

MINUTES FOR THE WEEKLY MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2009 AT 7 PM IN THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER BOARD ROOM, BUILDING F.

PARTICIPANTS:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bill Porter
Julie Leverenz
Rich Krapf
Chris Henderson
Mark Wenger
Mary Jones

NOT PRESENT:

Jack Fraley
George Billups
Vaughn Poller
Ruth Larson
Tom Tingle

STAFF PRESENT:

Tammy Rosario, Planning
David German, Planning
Allen Murphy, Planning
Alan Robertson, WJCC Schools
Terry Costello, Planning

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Julie Leverenz called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. with Mr. Jack Fraley, Mr. George Billups, Mr. Vaughn Poller, Ms. Ruth Larson, and Mr. Tom Tingle absent. She stated there was not yet a quorum present, so the Steering Committee could not yet conduct official business. Mr. Chris Henderson arrived before the approval of the minutes, allowing a quorum to be reached.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Leverenz opened the public comment session.

There being none, Ms. Leverenz closed the public comment session.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Bill Porter made a motion to approve the minutes with the changes that Ms. Leverenz brought forward and that were posted on the blog.

Ms. Mary Jones seconded the motion.

In a unanimous voice vote, the minutes were approved.

IV. PUBLIC FACILITIES

Mr. David German stated the presentation of the Public Facilities Technical Report would resume in the Goals, Strategies, and Actions section.

Mr. German outlined the language, wording, and placement of the remaining Goals, Strategies, and Actions.

Mr. Henderson stated that the Planning Commission and Policy Committee are working on a public facilities master plan concept. He suggested that, rather than having public facilities being developed in a sustainable manner, they should be developed according to the public facilities master plan. He said that the master plan itself would include sustainable concepts.

Mr. German stated that the public facilities master plan was referenced at the last Steering Committee Public Facilities meeting. He said Action 1.1.5 included guidelines to prepare financial plans for public facilities including expected operating costs, to develop long term maintenance programs, to encourage regional utilization, and to obtain control of future public facility sites.

Ms. Leverenz asked if these actions made a public facilities master plan redundant.

Ms. Jones stated that the public facilities actions were more concerned with sustainable building than with assets. She said that a public facilities master plan could be established as a goal of one of the Public Facilities actions.

Mr. Henderson stated that if the County decides on a public facilities master plan, that plan should supersede various other documents.

Mr. German stated that Action 1.1 and its parts are meant to guide the construction and operation of the County's public facilities if the County does not adopt a public facilities master plan. He said that the actions language can be amended to include the adoption of a public facilities master plan.

Mr. Henderson stated that most County departments already have a facilities master plan. The public facilities master plan would combine these individual department plans in a definitive document.

Mr. Rich Krapf stated that he was concerned with eliminating any action language from the Comprehensive Plan on the assumption that the Board of Supervisors might approve a public facilities master plan down the road.

Mr. German outlined Comprehensive Plan actions relating to capital asset costs, green design, efficiency, and sustainable building. He noted that some public facilities have no means of becoming more energy efficient, which is why the wording in the action included "where applicable" language.

Mr. Henderson stated that the County should have a financial return requirement for energy efficiency spending. He said that the private sector cost-recovery period is typically one to three years.

Ms. Leverenz noted that the action discusses energy efficiency upgrades where costs savings can be clearly expected or demonstrated.

Mr. German noted that County staff considers costs versus service life during capital asset purchases, and illustrated this point with the example of the purchase of a new ambulance by the Fire Department. He continued by outlining the action that calls for LEED Silver ratings on new and renovated buildings wherever possible.

Mr. Mark Wenger questioned whether certain building standards and language would still be valid by the 2013 Comprehensive Plan. He said the LEED standard action wording should allow for greater flexibility.

Ms. Tammy Rosario stated that language could be inserted into the Action, such as "or equivalent", in preparation for evolving energy efficiency performance standards.

Mr. Krapf suggested that the language should refer to the currently accepted industry standard, or its successor.

Ms. Leverenz suggested adding the word “security” to Strategy 1.5.

Mr. Henderson asked if the County’s computer system would be a public facility or a system.

Mr. German stated probably both, and suggested adding “data systems” to Action 1.5.1.

Mr. Porter questioned Action 1.5.2., and the fact that buildings are already built to a certain standard.

Mr. German stated that Action 1.5.2. was making reference to the fact that schools and other public buildings are not necessarily being built to a strong enough standard to serve as hurricane shelters. This new action is suggesting that, if the County needed more structures that could serve as shelters, a stronger building standard would be required in some cases.

Mr. Henderson stated that this action is the only place in the Comprehensive Plan that specifically addresses emergency preparedness. This illuminates issues concerning planning that involve all of the different departments. He expressed the importance of emergency preparedness planning, and suggested that it be included in the public facilities master plan, should it be adopted. He suggested adding additional strategies and actions that addressed emergency preparedness.

Ms. Leverenz suggested adding wording that would incorporate an emergency preparedness master plan in the public facilities master plan.

Mr. Henderson agreed and further suggested that it may prove beneficial to have a separate emergency plan being that it is separate from any public facilities master plan that is created.

Mr. Porter stated that there are plans in place to handle emergencies.

