centreville Course Study, I was working for the FAA and a Mr. Henry Long requested to meet with me concerning aviation safety. At the time, the noise line was out near the intersection of 28 and 29, but over the last 30 years has contracted to be just north of the present proposed site of the townhouses. Last year in Montgomery County, a small airplane took off from the airport, crashed into a single-family home, and – unfortunately, the young mother, her toddler, and an infant were all burned alive. The planning board in Montgomery County received great scrutiny for the lack of foresight in planning in letting houses be built so close to an airport. Because of all these factors, I cannot in good conscience support the idea of townhomes or single-family detached houses only three miles off the end of a busy runway. My revision to the staff recommendation limits the residential component to multifamily housing only. My formal recommendation is in the handout that I emailed to my fellow commissioners. The actual changes are listed below. In order to save time I will just focus on what changes occurred from April 15<sup>th</sup> to tonight. These changes are in

the three boxes below. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I MOVE THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS THE ADOPTION OF PLANNING COMMISSION ALTERNATIVE FOR PLAN AMENDMENT 2014-III-DS1, AS SHOWN ON MY HANDOUT DATED MAY 18<sup>TH</sup>, 2015.

Commissioner Flanagan: Second.

Chairman Murphy: Seconded by Mr. Flanagan. Is there a discussion of the motion?

Commissioner Flanagan: Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Murphy: Yes, Mr. Flanagan.

Commissioner Flanagan: I'd like – first of all, I'd like to thank Commissioner Litzenberger for mailing this motion out ahead of time so we did have a good chance to read it over thoroughly. And I ONLY HAVE ONE – sort of an EDITORIAL FRIENDLY AMENDMENT, I'D LIKE TO SUGGEST. AND THIS IS I'M – WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE MAKER OF THE MOTION CONSIDER DROPPING THE FIRST BULLET UNDER PARAGRAPH THREE. It appears to be redundant. The – everything that's in that bullet – that first bullet – is – can be found in the paragraph immediately preceding that.

Chairman Murphy: Does staff have a comment on that before –

Clara Johnson, Planning Division, Department of Planning and Zoning: Striking – that's correct. The option describes this as a predominately multi-family residential development just before that. And if you're going to strike it partially, it – it's still consistent to strike it entirely. It doesn't change the meaning.

Commissioner Litzenberger: I'LL ACCEPT THE AMENDMENT.

Chairman Murphy: Okay, Mr. Litzenberger accepts. And since the seconder made the friendly amendment, I guess the seconder also accepts his own friendly amendment.

Commissioner Flanagan: Yes, I'll second the amendment.

Chairman Murphy: All those in favor of the motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that it – that it adopt PA 2014-III-DS1, say aye.

Commissioners: Aye.

Chairman Murphy: Opposed? Motion carries.

Commissioner Hart: Abstain.

Chairman Murphy: And the Chair abstains with a friendly abstention. Mister-

Commissioner Hart: I'm abstaining too.

Chairman Murphy: -Hart abstains. Mr. Ulfelder abstains.

Commissioner Litzenberger: Okay.

Chairman Murphy: Okay. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Litzenberger: Mr. Chairman, when you read it, did you say the alternative Plan Amendment? Or just the Plan Amendment? Because it is an alternative plan.

Chairman Murphy: Oh I'm sorry. The correct – the alternative Plan Amendment. Yes, thank you.

Commissioner Litzenberger: Thank you.

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(The motion carried by a vote of 7-0-3. Commissioners Hart, Murphy, and Ulfelder abstained. Commissioners Lawrence and Sargeant were absent from the meeting.)

JLC