

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 24, 2006

TO: Members of the Rural Lands Committee

Jeff Barra	Victoria Fahringer
George Billups	Richard Krapf
Rich Costello	Gary Massie
Jim Daniels	Jack Schmidt

FROM: Tammy Rosario, Senior Planner II

SUBJECT: Rural Lands Committee Meeting #6 - January 25

Please find attached the materials for the next Rural Lands Committee meeting scheduled for January 25th at 4:00 p.m. at the **James City County Library Community Room** (7770 Croaker Road). These materials include the minutes from the December 14th meeting, the public comment notes from the January 12th public workshop, and the agenda for the January 25th meeting.

To start the meeting, the consultants will present the comments and findings from the second public workshop. Please review the attached public comments and reflect upon your observations at the meeting. As was the case with the first workshop, we hope the committee will affirm these notes as being reflective of what was said at the meeting. Next, the consultants will lead a discussion re-examining the various rural residential development options in light of the Comprehensive Plan goals, committee comments, and public comments. Following that will be a general discussion of design principles for rural areas and clusters. Finally, the agenda will conclude with a review of the committee's remaining work tasks and the overall study schedule.

Thank you all for your hard work and participation at the last public workshop. We also appreciate your dedication in joining us for the field trip to Loudoun County. We believe both of these events will really help the committee in Wednesday's discussion. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Attachments:

- Minutes from the 12/14/05 meeting
- Public comments from the 1/12/06 meeting
- Agenda for the 1/25/06 meeting



RENAISSANCE PLANNING GROUP

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 23, 2006

TO: Members of the Rural Lands Committee

Jeff Barra	Victoria Fahringer
George Billups	Richard Krapf
Rich Costello	Gary Massie
Jim Daniels	Jack Schmidt

FROM: Kristin Van Voorhees and Eric Wright, Renaissance Planning Group

SUBJECT: 12-14-05 Steering Committee minutes

The fifth committee meeting began with a public comment period during which Andy Bradshaw spoke with regards to the Board of Supervisors being aware that there are other development possibilities in the Rural Lands beyond residential. He mentioned that farming in James City County is not limited to "hobby" farming, but that small farming includes 20 or fewer acres. He said there are other uses of open space, such as forestry, environmentally sensitive lands, and vistas/view sheds. The committee then approved the minutes from the 11-30-05 meeting.

The meeting followed the following format with discussion on each topic:

Committee discussion/questions on alternatives

- Massive 3-acre subdivision is incompatible with Comp Plan and maintaining rural character (*J. Schmidt*)
- How do you maintain family subdivision without pushing the 3-acre? How do family plots relate to rural development?
- What is the impact of septic (\$5-6K) systems on soils that don't percolate (*J. Schmidt*)
- Advocate abandoning PSA as growth control (*R. Costello*)
- If we modify 1:3, are we segmenting into Northern part of county? (*G. Billups*)
- Clustering makes more sense for 20+ acres of land (*J. Schmidt*)
- JCC consists of a variety of soil types; sandy to peat soils affect percolation and thus cost of sewer/water (*J. Daniels*)
- Are the PROS and CONS related to case studies? Where were the original ones in the homework derived from? (*R. Krapf*)
 - o Pros and Cons were derived from counties with a track record of clustering; conclusions were derived from these counties.
- Land use: are their areas where By-right vs. clustering is more appropriate?
- What is the minimum acreage that is suitable to build a cluster? Is it 20 acres or more??



- Comp plan does talk about “rewarding” low density; it does not talk about “discouraging”; matter of semantics or taking a more positive approach.
- What does “discourage” mean?
 - o Mandate against it, to making it more attractive to cluster, etc.;
 - o Ex. decrease the number of lots that can be developed with on-site wells, etc. (refer to homework notes on this option)
 - o SUP – can be a disincentive because of the level of uncertainty associated with SUP and the length of the process can be longer

Sewer and water

- We need to compare apples to apples
- What are other counties doing?
- How has cost held back development in other rural areas? (*Marvin Sowers*)
- What does this mean for the rate of development?
- What are the impacts of additional development on current landowner private wells?
 - o Private wells: water comes from Chickahominy/Piney Point;
 - o In JCC-PSA: water comes from deeper, bigger supply; there is less impact to water under a public system.
- Financial disincentives are not holding back development in JCC anymore; PSA as a control mechanism is losing effectiveness; sewer outside the PSA may be a better long term decision as it is more sustainable; cost of land is making the PSA obsolete; public sewer they use the deeper Potomac Aquifer over the Chickahominy/Piney Point, which has a higher water table (*R. Costello*)
- PSA water and sewer - \$6-7,000 for hookup, depending on size; \$20-30K movement and system, etc. is built into the cost of the lot (*Larry Foster*)

