

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 5, 2005

TO: Members of the Rural Lands Committee

Jeff Barra	Ginny Hartman
Rich Costello	Richard Krapf
Jim Daniels	Gary Massie
Victoria Fahringer	Jack Schmidt

FROM: Tammy Rosario, Senior Planner II

SUBJECT: Rural Lands Committee Welcome Packet

Welcome aboard! We're very excited that all of you have agreed to serve as members of the Rural Lands Committee (RLC). The purpose of this memorandum is to familiarize you with your role as a committee member and to provide you with a list of the key players who will be working closely with you throughout the process. Also included as attachments are an agenda; a brief overview of the project; and background materials, including a copy of the A-1 Zoning District, the 2003 Comprehensive Plan, and the Primary Principles for Rural Lands developed in 2000.

The RLC will meet for the first time Wednesday, October 5th at 4 p.m. at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Building, located at 3127 Forge Road in Toano.

What is the RLC and what is my role as a RLC member?

In September, the James City County Board of Supervisors appointed eight citizens to serve on the Rural Lands Committee (RLC) as an outgrowth of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan and the recently adopted Cash Proffer Policy. The RLC is tasked with assisting staff and the Renaissance Planning Group, a planning, design, and policy analysis consulting firm from Charlottesville, in considering amendments to James City County's rural policies and ordinances. Specifically, the committee will review alternatives for rural residential development which support the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The options will include rural residential cluster development and varying standards for conventional residential development.

It is important that the RLC members take an active participatory role in the process. Citizen involvement--within the committee and through public workshops--is designed to play a central role in this examination of rural residential development. The primary products of the team, revisions to policies and ordinances, must reflect the vision of the larger community if they are to be successful in preserving the unique qualities of James City County's rural areas.

How often will we be meeting?

The RLC will be meeting every other Wednesday at 4 p.m. for a total of six to eight meetings. Most meetings will be committee meetings; however, two of the meetings will be public workshops

whose exact dates and locations will be determined with help from the committee. Generally, the committee meetings will be held at the EOC building unless a conflict requires us to shift the meeting to the James City County Library. We anticipate each meeting lasting approximately 1 to 2 hours.

Who are the staff members with whom the CPT will be working?

The committee will work closely with members of Development Management Department staff as well as the Renaissance Planning Group team. Listed below are the staff members and primary consultants involved in the process:

John Horne	<i>Development Manager</i>
Marvin Sowers	<i>Director of Planning</i>
Don Davis	<i>Principal Planner, Comprehensive Planning</i>
Allen Murphy	<i>Principal Planner, Current Planning</i>
Tammy Rosario	<i>Senior Planner II</i>
Ed Moran	<i>Planning Intern</i>
Ken Schwartz	<i>Renaissance Planning Group</i>
Eric Wright	<i>Renaissance Planning Group</i>

How long will it take to complete the Rural Lands Committee work?

We are expecting a 4- to 6-month process that will conclude in late winter with presentations to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors on the proposed changes to policies and/or ordinances.

Again, we are excited about working with all of you on this project. We truly believe this will be a rewarding process for all of those involved and one which will have a long lasting impact on the quality of life in James City County.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to participate on the RLC and please call me at 253-6685 if you have any questions or concerns.

Attachments:

- Meeting Agenda
- Overview of the Project
- Background Material: A-1 Zoning District, 2003 Comprehensive Plan, Primary Principles



James City County Rural Residential Clusters Study

STEERING COMMITTEE AGENDA

wednesday october 5, 2005 | 4 pm

4:00 INTRODUCTIONS - Tammy Rosario *James City County Planning*

4:10 OBJECTIVES – Tammy Rosario

Purpose of Steering Committee

4:15 KEY QUESTIONS – Ken Schwartz *Renaissance Planning Group*

Building Upon Existing Work

4:30 SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT - Eric Wright *Renaissance Planning Group*

1 Build Out of By Right Development

- Total Existing acreage
- Zoned Agricultural and Rural Residential acreage
- Environmental acreage (wetlands, slopes, floodplains, etc.)
- Public Property (Parks, Military, etc.)
- Easements
- Total acreage available for development/ 3 units per acre
- # of dwelling units possible under current by-right development

4:45 2 + 3 Clustered Development Pattern - Vlad Gavrilovic *Paradigm Design*

5:00 SCHEDULE - Tammy Rosario & Renaissance Planning Group

5:10 COMMENTS – Committee Members

5:30 ADJOURN

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Description

The James City County Board of Supervisors wants to investigate alternatives for residential development in Rural Lands areas outside the Primary Service Area (PSA) which will support the goals of the County's Comprehensive Plan. The PSA is one of the principal tools used by the County to manage growth. It is the area where the County encourages most growth to occur and where the bulk of public facilities and services will be provided over the next 20 years.

Options to be examined from a fiscal, environmental, and land-use planning standpoint include rural residential cluster developments outside the PSA and standards for conventional subdivisions in areas zoned A-1, General Agriculture, outside the PSA. The product of this project will be a draft rural residential cluster ordinance and draft ordinance amendments for any recommendations pertaining to conventional subdivisions to be voted on by the Board of Supervisors in early 2006.

