ALBEMARLE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION AND
CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSESSION
TUESDAY MARCH 18, 2008 -- 6:00 P.M.
ROOM 241, SECOND FLOOR, ALBMARLE COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a joint meeting with the Charlottesville City Planning Commission on Tuesday, March 18, 2008, at 6:00 p.m., in County Office Building, Room 241, Second Floor.

City Planning Commissioners present were: Mr. Mike Farruggio (Vice Chair); Mr. Hosea Mitchell; Ms. Gennie. Keller; Mr. Dan Rosensweig and Mr. David Neuman, University of Virginia Architect; Mr. Jason Pearson and Ms. Cheri Lewis were absent.

County Planning Commissioners present were: Ms. Marcia Joseph; Mr. Cal Morris (Chair); Mr. Bill Edgerton, Mr. Jon Cannon (Vice Chair), Tom Loach and Mr. Eric Strucko. Absent was Ms. Linda Porterfield. Ms. Julia Monteith, AICP, non-voting representative for the University of Virginia was present.

Staff Present were:
Ms. Missy Creasy, AICP, City Planning Manager
Mr. Wayne Cilimberg, AICP, County Planning Director
Mr. Greg Kamptner, Deputy County Attorney

Call to Order and Establish Quorum:

Mr. Morris called the Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting order at 6:01 p.m. and established a quorum.

Mr. Farruggio, Vice Chair called the Charlottesville City Planning Commission meeting order at 6:04 p.m. and established a quorum.

Other Matters Not Listed on the Agenda from the Public:

Mr. Morris invited comment from the public on other matters not listed on the agenda. There being none, the meeting moved to the next item.

Presentations:

The meeting began with a Power-point presentation regarding public water and sewer agency coordination from Gary Fern, Albemarle County Service Authority; Lauren Hildebrand, City of Charlottesville; Tom Frederick, Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority. (ATTACHMENT – Power-point presentation) The presentation ended at 7:25 p.m.

Questions:

The Commissioners posed questions and the presenters provided the following information:

In response to Mr. Loach's question, Mr. Frederick replied that 37.2 million was the complete cost for the Ragged Mountain Dam and Reservoir. A 50-year master plan was published, which includes projects that don't have to be done immediately and can be done over time. A lot of it addresses some aging infrastructure within their system as well as treatment plant capacity upgrades. The 50-year figure that was published is 142 million.

Mr. Morris asked whether Mr. Fern projects an increasing problem with failing septic systems due to aging infrastructure in subdivisions in the county of lots when created might be an acre and did not have the dual capacity. In response, Mr. Fern replied that with more stringent regulation on on-site waste water systems they are finding that those smaller lots don't have enough land to be able to put in a new system. Also, what they are finding is that with the technology in the on-site

waster water field they are able to do a lot more treatment and basically take a regular sized treatment facility and make it for one single home. That can be done on properties, but they were just running out of land. It is also becoming so costly that it is actually probably less costly to be involved with an entire public sewer system and just connect on and go from there. It is going to be a more increasing problem. Currently it is happening in Oak Hill Subdivision and Northfields Subdivision and he was sure that it was going to happen in other subdivisions as they go on.

In response to Mr. Farruggio's question, Mr. Frederick replied that in calculating the 50-year needs, in terms of water supply, they figured a 5 percent reduction in per capita consumption based on future conservation.

In response to Mr. Farruggio's questions about how they came to the 5 percent if he felt that was ambitious or consistent with other municipalities, Mr. Fern replied that when doing water supply planning in their mission and contract, basically in the contract with the agencies they serve, they will assure that they can provide adequate water supply. The tendency in an estimate like that is to be a little bit on the conservative side. He hoped and had faith in believing that this community can do better than that. One thing to be cautious about is that this estimate was done in 2004 right after the 2002 drought. There was a significant drop in consumption in this community because businesses put in systems to use less water. Also, their waster water treatment plan put in a non-portable water system so that they would not be using drinking water for their process make up, which is still being run today. Many people put in new appliances and things like that. So there was a significant drop in water consumption in 2002. They wanted to be careful that they did not over project that number recognizing that a lot had already been achieved. But, all of their water conservation programs are geared towards trying to promote continued conservation because that helps to delay future projects and helps extend the system. It is also good for the environment. If they have impounded storage for a reservoir and they can release more of that water to the stream instead of putting it in treatment plants and pipes, they are doing more for the environment.

In response to Mr. Edgerton's question on whether lining the sewer lines and pipes loses a lot of capacity, Lauren Hildebrand replied that the lining placed in sewer lines is not very thick and it depends on the diameter of the pipe. As the diameter of the pipe increases the lining, which has structural integrity, gets a little thicker. Mr. Fern noted that the sewer lines actually gains capacity because the inside of the pipe is smoother and slipperier and can take more flow faster.

In response to Mr. Edgerton's question about projects moving forward through the planning process in the county that are going to require more of a load on the system and whether the Service Authority allocates the charges to the development community and to the existing rate holders or is it just assumed that everybody's rates are going to go up and that is going to cover it, Mr. Fern replied that they sit down and talk with developers if they know there is going to be a capacity issue on a particular sewer. Just this past year they had an example of this with the Airport Trunk Sewer. They had developers at Hollymead Town Center wanting to build further in the Town Center itself and there could be constraints on the capacity of the Airport Capacity Trunk Sewer. They had agreements with them that when it reaches a certain point that they designate that they are required to make all of the improvements necessary to maintain the flow. The Service Authority has the legal authority to do this. He did not think that should be part of the proffer process. They had discussions between the Service Authority and the County attorneys on whether or not they should. In fact on Biscuit Run they actually started looking at a proffer and realized that was probably a bad thing to do. As an authority, in some cases, they have more rights than the county does. So they can more forward and do some things like set up agreements with developers, which they have done. The Service Authority looks at each project individually. The increasing densities of the projects being approved is putting the Service Authority in the position of having pipes that were sized with not the densities that are now being approved. When they see a project come along and know that the density has been increased they then have to go back and relook at that entire piping system to make sure it can handle what is going to come down the line. If it can't be handled with that trunk sewer, then the Service Authority has to go to the developer and say that this pipe was designed with different flows in mind and their project is now going to increase that so the developer has to pay more.