Mass Drainfields

- How are mass drainfields set up in other communities? (*John Horne*)
 - o Loudon County has 100-200 units on mass drainfield; #of units supported by drainfield depends on topography and type of soils; clay soils are not suitable as percolation ability is low.
- Drainfields require certain types of soil that are also useful for farming; will the two compete for this land? (*Tammy Rosario*)

Costs:

Under 5 lots:

- There are upfront installation costs, then maintenance per year is low
- Around \$5-8,000 per lot
- On-site septic: cost depends on the soil conditions present
- Direct discharge: most expensive and not allowed in JCC

Over 5 lots:

- As the number of units increases, the cost for community water system decreases
- 35 lots = \$30-50,000/lot
- 100 lots = \$10,000/lot (+)



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- Add around \$20K for hydrants and water lines in the 100 lots
- Common well: Development of around 35 lots can absorb these installation costs; however, in JCC regulations can drive up the price. Larger pumps and tanks are required for built in fire protection.
- A shared well is not an incentive at this cost

In the PSA:

- Public sewers \$22,000 (absorbed into the cost of the house)
- Connection fees \$6-7,000

Workshop # 2

- Repackage 11 options into 3 with sub-options:
 1. By right – sub-categories of voluntary, or mandatory
 2. Cluster – provision making everything SUP – vol. or mand.
 3. Lower density – mandatory for certain size development, voluntary for others
- Use graphics to represent the 3 directions
- The last workshop was too focused on clustering (*R. Krapf*)
- Allow voting exercise with a certain method for ranking preferences: scale or gradient?
- 3 breakout sessions on each of the 3 directions (*J. Schmidt*)
- What is done has to fit in with the public (*G. Billups*)

Public Comments

Sam Hazelwood

- Drainfields are costly
- Present all 6 options to the community
- Collective drainfield exists on Eagle Tree Farms
- State governs drainfields
- We need alternatives for small pieces of land

Drew Mulhare

- Ford's Colony is interested in open space, which can be established by spreading out homes.
- Less impervious surfaces, greater tree canopy
- There are issues with building large tanks
- Encourages advanced septic systems

Mark Rinaldi

- Conventional Development is ok, especially with regards to smaller lots.

Caroline Lott

- Think about telling the public what weight their vote will have

The committee chairman then asked for and received a motion and second for the meeting to adjourn, with all voting in favor.

James City County Rural Lands Public Workshop #2 Verbatim Notes
Thursday, January 12, 2006
6:30 p.m. at Toano Middle School

From the Workshop Handouts

BY-RIGHT DEVELOPMENT:

PROS:

Value of land is retained
Less Government restrictions
Land owners development rights are retained
3 acres is a Manageable lot size
The land is set; it can't be developed any further
Keep "as is."
Keep private farms; allows freedom to own pigs, horses, cows, etc.
Allows Family farming
Landowners have the choice of what to do with their land
More Privacy

CONS:

Does not support rural economic development as an alternative
Not all land should be assumed for residential development
Development is inevitable
As stewards of the land, we need to plan ahead
Sprawl
No Privacy in cluster

OTHER COMMENTS:

Do not take By-Right development away from existing land owners
Farming is going to be non-existent
Leave our farm alone

DENSITY NEUTRAL CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

PROS

Add higher density clustering as a By-Right incentive
Allow Cluster developments to share PSA resources
Allow unattached parcels to be combined for density calculations, so density can be increased or shifted between lots (ie. Allow TDR).
Leaves land available to future development if rules change

CONS

Don't require HOAs for clusters; allow conservation lots.

OTHER COMMENTS

Should not be applied to ALL rural lands:

Rural lands need to be classified according to certain criteria: community character corridor, proximity to PSA, proximity to transportation hubs (I-64, Rt. 60, etc.).

LOWER DENSITY DEVELOPMENT

PROS:

None listed

CONS:

Destroys the possibility to develop affordable or even middle income housing

Decreases land values

3-acres is already too large of a lot size; not everybody needs that much land to care for.

OTHER COMMENTS:

Do not take away any current rights from landowners

All in room say NO mandatory lower density

No clusters unless landowner wants to develop that way

Breakout session – Workgroup flipchart notes

BY-RIGHT DEVELOPMENT

PROS:

Provides a buffer compared with Northern Virginia

Development rights belong to landowner

Doesn't further restrict the landowner

Doesn't take away any of the owners' current rights

Expanding options is okay, but don't take away the right to develop at 3-acres.

