



BERKELEY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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Development Roundtable Meeting

April 12, 2013 1:30 pm

Notes

Mike Thompson, the Planning Director, opened the meeting by updating the attendees that the approved Subdivision Regulation revisions were on the website. He also informed the attendees that the Planning Department applications have also been updated and are now in fillable form.

Kim Shrader, the County Engineer, stated that the building code will be updated to 2012 codes effective 7/1/13. Please see the attached list of codes to be adopted. Ms. Shrader stated that there will be Public Meeting concerning the codes, which will then be forwarded to the County Council for approval.

Ms. Shrader stated that May is Building Safety Month. Pamphlets will be available in her office throughout the month regarding building safety.

Mr. Thompson stated that the Planning Commission had approved a bond tolling policy, which was modeled after Jefferson County's. Berkeley County has two projects that will be approved for the tolling, while Jefferson County has 8-9. The policy will be forwarded to the County Council for a Public Hearing. If any Roundtable members have any suggestions, please email Mike at mthompson@berkeleywv.org.

Matt Powell, from Dan Ryan Builders, stated that it is almost impossible to receive tolling unless the project was phased. He would like a definition of "no infrastructure."

Mr. Thompson stated that if there are utilities in the ground, the project needs to be bonded.

Steve Thomas stated that Jefferson County's policy is that no improvements can be done, so that the ground could be returned to agriculture.

Mr. Powell feels that the language is subjective.

Mr. Whitacre stated that the taxing class is different if there are improvements done. He feels the land must be vacant with the possibility of stripping the top soil. Water/sewer in the ground is not acceptable.

Mr. Powell asked if the bond was pulled, would the new rates apply.

Mr. Thompson answered yes. Mr. Thompson used the Bakers Field subdivision as an example of what will be acceptable.

Mr. Powell wondered why bonding cannot just be done for the work being done at the time.

Mr. Thompson stated that everything recorded on the final plat must be completed. To ensure that it is completed, it must be bonded.

Dirk Stansbury stated that some banks have created a dummy plat that is held by the bank. If the developer defaults, the merger plat is recorded, returning the land to agriculture.

Mr. Thompson stated that he will be forming a committee of Staff and Roundtable Members to review changes to the Subdivision Regulations. The Regulations are a living document and can be improved. He would like 5 or 6 volunteers. If you are interested in this review, please email Mike.

Mr. Thomas stated that he would like some feedback from the group regarding Surveyor's Certificates.

Don Berry stated that a seal is a certification and is regulated by the state. He feels the certificate is redundant. Commercial site plans are not recorded, so he feels that having the certification doesn't make sense.

Mr. Thomas stated that he had spoken to an out of state surveyor who did not want to certify other property.

Mr. Berry stated that a boundary line belongs to two people, while a corner belongs to 4. Adjoining properties must be reviewed when creating a plat; surveyors cannot just go by the deed. Deed books are very important as tax maps and parcel numbers are not permanent.

Dirk Stansbury stated that if the state regulations are met, the county's regulations are met.

Mr. Thomas asked if Jefferson County has specific language in their Subdivision Ordinance.

Mr. Stansbury answered yes.

Mr. Berry stated that he would like to see the size of the plats and regulations reviewed. With different sizes of plats, there are different rules.

Mr. Thomas stated that the Departments are currently using 3 sets of Regulations. With the 2004 Regulations, a Supplemental Plat is required. In the 2009 Regulations, a Final Plat is required without showing improvements. All projects need Asbuilts submitted for the Engineering Department. Mr. Thomas would like to see all plans migrate to the current regulations.

Mr. Thompson stated that changes have occurred on the Planning Department website. The following sections have been added: staff, FAQ's, applications, Safe & Clean Agency and the Roundtable. In the Roundtable section, agendas, minutes, memos and meeting dates can be found.

Mr. Stansbury stated that he would like the bonding spreadsheets to be placed on the website, so that line item information is available for bond releases/reductions.

Ms. Shrader stated that she will get them added into the ACT file so that they can be searched.

Jim Whitacre, Council Person, stated that he had 2 items to discuss. The first being a monetary transaction in lieu of green space within subdivisions. He stated that the money collected could be distributed to the Parks and Recreation District or to the Homeowner's Association, so that facilities can be utilized. Homeowner Associations would not have to maintain green space.

The second item for discussion is in regard to 3rd party inspections for footer inspections. Mr. Whitacre stated that it is sometimes difficult to get an inspection scheduled. He stated that Kim Shrader had concerns about this subject. Mr. Whitacre suggested that once a footer is inspected, a sticker would be placed on the permit. These inspections would only take place in a tight position or if the building market would boom again. He doesn't know who would pay for the inspection yet. Mr. Whitacre would like to initiate a discussion group with builders and contractors regarding this matter.

Lloyd Winters from Greenway Engineering stated that he does 3rd party inspection in Virginia. The builder pays for them and the plans are stamped on site.

Mr. Whitacre asked if they were commercial inspections.

Mr. Winters answered yes.

Mr. Whitacre stated that he was looking at residential inspections. He wondered what guidelines were in place.

Mr. Winters answered that it varied by the county.

Mr. Whitacre stated that if there was an uptrend in the economy, he would like accommodations in place.

Ms. Shrader asked if he had received complaints or heard of any issues regarding inspections.

Mr. Whitacre stated he had not heard any complaints and that the Staff was capable. He would just like to be ahead of the game.

Mr. Whitacre also stated that the County is working with the IT Department to accept credit cards by July 1, 2013.

Mr. Whitacre would like to see committees formed on the two issues he brought to the Roundtable.

Mr. Berry asked why there is an engineering fee for smaller projects, such as Preliminary Finals. The lot cannot be engineered. He thinks that the County Engineer does not need to review these plans.

Mr. Thompson said he would look into the review procedures and if anyone else had input to let him know.

Mr. Thompson stated that the next Roundtable meeting would be on July 12, 2013 at 9:30 am.