Project Objectives

James City County faces increased pressures on development in its designated Rural Lands Areas. These areas primarily consist of agricultural and forested uses and are integral to the broader environmental and economic health of the County and region. As a consequence, controlling the nature of future development within these areas is vitally important.

The approach of James City County's Rural Residential Development Study centers on place-making. Place-making, by its nature, adapts to the unique conditions of a particular locality, while drawing strength from some generalized principles in controlling growth. The three basic elements of place making- sustainability, tradition, and change, will translate into the kinds of development patterns sought by James City County's vision. The natural environment will inform the design of an open space framework for development. Rural residential areas will nest within the open space framework.

General Methodology

Task 1 - Create Rural Development Scenarios

The purpose of the task is to create scenarios with which to determine the implications of differing development patterns outside the PSA. Up to three rural development scenarios will be developed:

- Scenario 1: Build out of By-right Development - Environmental and zoning information will be used to determine how many dwelling units can be developed outside the PSA under the existing ordinance.
- Scenario 2 and 3: Clustered Development Patterns - Based on input at the first public workshop, two variations of clustered residential development outside the PSA will be developed.

Task 2 - Evaluate Scenario Impacts

The purpose of the second task is to analyze the impacts of each scenario. The results will help the public and others evaluate scenarios and ultimately provide the basis for incentives and disincentives used in the implementation tools.

The results of the scenario evaluations will be presented at the public workshop to gauge the public's reaction to impacts and determine preferences for a scenario.

Task 3 - Develop Implementation Tools

The implementation tools will be developed concurrently with the development and evaluation of scenarios to the extent possible. In conducting this task, other rural development regulatory tools used in Virginia will be reviewed, the County's existing policies and ordinances will be examined, and a new ordinance with design standards will be crafted.

Task 4 - Consensus Building

The project will be conducted within the context of a comprehensive public involvement process involving the residents, public officials, and the development community. In addition to regular committee meetings, two public workshops will be held to solicit feedback from the wider community.

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 29, 2000
TO: The Board of Supervisors
FROM: Donald E. Davis, Principal Planner
SUBJECT: Primary Principles for Rural Lands

The Board of Supervisors endorsed the formation of a Rural Lands Study Committee at its July 13, 1999, meeting. The eight member Committee (attachment No. 1) was created to begin examining rural, agricultural, and forestal lands to determine what challenges exist or are foreseeable in the future and which directions should be considered in advance of the development of the 2002 James City County Comprehensive Plan. The Committee began meeting twice a month in September 1999 and presented its primary principles for rural lands (attachment No. 4) and a communications and outreach plan (attachment No. 5) to the Board at the December 21, 1999, Board of Supervisors meeting. Following a brief discussion among Board members, Mr. Nervitt recommended that staff schedule this afternoon's work session on rural lands and the future of the Rural Lands Study Committee.

As described in the July 13 memorandum to the Board of Supervisors, the Rural Lands Study Committee was charged with presenting the Board with a list of principles for rural lands by December, a goal accomplished by the Committee. The Committee was to make a second presentation to the Board at the end of nine months specifically defining which principles they recommend be employed as part of the 2002 James City County Comprehensive Plan. The Committee was also charged with reporting on the status of the rural lands and making recommendations to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors on specific legislative changes and programs for immediate action. During the Committee's presentation to the Board on December 21, 1999, the Committee offered its list of primary principles but expressed a reluctance to proceed further at this time.

The Rural Lands Study Committee recognizes that the work necessary to create the tools required to successfully achieve positive results in rural lands, and to build support for those tools, is going to extend far beyond the originally discussed six month period of time. Further, the Committee believes this process should be based on the principles offered to the Board by the Committee and should be incorporated from the beginning of the planning process for the 2002 Comprehensive Plan Update rather than as a freestanding process. Staff anticipates initiating the Comprehensive Plan Update by December of this year.

Concern exists at both the Committee and staff level that investing vast amounts of time, energy, and effort now will not result in a product which appreciably benefits citizens currently living in the rural areas or County citizens in general in the short term future. It is anticipated that our citizens and appointed officials will have a considerably better opportunity to understand the full range of issues and potential solutions when rural lands are considered within the context of all County Land during the Comprehensive Plan Update process.

The previous Board also reviewed a related issue in 1999. A report, which included recommendations, was developed by a staff/Board committee on **Purchase of Development Rights**. The report (attachment No. 8) recommended waiting to incorporate a PDR program into a broader rural lands management program. Staff continues to believe that a PDR program would be most effective if it's design could compliment other rural strategies. Due to this significant delay in full consideration of rural strategies, staff recommends starting the development of a PDR program before the 2002 Comprehensive Plan Update. This will be a significant work effort so the actual start-up date will be several months away. If the Board conceptually agrees, staff will develop a specific schedule for Board review at a later date.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Rural Lands Study Committee and James City County staff concur that the Primary Principles for Rural Lands, as agreed to by the Committee, should be included in discussions as we develop the 2002 Comprehensive Plan and, further, should be used as a guide for future actions involving rural lands.
2. A committee should be formed and charged with establishing a Rural Assistance Program as described in Principal No. 5 (Foster the economic health of those businesses in the rural setting that contribute to the character of rural lands).
3. In advance of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan Update, staff will develop a schedule for creating a Purchase of Development Rights program.

