



AMHERST COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING



MINUTES

November 21, 2024
Administrative Office Complex
153 Washington Street
Public Meeting Room
Meeting Convened - 7:00 PM

1. Call to Order

Members Present: Beverly Jones (Chair), Michael Bryant (Vice Chair), Jim Thompson, Derin Foor, Michael Martineau, Catherine Gamble, Emerson Bryant (Youth Participant Non-Voting Member) and Beyla Cunningham (Youth Participant Non-Voting Member)

Staff Present: Tyler Creasy (Director of Community Development), Sarah Nichols (Assistant Zoning Administrator) & Stacey Stinnett (Administrative Assistant)

Members Absent: David Pugh (Board of Liaison Non-Voting Member)

Madam Chair Jones called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance

Youth Participant, Emerson Bryant, led in prayer and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as submitted.

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Motion to approve the agenda

Motion made by: Thompson

Second: Bryant

Motion carried by a 6-0 vote.

4. Citizens Comments

Mr. Martineau announced that it was Planning Commission Member, Derin Foor's birthday. Everyone wished Mr. Foor a Happy Birthday.

5. Public Hearing - Special Exception

A. 2024-608 Mark & Andrea Hamm

Request by Mark and Andrea Hamm for a special exception in the A-1, Agricultural Residential District. The purpose of the special exception is to allow a photography venue and special events space for weddings and other similar uses. The property is located at 154 Buffalo Springs Turnpike and is further identified as tax map number 47-A-8.

Mr. Creasy presented the staff report and concluded his comments by stating that staff recommended approval of the special exception with the following conditions:

1. The entrance shall be approved by the Virginia Department of Transportation for the proposed change of use before issuance of a zoning permit.
2. All requirements of the Virginia Department of Health shall be met (one privy per 100 persons) for each event.
3. Guests shall be required to park on the property and not park on neighboring lots or on any right-of-way outside of their property unless they have written permission.
4. No more than 100 people may be in attendance at one event.

Madam Chair Jones opened the public hearing.

The applicants, Mr. and Mrs. Hamm, spoke in favor and gave a brief slide show of pictures of their property and answered the Planning Commission's questions.

No one spoke in opposition.

Madam Chair Jones closed the public hearing.

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Based on the analysis, the Planning Commission recommends to the Board of Supervisors approval of Special Exception 2024-608 at 154 Buffalo Springs Turnpike to allow a special events and photography venue with staff conditions.

Motion made by: Bryant

Second: Martineau

Motion carried by a 6-0 vote.

B. 2024-620 Arcola Towers 2, LP

Request by Arcola Towers 2, LP for a special exception in the A-1, Agricultural Residential District. The purpose of the special exception is to allow a 199' overall height monopole communications tower (Personal Wireless Service Facility) inside a 50' x 50' fenced compound with supporting equipment. The property is located at 299 Toytown Road and is further identified as tax map number 83-1-2.

Mr. Creasy presented the staff report and discussed two letters that he had received, one from John Riley with Verizon and the other from Ben Bond with Amherst County Public Safety. Mr. Creasy concluded his comments by stating that staff recommended approval of the special exception with the following conditions.

1. The property shall be developed in substantial compliance with the "Apple Market Arcola Towers Rawland NB+C Project # 101019" site plan dated October 18, 2024.
2. The proposed Arcola Towers landscaping shall be extended around the entire 50'x50' fenced compound.
3. The petitioner shall draft and record satisfactory documentation to the zoning administrator for Tax Map No. 83-1-2A pertaining to the fall zone and break point technology associated with the personal wireless service facility located on Tax Map No. 83-1-2.

Madam Chair Jones opened the public hearing.

Stuart Squier, Zoning Manager for GDN Sites, spoke in favor and gave a brief description of the request.

Jonathon Yates, representative with Arcola Towers, spoke in favor and briefly described the structure as well as the amount of coverage that the tower would allow for service.

No one spoke in opposition.

Madam Chair Jones closed the public hearing.

The Planning Commission was concerned that there were other areas within the County, for example, the Ambriar Shopping Center, that weren't covered by service, and they felt these areas should be considered priority since they were not rural. The applicants stated that their company chooses these sites based on budgets and within time, hopefully, these areas will be covered soon.

The Planning Commission requested that the applicant refer back to Arcola and Verizon about their concerns and consideration for the areas discussed.

No one spoke in opposition.

Madam Chair closed the public hearing.

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Based on the analysis, the Planning Commission recommends to the Board of Supervisors approval of Special Exception 2024-620 at Tax Map No. 83-1-2 to allow a 199' monopole communications tower with auxiliary wireless service facilities subject to the following conditions:

1. The property shall be developed in substantial compliance with the "Apple Market Arcola Towers Rawland NB+C Project # 101019" site plan dated October 18, 2024.
2. The proposed Arcola Towers landscaping shall be extended around the entire 50' x 50' fenced compound.
3. The petitioner shall draft and record satisfactory documentation to the zoning administrator for Tax Map No. 83-1-2A pertaining to the fall zone and break point technology associated with the personal wireless service facility located on Tax Map No. 83-1-2.

Motion made by: Bryant

Second: Martineau

Motion carried by a 6-0 vote.

6. Non-Public Hearing (Timothy Waldren)

A. Resolution 2024-11

Staff reminded the Commission that they have 100 days to provide its recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. A recommendation must be provided to the Board by December 28, 2024.

The previously recommended motion was to approve Resolution 2024-11.

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Motion to table Resolution 2024-11.

Motion made by: Jones

Second: Bryant

Motion carried by a 6-0 vote.

7. Potential Code Change

A. Subdivision Platting Requirements

Mr. Creasy stated that currently the Commissioner of the Revenue is hand drawing subdivisions and reconfigurations to send to the Timmons Group for our GIS to be updated.

This proposal would require surveyors to submit their plat electronically in a form that is acceptable to Timmons. This would remove the additional step of the Commissioner drawing in new / changing lot lines.

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Motion to draft staff to draft the attached language into the form of an ordinance and schedule a public hearing.

Motion made by: Bryant

Second: Foor

Motion carried by a 6-0 vote.

8. Site Plan Review

A. Site Plan Review

Mrs. Nichols updated the Planning Commission on the current site plans.

9. Old/New Business

Mr. Creasy informed the Commission that it was time that Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood maps were updated for the flood hazard overlay district. The purpose of the ordinance is to update the flood insurance rate map and flood insurance study dates, definitions, liability disclosure, and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) formatting requirements. Mr. Creasy stated that a public hearing would need to be advertised for the December meeting regarding code changes for FEMA. Due to time constraints, Mr. Creasy stated that there would be no first read and, unfortunately, this was out of his hands because he had just received this information.

The Planning Commission briefly discussed the status of the intersection project at the Madison Heights Town Center.

10. Approval of Minutes for October 24, 2024

A. Attachment

The minutes were approved as submitted.

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Motion to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes for October 24, 2024 Meeting Minutes as submitted.

Motion made by: Bryant

Second: Gamble

Motion carried by a 6-0 vote.

11. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Motion to adjourn.

Motion made by: Martineau

Second: Bryant

Motion carried by a 6-0 vote.


Chairman