Property rights stay the same

More privacy

Provides more options for locating a home on a lot with areas of unbuildable land conditions

Less added restrictions

This option will work for the builders

CONS:

Does not support rural development

No true affordable homes

Tax increases are making land less affordable

Restricts economics for land owner

Doesn't provide many affordable homes

Workers can't afford to buy in JCC under the current zoning and it is pushing first time home buyers out of the county

Too many restrictions

Want more options: voluntary cluster incentives

PARKING LOTS:

What is being done to preserve farming?
Horse lands do not require the same infrastructure as residential (like schools)
Let owner divide land the way he wants; especially for family subdivision
There should be different rules for long-time land owners and those with large plots of land.
Want more than one option (only three options are currently being presented)
Let owners make decisions on what to do with the land
Family subdivision of land should be supported
County should buy conservation land from landowners
JCC has already restricted landowners enough – making the land someone else's country club
Restrict options for developers and non-landowners with regards to regulations on water, infrastructure, roads, etc.
Want less government regulation and less options available to non land owners
Expand ways to give feedback besides these forms
Have to put up with complaints from new development (paint barn, tractor parked there etc.)
We are setting up JCC for developers and retirees
Taxes need to be lowered, instead of increasing so that landowners are forced to sell
Development should tie into PSA
Allow landowners to pool together developable land for building and pool together undevelopable land for conservation/green space.
PSA needs to be expanding, especially to provide affordable homes.
The design of by-right on Forge Road is the worst case scenario; not sure if it is presented in the best way

DENSITY NEUTRAL CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

PROS

Incentive – increasing the number of lots in minor subdivision would be valuable
Could cluster lots on the best drainfield soils
Preserves existing density
Voluntary provides a mix of lot types and development
Maximizes value if owner can cluster around most valuable parts of land

CONS

Might have future development of open space
Homeowner/neighbors shouldn't be responsible for remainder open space
Don't use public money to maintain open space
Restricts flexibility of landowner; might devalue land
Mandatory clustering limits flexibility
Too many estates; homes too close together
No mandatory option!
Possible future development of open space
Would make HOAs necessary
Mandatory would devalue property and decrease housing choice

PARKING LOT

Should expand PSA to provide more options to rural landowners
Can unbuildable land be used as open space?
Provide for family subdivision

Increase density to 1 acre
Provide all options for landowners
Clarify incentives
Mandatory cluster removes incentive for conservation easements
NO incentives – maximize voluntary options
Incentive – increase density or allow connection to PSA
Infrastructure cost should be borne by new developer
Should distinguish between types of rural lands for development options
Cluster illustrations are not true representations
Expand the PSA instead of limiting landowners

LOWER DENSITY DEVELOPMENT

PROS:

Voluntary development
Expands options to landowner
Helps to preserve and maintain community character corridors
Better for traffic and schools

CONS:

10-acre lot has the potential for other uses
Mandatory restrictions on land
More restrictions
Lowers the value of land
Affordability of lots – investors coming in to subdivide lots
Not the best use of land in 10 acre
10-acre lot is too expensive to own
Can't afford maintenance on 10 acres
Why should homeowner provide green space?
Lowers existing land value
Inefficient use of land and infrastructure and precludes transit and rail
Communal wells are not feasible for 10-acres
Economically devalues the property
Too much to maintain and shouldn't be required
Low density is unrealistic; it devalues the land
Not enough incentive to get developer to build; will result in expensive homes
Lower density = unaffordable
Reduces the opportunity for future generations

PARKING LOT

County needs to realize that land will not remain the same – no one will farm land anymore
County needs to lower density
Distinguish between farm owners and land owners
Pass on cost of infrastructure to the developer
No more restriction on land use
Landowners concerned that they didn't call "the meeting"
Reward landowners for preserving green space
Government can use eminent domain

Nothing should be done
Too much growth, too quickly
Restrictions on rural lands
Graphic shows area that can't be developed
Graphics are deceptive and unrealistic
Build out estimate is unrealistic; restrictions on private wells, stream set-back restrictions
Didn't account for scenic easement
Too many restrictions currently on rural lands
Concern that voluntary could become mandatory
PDR program
Should be focusing on bringing in economic development such as industry/ R&D



James City County
Residential Development in Rural Lands Study
STEERING COMMITTEE AGENDA

wednesday january 25, 2005 | 4 pm

- 4:00 **OPENING - Jeff Barra & Public Comments**
Approve Minutes from December 14th Steering Committee Meeting
- 4:10 **PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2 REVIEW**
Notes from Workshop - Steering Committee Affirmation
Consultant Summary
Steering Committee Observations
- 4:45 **REVIEW OF ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS**
Recommendations for Voluntary Cluster Provisions
Potential Incentives and Process
Discussion of Residential Development Recommendations
Discussion of Non- Residential Development Recommendations
- 5:15 **DESIGN PRINCIPLES**
Rural Area Design Principles
Cluster Design Principles
- 5:30 **REMAINING SCHEDULE**
Direction
 Reaching Consensus on Alternatives
 Evaluating Impacts of Alternatives
Timeline
- 5:45 **CLOSING - Public Comments**
- 5:45 **ADJOURN**