Mr. German suggested adding the inclusion of emergency preparedness as an action, and tying it to a public facilities master plan at the bottom of the other actions. He suggested that each grouping of strategies and actions could conclude with an action that suggested a public facilities master plan as a way to achieve each of the other actions, if desired by the Steering Committee.

Ms. Jones suggested getting the input of Ms. Kate Hale, the County’s Emergency Preparedness Director.

Mr. German stated he would draft an action item, and then get Ms. Hale’s input on that item.

Mr. Henderson suggested having some information in the technical report as to the capability of County facilities that currently could serve as shelters.

Ms. Jones asked what Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) was.

Mr. German gave the example of not using dense foliage as part of the landscaping plan at the entrances of buildings, for safety reasons. This can be overcome with lighting, and changing the landscaping.

Mr. German stated that there was new piece written by the Communications staff that will be included in the technical report. It expands on the mission and activities of the County Communications Division.

Mr. Alan Robertson gave a presentation on the facility and service guidelines for the schools. He spoke about the factors involved in selecting a school site and determining its ultimate size. These would include community interests, sports fields, and stormwater management. He stated that an architectural firm was consulted, and developed some guidelines for school construction, and also standardized the school design process. Mr. Robertson stated that these guidelines were used for the last two schools. He stated that when searching for a site, it was important to serve the school's needs as well as the community's needs. He displayed the Matoaka Elementary School site, and explained the layout of the school, calling out the buildings, playing fields, and stormwater management facilities. Mr. Robertson pointed out the buffer and discussed the school's architectural features. He thought it was important to explain how a large site was used.

Mr. Krapf asked if there was some evolution with regards to school site designs, and more specifically LID measures.

Mr. Robertson stated that there has been dialogue. He stated that there are some dry swales on some of the school sites.

Mr. Henderson noted that another consideration of how a school site might be laid out is the geometry of the parcel.

Mr. Robertson stated that this is something that is taken into consideration when determining a school site. It is a common practice to overlay potential new sites with footprints of other existing schools to see how well the proposed sites would work.

Mr. Porter stated that the schools are spread out throughout the County.

Mr. Robertson then displayed the 26-acre Stonehouse Elementary School site and described where everything is located.

Mr. Porter asked what the sizes of the Rawls Byrd and Matthew Whaley sites are.

Mr. Robertson answered that the Matthew Whaley is a 9-acre site. He displayed the site and described where everything is located. There is no multi-purpose field on this site.

Mr. Wenger asked about current design standards and whether the number of stories or floors is considered.

Mr. Robertson answered that the number of floors depends on the site. He stated that the new elementary school will be two stories, and the new middle school will be three stories.

Ms. Jones mentioned that in the proposed level of service guidelines, the recommended developable acreage does not include accommodating community and recreational needs.

Mr. Robertson asked why it does not include these considerations.

Ms. Jones stated that maybe they should be taken into consideration.

Ms. Leverenz suggested including something where community and recreational needs are taken into consideration at some level.

Mr. Porter stated that he felt that the educational needs, and the community and recreational needs, should be separate. They can be combined but then it changes the requirements.

Mr. Wenger stated that it could be written in a section, but that there may be some standard currently, given the example of James River Elementary School, where there is a recreational facility attached to the school.

Ms. Jones stated that it is referenced separately.

Ms. Leverenz stated that Mr. Billups made the point about urban and rural schools having different needs and requirements.

Mr. Robertson stated the importance of considering school, recreational, and community needs at the same time, being that schools are not being built on a continuing basis.

Ms. Leverenz suggested adding wording to include “and baseline community activities.”

Mr. Henderson questioned the requirement of buffers for schools that were greater than ordinance requirements. He stated that maybe this would create a situation that was counterproductive.

Mr. Robertson stated that buffers probably could be negotiated depending on what was adjacent to the school.

Mr. Murphy felt that there was enough flexibility in application with regard to Community Character Corridors and buffers.

Mr. Robertson stated that Rawls Byrd School is 12 acres, and is surrounded by neighborhood residential communities. He was not sure if this particular design would be the design of the future due to practicality reasons related to open urban space and the cost of land. He then displayed the Warhill site, and all the facilities that are located there.

Ms. Jones asked how other comprehensive plans identify potential school sites.

Mr. Henderson stated that maybe urban and non-urban need to be separated, and that this might provide the flexibility that the Committee is looking for.

Mr. Wenger agreed. He suggested keeping the acreage numbers, but adding a reference that the larger acreages are for a combination of school, community, and recreational uses.

Mr. Henderson asked if numbers were available as to how many County residents were in private schools and what the impact could be on the public school system if a shift were to occur away from private schooling.

Mr. Robertson stated that this information is obtained through the Census.

Ms. Jones commented that this data was currently being worked on as part of another effort.

Mr. Henderson suggested that there should be incentives for private schools, as these schools alleviate some of the costs of building and operating public schools.

Mr. Robertson agreed that the number in private schools is something to monitor.

Mr. Wenger asked about the number of home-schooled children.

Mr. Robertson stated the number was small, but that the schools do have the figures since home-schooled children must be tested regularly to ensure that they are receiving adequate educations in the home environment.

V. OTHER ITEMS

Mr. Henderson asked for the number of housing units in James City County with an assessed value that meet the County's affordable housing ranges, and also asked for breakdowns for workforce and market-priced housing as well

Ms. Rosario stated that staff will look into this request.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Krapf made a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Jones seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.