

Spotsylvania County Planning Commission

Holbert Building Board Room, 9104 Courthouse Road, Spotsylvania VA 22553

MINUTES: April 3, 2019

Call to Order: Mr. Newhouse called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present:

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| Richard Thompson | Courtland |
| Howard Smith | Livingston |
| Jennifer Maddox | Berkeley |
| Michael Medina | Salem |
| Mary Lee Carter | Lee Hill |
| C. Travis Bullock | Battlefield |
| Gregg Newhouse | Chancellor |

Staff Present: Paulette Mann, Planning Commission Secretary
Wanda Parrish, AICP, Director of Planning
Shannon Fennell, Planner III
Alexandra Spaulding, Senior Assistant County Attorney

Announcements: Ms. Parrish introduced new planner, Shannon Fennell, to the Commission. She stated that she will be presenting her first case at the next meeting. The Department also has another new planner, David Dameron, who joined a few weeks ago.

Mr. Newhouse welcomed Ms. Fennell and inquired if the department is now fully staffed.

Ms. Parrish stated yes, the department is fully staffed.

Review & Approval of minutes:

Motion and vote: Mr. Thompson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Smith to approve the minutes of March 6, 2019. The motion passed 7-0.

Unfinished Business: None

Discussion Item(s):

Substantially in Accord Review – Spotsylvania Middle School

Ms. Parrish stated that the County’s annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) addresses short-term facility planning. The CIP is schedule for the acquisition, development, enhancement, or replacement of public facilities over a five (5) year period. Under § 15.2-2232 of the Code of Virginia, a local Planning Commission shall ensure that projects included in the CIP are *substantially in accord* (in conformance) with the locality’s Comprehensive Plan in terms of location, character, and extent when those projects are not shown in the Comprehensive Plan.

One project proposed for inclusion in the CIP is not shown in the Comprehensive Plan and also contains sufficient detail for review by the Planning Commission. That project is expansion and renovation of Spotsylvania Middle School.

According to Spotsylvania County Schools, the overall scope of the Spotsylvania Middle School project will focus on making the facility a 21st century learning environment. The project will also focus on access upgrading areas to ADA codes and standards. Spotsylvania Middle is at capacity so one goal is to add capacity. This can be done not only by adding square footage but making better use of existing space. Educational requirements and the needed classes have changed since the original 1965 design. The site around the building will change as the design and flow of the building changes. Some of those changes will include better access and added space for parent pickup and drop off.

Ms. Parrish explained that Guiding Principles and Policies C.4. within the Comprehensive Plan seeks to *“ensure that Spotsylvania County continues to provide excellent educational and recreational, and cultural opportunities.”* This proposal falls within the umbrella of that guiding policy. Comprehensive Plan support for this renovation and expansion project is exhibited within the Public Facilities Element in Key Policies of the Public Facilities Plan #2, *“construct or expand facilities in accord with established criteria and level of service standards.”* As noted by the schools in the project detail above, Spotsylvania Middle is presently at capacity and expansion is warranted to accommodate additional capacity. The Comprehensive Plan has established a County School Board design capacity of 940-960 students for middle schools as a key level of service indicator. As of October 1, 2018, Spotsylvania County Public Schools report Spotsylvania Middle enrollment of 934 (still within design capacity parameters established in the Comprehensive Plan). By the 2020-2021 school year however, schools project enrollment to increase to 1020 students or 60 above top threshold level of service design capacity as per the Comprehensive Plan. Staff notes the Spotsylvania Middle School has an actual designed building capacity for up to 907 students so from a space needs standpoint the building is already considered over capacity.

This project is consistent with facility design and location criteria established in the Comprehensive Plan including to *“schedule school construction to relieve overcrowding and plan for new growth before it occurs”*, and *“provide up-to-date learning facilities including advances in technology and related instructional software”*. As a cost effective measure the project is well aligned with Comprehensive Plan recommendations for the provision of adequate school facilities, including *“look to constructing additions to existing school facilities before constructing new school facilities for cost efficiency purposes.”* Additionally, seeking capacity expansion through physical expansion and design efficiencies as exhibited by the project description is very much consistent with schools recommendations to *“maintain levels of service by staying consistent with state standards for classroom size by education level and full utilization of school facilities based on building capacity.”*

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission find the renovation and expansion of Spotsylvania Middle School Substantially in Accord with the Comprehensive Plan for the reasons stated in the staff analysis. Ms. Parrish stated that there are two representatives from the school system present for questions.