Donald E. Davis

CONCUR:

O. Marvin Sowers, Jr.

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rurallands.mem

Attachment:

1. Rural Lands Study Committee members
2. Board of Supervisors Memorandum, Creation of the Rural Lands Study Committee
3. Board of Supervisors Memorandum, Primary Principles Report
4. Primary Principles for Rural Lands in James City County
5. Communications and Outreach Plan
6. Minutes of December 21, 1999, Board of Supervisors meeting
7. Minutes of December 2, 1999, Rural Lands Study Committee meeting
8. Board of Supervisors Memorandum, Purchase of Development Rights

Primary Principles for Rural Lands in James City County

1. Enable rural property owners to keep their property and/or receive fair value for it

The financial viability of maintaining the rural lands as traditional farms, open spaces and forested land has never been in greater question. Development increases both the pressure and the opportunity for rural landowners to sell their land to the highest bidder, which is often the residential developer. The County should assist landowners in understanding their options, in order to strike a balance between the owner's financial interests and his/her desire to preserve the rural nature of the land.

Potential actions/comments:

- Examine potential changes to the AFD Program to create greater flexibility for the landowner including the relationship between the Land Use Program and the AFD Program
- Determine which land has the greatest value for protection and identify the most strategically important land
- Explore the creation of a Purchase of Development Rights program and other conservation/preservation programs

2. Maintain the historic, educational, cultural, aesthetic and environmental character of rural lands

Rural lands add values and character to the County different from those of the more suburban areas. Those qualities include much more than the visual appeal of the countryside. Preservation efforts should be designed to help retain all of those qualities.

Potential actions/comments:

- The retention of significant areas of rural land is important to maintaining its essential qualities
- The preservation of farm buildings is important to preserving rural character
- Maintaining rural qualities includes preserving an active farming community and an adequate supply of prime agricultural soils

3. Ensure that future residential development is compatible with the County's rural character

A significant portion of agricultural land and open space is not currently in active use, but is maintained by its owners. For those rural residents who choose to live in and maintain a rural setting, there is little assurance that the rural setting will not be infringed upon by development or that residential developments will not intrude upon and interfere with agricultural operations.

Potential actions/comments:

- A critical mass of rural/agricultural land must exist in order for a rural economy to thrive

- Performance standards for rural residential development may require the identification of best agricultural soils, aquifers and recharge areas, buffers along streams, wooded areas, difficult soils, slopes, scenic views and other features
- Explore the creation of a rural residential cluster ordinance

4. **Strengthen the health of agricultural enterprises and home based businesses in rural lands**

Individuals living in the rural areas should generally have opportunities to generate income and/or a means of a living via agricultural interests or small, home based businesses. Incentives should be created to promote and assist rural businesses which help maintain the rural landscape.

Potential actions/comments:

- Explore expanding the list of by-right uses in the zoning ordinance to include suitable small-scale home based businesses
- The County should be able to assist new forms of agricultural production and offer opportunities for alternative rural enterprises
- Consideration of the adequacy of existing zoning ordinance regulations (setbacks, landscaping, parking, etc.) in the rural setting
- Support existing agricultural activities

5. **Foster the economic health of those businesses in the rural setting that contribute to the character of the rural lands**

Any attempt to foster a healthy rural economy should include measures aimed at determining what opportunities exist for the support and expansion of existing rural businesses. A study should be conducted to determine business types that are most likely to benefit from locating in a rural area and which, in turn, will benefit the rural economy and the rural character.

Potential actions/comments:

- Explore the establishment of a Rural Assistance Program to assist rural businesses in obtaining financial assistance and locating technical resources directed toward rural enterprises
- Provide technical assistance in business planning and feasibility studies for the initiation of new enterprises within the rural economy
- Identify the infrastructure required for relocation or expansion of businesses to rural settings

6. **Foster cooperative relationships between rural citizens and other County residents, recognize our differences and promote synergy, empathy and understanding**

The County's greatest resource is a diverse population that brings a wealth of perspectives to the table and enables our leaders to take action representative of a wide variety of public interests. More should be done to facilitate interaction and communication between all County residents in order to gain a better appreciation and understanding of the diversity that is the cornerstone of a healthy and stable community.

Potential actions/comments:

- Explore opportunities for local farmers to sell their goods locally
- Explore the concept of Community Gardens
- Make educational field trips to working farms and other businesses in the rural areas available to all County citizens
- Create greater awareness of the heritage and history of the rural areas
- Increase opportunities for interactions between all County residents