In response to Mr. Cannon's question, Mr. Frederick agreed that the Buck Mountain Creek would be a way of mitigation of the work that they would be doing at Ragged Mountain. It is on land that Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority now owns on land that they acquired for a dam that is not going to be built. The Board of Directors has not made a decision regarding a possible sale of the land for the Buck Mountain Creek dam that is not going to be built. The direction given was to continue to lease the property and work with lease holders. They are doing that right now. The negotiations are interesting in that the lease holders that they have now are mostly engaged in agricultural type of operations. Trying to fit the idea of stream buffers and forested buffers into mentality that the best land for agriculture is right next to the river is creating some interesting dynamics for them right now. The average commitment for buffers averages 200' on each side. They have put together some guidance that allows with existing property that is leased in agricultural use. There are six lease holders that signed up to participate, which are the only ones eligible right now. With those six lease holders if there is existing agricultural operations that would be impaired to a great degree by 200' buffers what they are allowing is that it would go to as little as 100' in exchange that they have to find somewhere else on the leased land where they are willing to expand to 300'. This makes sense in some areas because the agricultural developed land is flatter as it approaches the stream. There are many areas where there is a steep rise in the land above the stream and it is forested. So putting a 300' buffer there makes a lot of sense. They are showing some flexibility there, but have had to draw a line that they can't go less than 100'. They feel the integrity of the proposed mitigation is compromised if they go below that.

Mr. Morris thanked the presenters for the valuable information given in their presentation.

Mr. Morris turned the meeting over to Mr. Farruggio to take the opportunity for old and new business and then adjournment. After that the County Planning Commission would do the same thing.

Mr. Farruggio said that he had a question that was directly related to the Planning Commissions. In the past everything that they use now he calculated as paid for by past taxes and past bond issues, which is what they all live with right now. He felt that they needed to have a discussion more of is it fair that the future growth is paid by everybody as it is for us or should there be more types of charges towards future development. That is something that they talk about themselves. Some of it has to do with what the state allows. He suggested that the City and County Commission needs to discuss this issue. It is interesting that the County Authority can levy fees themselves. He asked if they can do that as a city as well or do they have to rely on proffers.

Ms. Hildebrand apologized that she had only been with the city since June 19 and was working through getting up to speed on all the information at this point. As she understands, it is actually in the subdivision ordinance that is getting ready to get Council approval, that if they know of areas that need work they can set aside those areas with specific costs for rehabilitation. Then as development comes in they can charge them for rehabilitating the water or sewer lines. Those areas have to be established, which she sees as a challenge right now. There are quite a lot of developments that have already been approved and yet some yet to come that they need to try to get a handle on with establishing those areas.

Mr. Farruggio said that recently they approved a project that needed to have the sewer line upgraded at the cost of a developer. In past conversations they have asked staff and Council whether or not they can request additional proffers to address the supply situations that they have. So they could use some more clarity in that as well.

In response to the question whether the University of Virginia has their own separate contract, Ms. Hildebrand replied that they are a customer of the city.

Mr. Farruggio asked if the University of Virginia is a state agency and they propose a project that is going to add a large increase to a line in the city do they pay for that upgrade or does it stay the way it is until it is fit into the city's CIP to upgrade it. Ms. Hildebrand replied that they could certainly take a look at it, but right now it is just fit into the program.

Ms. Monteith noted, as an example, that over the last six or seven years the University of Virginia's overall water usage has dropped because they are employing a lot of conservation on the grounds in a number of different ways. They are talking about one specific project. But, when they look at the overall water use they are actually going down.

Ms. Hildebrand agreed that the water usage has gone down.

Mr. Newman noted that each project is a negotiation. In fact, there is a capital improvement that is part of the project that is paid for as part of the project. So it is not deferred. Then if there is a rate increase it has to do with this flow. So there is a fixture cost analysis done with what the flow rates would be. So that whole calculation gets put together and negotiated by their facilities group. Sheryl Gomez is the director of that and she works directly with the city on each of those. It is the same with the sewer issue. They have been working to diminish the demand on the sewer system by conducting smoke tests on the hospital. Not that they are trying to off-set that as a credit toward something else, but trying just to help solve that problem. They have also been doing some of that work such as lining some pipes as projects are developed and there is an opportunity to have that complete.

Mr. Fern pointed out that the University also has a representative that sits on the committee that gets together regarding system modeling and the GIS. All three entities and the University of Virginia participate and it is a coordinated effort.

Ms. Monteith noted that in terms of storm water, they have a banking system and are a part of two different water sheds. They have to be responsible for that storm water banking at all times. So when they look at putting a new project in they have to make sure that they are not increasing impermeable ground space. So they are very careful about that because they have to monitor their own banking system.

Old Business

Mr. Morris asked if there was any old business. There being none, the meeting proceeded.

New Business

Mr. Morris asked if there was any new business. There being none, the meeting proceeded.

Adjournment:

The Charlottesville City Planning Commission adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

With no further items, the meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m. to the Tuesday, March 25, 2008 meeting at 6:00 p.m. at the County Office Building, Second Floor, Auditorium, 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

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V. Wayne Cilimberg, Secretary

(Submitted by Sharon C. Taylor, Clerk to Planning Commission & Planning Boards)