

**NELSON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
September 27, 2017**

Present: Chair Philippa Proulx, Commissioners Mark Stapleton, Mary Kathryn Allen, and Tommy Bruguere

Staff Present: Sandy Shackelford, Director of Planning & Zoning and Emily Hjulstrom, Secretary

Call to Order: Chair Proulx called the meeting to order at 7:00 P. M. in the General District Courtroom, County Courthouse, Lovingston.

Approval of Minutes – August 23rd, 2017:

Commissioner Allen motioned that the minutes from August 23rd, 2017 be approved. They were approved 4-0.

Old Business:

Public Hearings:

Other Business:

– **Skylark Subdivision (Preliminary) –Craig Colberg**

Ms. Shackelford showed the preliminary plat of the subdivision and stated that the subdivision will be on a private road. She noted that it will not be a state maintained road but that the applicants will need to have their entrance approved by VDOT. She noted that the road will meet all of the design criteria in the subdivision ordinance. She noted that the subdivision has the maximum amount of lots allowed. She also noted that there was a site plan review committee meeting and that VDOT, DEQ and stormwater management look good. She also noted that there is additional information that DEQ will need prior to final approval. She recommended that the PC approve the preliminary subdivision.

Massie Saunders introduced himself and the owner **Craig Colberg**.

Supervisor Bruguere asked if the main home was on the 30 acre residue parcel and where the Christmas trees were in relation to the house. Mr. Colberg confirmed that the main home is on the 30 acre residue. He also noted that the Christmas trees are adjacent to the subdivision.

Commissioner Allen made a motion to approve the preliminary Skylark Subdivision plat. **Commissioner Stapleton** seconded the motion.

The preliminary subdivision plat was approved 4-0.

– **Major Site Plan #2017-10- Storage Units**

Ms. Shackelford showed the site plan for the proposed storage units and noted that it was missing the lighting plan, but that the lighting plan was brought by Mr. Saunders tonight. She noted that signature lines will need to be added to the final site plan. She also noted that the E&S had been approved during a previous phase and that there will be no additional land disturbance. She noted that the building meets setbacks and is off of a private road and won't need VDOT approval for the entrance. She recommended that the Planning Commission approve the preliminary site plan.

Supervisor Bruguiera noted that it is an appropriate place for storage units. **Supervisor Bruguiera** asked if there is a road maintenance agreement for the road. **Mr. Saunders** noted that he did not believe there was.

Mr. Saunders asked if this was being reviewed as a preliminary or a final. **Ms. Shackelford** noted that she had presented it as preliminary because it was marked as such but that the Planning Commission could review it as a final because it included all the necessary information.

Mr. Saunders noted that every other bay will have a light and that the lights will be pointed downwards. He also noted that there is no attendant, and there will be a padlocked gate.

Supervisor Bruguiera made a motion to approve the final Major Site Plan 2017-10. **Commissioner Stapleton** seconded the motion.

The final site plan was approved 4-0.

– Major Site Plan #2017-04 – Retail Store in Piney River

Ms. Shackelford noted that this had already been through a rezoning. She noted that there were still things that VDOT needed. She also noted a few small changes that would be needed before the final site plan was ready to be signed such as adding the signature panel, updating the zoning notes, and updating the water and sewer notes. She noted that otherwise all requirements have been met and that she recommended approval of the final site plan.

Alyssa Carter is with the Broadway Group. She noted that VDOT mentioned adding a slight right turn lane on Lowesville Road and widening the driveway. She also noted that they were looking at stormwater calculations to make sure that the runoff will not be going into the VDOT right of way. She also noted that VDOT had approved their Access Management Exceptions.

Supervisor Bruguiera asked if they had an artist rendition of what the building would look like. **Ms. Carter** noted that it will be 7500 Sq ft and have a block front. **Ms. Carter** noted that it will be smaller than the other Dollar Generals in Nelson County.

Commissioner Allen made a motion to approve the final major site plan for the Piney River commercial retail store dated August 14th, 2017 to include recommendations from the Zoning Administrator and pending approval from VDOT. **Commissioner Stapleton** seconded the motion.

The final site plan was approved 4-0.

Matters from the Planning and Zoning Director: – RVAP Discussion

Mr. Stapleton noted that he thinks the most forward-thinking document that they have is the RVAP. He also noted that if they can amend it to the point that they feel comfortable adopting it that they should do that. He presented as follows:

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SITUATION:

Nelson County has ongoing and unplanned development. Written guidance in the form of the Comprehensive Plan is fifteen years old. The most current reference document is the Rockfish Valley Area Plan (RVAP), which has not yet been adopted.

MISSION:

The Nelson County Planning Commission (PC) reviews the RVAP, makes edits and changes and produces a revised and final version for approval and implementation. The amended RVAP will convey the PC's recommended actions to the Nelson County Board of Supervisors (BOS) for approval, adoption, funding, etc. The PC goal is to have developed and presented the "new" RVAP for approval to the BOS NLT February 2018. The "approved" RVAP will be used as the baseline document for revision of the Nelson County Comprehensive Plan AND will provide direction to the Director of Planning & Zoning and the PC.