Mr. Smith inquired if any modifications would be made to the front of the school for pickup and drop-off traffic. It's been a problem for some time.

Mr. Hockaday stated that they will be looking at that as well as parking for teachers and bus traffic.

Mr. Newhouse inquired about the enrollment slide that Ms. Parrish displayed and if they would only be updating the school to accommodate 960 students because the current enrollment isn't that far off.

Mr. Hockaday stated that 960 would be the minimum capacity. He advised that they intend to have room for growth and it would accommodate up to 1200 or so.

There was discussion about the fact that some redistricting could occur that could potentially lower enrollment slightly.

Mr. Newhouse inquired about the costs and whether that is only brick and mortar costs.

Mr. Hockaday stated that they haven't gotten that far into design. He discussed that the costs would include modifications to classrooms such as computer labs and science rooms. He discussed that the design of the school is a very early 60's design and what was needed then has changed over time.

There was a brief discussion about population projections for the middle schools.

Mr. Hockaday stated that the schools receive instruction from the state as far as what they have to do and have.

There was discussion about how the project would be funded.

Mr. Hockaday stated that it would be funded by the CIP and through the sale of bonds.

Ms. Maddox inquired when the last remodel occurred at the school.

Mr. Hockaday stated that it has never been fully remodeled. He stated that even without the capacity issue, the work needs to be done due to the age of the school. He stated that many of the systems within the school are in desperate need of replacement and need to be caught up with the times.

Ms. Maddox discussed that she went to Spotsylvania High School there and that she was in the school last week and it looks exactly the same as when she went there.

Ms. Carter stated that she hears a lot of compliments about the schools Vocational Center.

There was a question about how much it would cost to do a complete tear down and rebuild.

There was discussion about enrollment projects and Mr. Upperco handed out Middle School

projections through 2023-2024 school year.

Mr. Hockaday stated that it would cost at least \$20 million more.

Motion and vote: Ms. Maddox made a motion, seconded by Ms. Carter to find the renovation and expansion of Spotsylvania Middle School Substantially in Accord with the Comprehensive Plan for the reasons stated in the staff analysis. The motion passed 7-0.

Public Comment: None

New Business:

Ms. Parrish inquired if the Planning Commission would be interested in having County email addresses. She stated that it would save the Commission members from having to review their email when a FOIA request comes in and instead that can be done by the IT department while doing county staff email.

Mr. Newhouse stated that he is in support of this.

There was discussion about whether to use their names or a generic email so when a new member comes on, they just take over that email. It was decided that they would prefer to have email that is name specific and new email addresses be assigned to new PC members.

Ms. Parrish stated that the request for County email for PC members needs to go to County Administration for approval and asked the Commission for a motion related to this.

Motion and vote: Mr. Newhouse made a motion, seconded by Mr. Smith to ask for county email for all PC members. The motion passed 7-0.

Mr. Newhouse stated that he would like to look at the Commission Bylaws in regard to what constitutes a group and would like to improve the process in regard to speakers during public hearings. He suggested a meeting to discuss.

Mr. Smith inquired whether the Board of Supervisors is looking at this also.

Ms. Parrish stated that she doesn't know

Mr. Smith stated that he feels like the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission should be on the same sheet of music and be consistent with one another.

Finally, Ms. Parrish stated that the Crucible public hearing may be coming up as early as June and stated that if the Commission wants to change venue, we need to allow for lead time so that we can adequately advertise.

Mr. Newhouse stated that he has strong feelings related to moving the meeting but we will discuss at another time.

Mr. Medina inquired about the sPower cases and what the current status is on them.

Ms. Parrish stated that the three sPower cases are going back to the Board of Supervisors next week, Tuesday. The Board directed staff to use the Commission's recommended conditions as a baseline, add a few legal edits, and they provided a few additional conditions.

Adjournment:

Motion and vote: Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thompson to adjourn. The motion passed 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.

__ *Paulette Mann* _____

Paulette L. Mann

__ April 17, 2019 _____

Date