

**MINUTES
LURAY PLANNING COMMISSION
MARCH 14, 2007**

The Luray Planning Commission met on Wednesday, March 14, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. in regular session for the purpose of a public hearing. The meeting was held at the Luray Fire Department, Luray, Virginia. Chairman Tom Potts opened the meeting.

Commissioners Present:

Tom Potts, Chair
Clifton Campbell
Peyton Baughan
Terry Dodson
Larry Hakel
Judy Suddith
Sam McNeely

Others Present:

Bryan Chrisman, Assistant Town Manager
Ligon Webb, Town Planner
Jason Spitler, Town Attorney
Mark Belton, Page County Administrator
Mayor Ralph Dean
Members of the Luray Town Council
Jamie Turner, Page News & Courier

Chairman Potts called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and everyone joined in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Chairman Potts asked the Commission to go directly to the business of the Regional Jail

Chairman Potts asked for an orderly meeting and to suspend the order of agenda for the meeting and go directly to the business of the Regional Jail. Chairman Potts began by turning the meeting over to Town Planner, Ligon Webb. Mr. Webb noted that the purpose of the meeting is to decide on whether or not the Regional Jail Group should be granted a special use permit for the site in question. Mr. Webb began by welcoming everyone to the evenings meeting and clarified that the procedure for applying for a special use permit is standard procedure for industrial sites. The location is approximately 33 acres North of EMCO and South of Rte. 211. In a regional jail scenario three or more counties or cities would participate in a full service facility. The facility would house approximately 485 beds for inmates and could employ around 160 individuals from various localities. The anticipated opening of such a facility would be between 2008-2009, being fully operational by the Fall of 2010. Mr. Webb drew attention to the fact that there is currently a proposal for town homes nearby this location, as well as an existing housing development. The applicant has agreed to conduct a formal traffic analysis due to these considerations. Other issues concerning the site are relative to the flood-way and the flood-plain areas. Town Planner Webb did touch on the economic benefits of a regional jail; employment opportunities, salaries of such positions, and the benefits to the community as a whole.

Chairman Potts reviewed the Commissions visit to the Winchester facility and noted that the commission was quite impressed with the overall appearance and operations. Mr. Potts then

turned the meeting over to County Administrator, Mark Belton, for his portion of the evenings meeting.

Slide Presentation by County Administrator, Mark Belton

Administrator Belton then presented a power point presentation on the Regional Jail concept that included various statistics, topographical maps, and design features.

Upon conclusion of Mr. Belton's presentation the Planning Commission members held a brief question and answer period, allowing commissioners to address any of their concerns with Administrator Belton. Areas of discussion included the following:

- Evacuation Routes
- Nearby Fuel Tanks
- Status/ Nature of Inmates Housed at the Facility
- Traffic/ Roadways
- Employment
- Implications for Local Jails
- Flood Plain
- Alteration of the flow of flooding due to the large amount of fill dirt
- Nearby Residential Areas

Chairman Potts then opened the meeting for the public hearing and comments from the public.

Public Comments

Nancy Waldo, 6 Constitution Ave, Luray, VA-

Ms. Waldo would like to see a locally controlled/governed jail and has concerns for the future growth of such a facility.

Jim Turner, 830 MillCreek Crossroads, Page County, VA-

Mr. Turner began by noting that even though he is a county resident he does own property within the corporation limits of the Town of Luray. Mr. Turner voiced concerns for the amount of jobs that would be awarded to residents outside of Page County. As well, he noted that regardless of the facilities appearance it is still a "jail" facility. Lastly, Mr. Turner expressed his concerns regarding the location being in a flood area and the issue of released/escaped inmates.

Tom Ford, 1 East Ridge Lane, Luray, VA-

Mr. Ford conveyed his opposition to the location in question due to potential flooding and evacuation procedures. As well, Mr. Ford communicated that a facility such as this could deter future businesses from coming to the area and that the commission should consider their community vision for the future when making a decision.

Lynda Rosser, Island Ford Rd, Rileyville, VA-

Ms. Rosser stated that she is employed with the Warren County Sherriff's office and feels that Warren County will bear the majority of the cost involved since they are the largest of the localities. Ms. Rosser made it clear that the regional jail concept is not "all bad" and has positive aspects for the community, including trainable job openings.

Natalie Zuckerman, Stanley, VA-

Ms. Zuckerman emphasized that her main issue with the concept is the issue of flooding.

Gilbert Campbell, 244 East Main St, Luray, VA-

Mr. Campbell noted that with the close of much of the Wrangler Facility an operation such as the Regional Jail could help compensate for some of the town's water and sewer costs and associated improvements to those systems. Mr. Campbell stressed that he feels the location is a good one and that the County of Page is the best location.

John Williams, 17 O'Flinn St., Luray, VA-

Mr. Williams noted that he would like to see a regional jail located in Warren County leaving the opportunity for business/industry to come to this area.

Brandy Lowery, Island Ford Rd., Rileyville, VA-

Ms. Lowery feels that the potential creation of jobs would be beneficial to the local community. Examples of these benefits would include local revenues in the sales of gas, food, etc.

Carl Turner, Luray, VA –

Mr. Turner emphasized that he would like to see County Officials focus their time on finding opportunities that would bring local jobs.

Joe Kauffman, 102 Fourth St, Luray, VA –

Mr. Kauffman expressed concerns over the possibility of a decrease in property values and existing businesses moving out of the community.

K.K. Stroupe, Representative for Shen-Paco Industries, Inc., 34 Stoney Brook Lane, Luray, VA-

Ms. Stroupe is concerned for her company's employees as they would be located in close proximity to a regional jail facility. Ms. Stroupe notes that her employees are vulnerable citizens of the local community and she is speaking on behalf of their best interest.

Chairman Potts closed the Public Hearing portion of the evenings meeting at 8:30pm due to no further comments from attendees. He asked for a short recess, and then for the commission members to reconvene for the remainder of the evenings business.

Re-Opening of Meeting for Regular Business

Mr. Potts asked the commission for any discussion or further questions they might have. Commissioner Peyton Baughan addressed several issues concerning the topic. Mr. Baughan noted that he is not opposed to a regional jail; however he is opposed to the location in question. Overall, Mr. Baughan felt that there were too many unanswered questions for him to make a decision in favor of this request. Commissioner McNeely called the question. Chairman Potts asked for a motion, being that no further discussion could take place.

Motion: Commissioner Clifton Campbell motioned to deny the request for a special use permit on the grounds of the flood plain and improper use of an industrial site. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Judy Suddith with the vote as follows: YEA: Commissioners Potts, Campbell, Baughan, Hakel, Suddith, McNeely. Abstain: Commissioner Dodson. **Approved 6-0**

Approval of Minutes of the Regular Planning Commission Meeting on February 21, 2007

There were two minor changes to the minutes of February 21, 2007. They will be revised per the commission's request.

Adjourn

With no further business, Chairman Potts adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan T. Chrisman
Assistant Zoning Administrator

ATTEST:
