

BLAND COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes for October 2, 2023

Members Present:

Jerry Mercer, Elmer Chewning, Ron Sevenot, Jim Pruett, Meagan Bradshaw, John Dodson, Keith Costello, Jim Baker

Members Absent:

John Dodson

Others Present:

Joel K. Cagle, Planning Commission Secretary
Paul Cassell, County Attorney

CALL TO ORDER

At 6:00 PM, Chairman Mercer called the meeting of the Bland County Planning Commission to order at the Bland County Courthouse; Bland, Virginia. The Invocation was given and allegiance was pledged to the flag of our country by everyone present.

ROLL CALL

Planning Commission Secretary Cagle took the roll call and announced that a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Mercer invited a motion to approve the meeting minutes of July 3, 2023. Commissioner Bradshaw made the motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 6, 2023; Commissioner Pruett provided the second, and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING

- An application to re-zone and obtain a CUP on Tax Map 32-A-12 from Agricultural to Commercial and a CUP to operate a Recreational Facility was brought before the Commission. Mr. Hussein Mrad proposes to renovate the current Boy Scout Camp into a Glamping site, under the Eupepsia Brand. It was discussed that the site will consist of 20 Yurts and a Mess Hall. Some of the existing buildings will be demolished, while others would be renovated to meet the needs of the project.

A public hearing was opened with four registered speakers.

-Will Smith stated that the Commission should table the vote until after the new owners applied for and obtained all applicable permits (E&S, DEQ, Army Corp., etc). He noted a traffic study should be completed prior to action. He stated that a permit request was made 25 years ago to clean the pond from the Army Corp. of Engineers and it was denied.

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-Keith Beckett spoke on the environmental concerns as well.

-Bob Saunders asked how they plan on making a return on their investment, with the upfront costs of the land purchase and all the new structures. He felt something was off. He requested the application be tabled.

-Jan Hutchison echoed the need to obtain all permits prior to any zoning change; questioned the accessibility for the public, stated a traffic study should be completed, and the need to maintain the environment, especially the water.

With no other registered speakers, the public hearings were closed. After some discussion a motion was made by Commissioner Bradshaw to recommend the Board of Supervisors re-zone Tax Map No. 32-A-12 from Agricultural to Commercial, with a second being provided by Commissioner Pruett. A unanimous vote was given.

After further discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Stevenot to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve the CUP with the following conditions:

- 1) Guest structures to be limited to 20 Units.
- 2) First responder vehicle access to be maintained by owner, with input from the Grapefield Fire Chief and approval of Building Official.
- 3) No obtrusive lighting.
- 4) Project to be completed within 18 months from BOS approval.
- 5) Fully contained, bear resistant, enclosed refuse containers with regular pickup.
- 6) All federal, state, and local fire laws shall be followed as well as safe practices utilized to prevent forest fires.
- 7) Pursuant to federal, state and local regulations, protection of surface water and groundwater to be maintained.

A second was provided by Commissioner Pruett. A unanimous vote was given.

NEW BUSINESS

-None

OLD BUSINESS

-Comprehensive Plan Update

ITEMS TABLED FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

-None

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission at this time, Commissioner Baker made a motion to adjourn; Commissioner Bradshaw provided the second, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joel K. Cagle- Secretary
Planning Commission
County of Bland