ASSUMPTIONS:

- Commissioners accept, 1) that there is a need for amendment and adoption of the RVAP and, 2) that Planning Commission has responsibility
- Final revised RVAP will retain the basic structure and supporting documentation of the current RVAP
- Director of Planning & Zoning "owns" oversight of this process
- That the BOS will consider approval and adoption of a modified RVAP
- That an approved RVAP will contribute to any update of the county Comprehensive Plan
- That approved RVAP recommendations will be implemented in an action plan for the county

EXECUTION:

Approach:

The Director of Planning & Zoning supported by a designated member of the PC, will work to develop a schedule, documents and working papers for consideration by the full PC. These documents will be presented to the full PC for discussion and approval. Readalouds will be provided prior to all meetings with sufficient time for PC members to read, appreciate, provide edits and comments prior to meeting. Meetings will be controlled with specific agenda items presented for approval, voting and adoption.

Schedule:

The PC will set aside no less than 30 minutes per regularly scheduled meeting for discussion and approval of changes to the RVAP. Additionally, PC members will meet monthly in work sessions of 2-3 hours to work on the revision. These work sessions will generally be scheduled at a midpoint between normal monthly meetings. At the point where the revised RVAP represents the consensus of the PC and is in final draft form, the PC will schedule both public hearings and presentation to the BOS and county leadership.

Notional Schedule of Events (actual schedule TBD):

27 Sep PC Meeting
10 Oct Concept Presentation to BoS
11 Oct RVAP working session
25 Oct PC Meeting
8 Nov RVAP working session
14 Nov In Process Review (IPR) for BOS
22 Nov PC Meeting
6 Dec RVAP Working session
12 Dec In Process Review (IPR) for BOS
20 Dec PC Meeting
9 Jan In Process Review (IPR) for BOS
10 Jan RVAP Working Session
24 Jan PC Meeting (Public Hearing)
6 Feb Final RVAP Presentation to BOS

The end goal of this review is to produce an updated RVAP, reflecting the majority position of the PC. The amended RVAP will be coordinated with appropriate Nelson County equity holders and used to convey specific recommendations to the BOS for approval and implementation and will serve as the foundation document for revision and update of the Comprehensive Plan,

Overview Concept

Task I –

- Describe the plan to commission in next meeting
- Affirm responsibilities of the PC and willingness/interest of members in establishing goals, requirements, guidance, standards, other items for strategic planning for Nelson County

Task II - Review current RVAP recommendations, sort into:

- Accepted as is (minor edits to wording)
- Worthy but requires editing, rewrite
- Do not use, discard
- Addition of new recommendations

Task III – Perform writing, editing, composition. Initial drafts produced by professional staff and selected planning commission member

Task IV – New First Draft edited document provided to planning commission for review and approval

Task V – Present new and updated RVAP to selected members of Nelson County staff (those with equities). Incorporate minor edits. Hold meeting for public comment.

Task VI – Present Final Draft to BOS, either individually or as a group.

Task VII – Accept decisions and guidance from BOS for inclusion into RVAP and for operations of the PC

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and the Nelson County Planning & Zoning Office.

Chair Proulx had a few corrections for the schedule: that the November meeting is on the 15th and not the 22nd and that the December meeting is the 27th and not the 20th. She stated that she would like to skip the extra meeting in December. She also noted that they might need to change when they have the public hearing for the RVAP. **Commissioner Stapleton** asked Supervisor Bruguere how the BOS would feel about the RVAP. **Supervisor Bruguere** noted that they would need to review it first and see where the RVAP is at that point. He noted that they would also need to wait to act on it so that they could see comments from the public.

Commissioner Stapleton proposed October 11th for the first work session. The PC agreed to this.

Chair Proulx asked Supervisor Bruguere if they should update the BOS monthly. **Supervisor Bruguere** noted that the commission should wait until it's ready to present it all at once. **Ms. Shackelford** noted that Supervisor Bruguere can keep the BOS updated in the monthly BOS meetings.

Commissioner Allen noted that many of these goals are repetitive and should be merged.

Commissioner Allen also noted that she will not be available for the November 8th work session.

The Commissioners then provided individual feedback on the goals in the RVAP. A green star denotes a planning commissioner wanting to keep the goal, red to remove it and any additional comments they provided in blue.

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Community

Goal C-1: Develop and implement common-sense growth management policies that balance development and rural preservation. ****

Objective A: Identify appropriate future development areas as well as rural preservation areas.

- i. Evaluate suitability of locations in Afton, Rockfish Gap, Nellysford, and Beech Grove for designation as future development areas.
- ii. Identify sections of the highway corridors and other parts of the Rockfish Valley that are high-priority areas for the preservation of rural character or protection of scenic resources.

Obj. B: Conduct a focused effort to update County policies, plans, and ordinances to create a stronger framework for balancing development and rural preservation.

- i. Review and update the Comprehensive Plan, with particular emphasis on updating the Future Land Use Plan and Map.
- ii. Review zoning map in areas designated as future development areas and designated rural preservation areas, and identify appropriate modifications for further evaluation.

Locations critical

Goal C-2: Increase access to public space(s) within the Rockfish Valley. ***

Obj. A: Connect with local stakeholders and explore shared interest(s) and ideas relating to a potential place-making project.

- i. Conduct a vision-casting workshop in collaboration with community stakeholders, to evaluate public interest and feasibility of establishing a new “**central gathering place**” in the Nellysford area.
- ii. Convene committed stakeholders to more formally establish of a collaborative partnership, for the purpose of successfully advancing a public “place-making” project.

Goal C-3: Increase access to natural landscapes and outdoor recreation amenities. *

Obj. A: Complete the Blue Ridge Tunnel rehabilitation and rails-with-trails project.

Obj. B: Utilize the Old Howardsville Turnpike as a recreational facility (hiking trail) connecting the Rockfish Valley to the crest of the Blue Ridge.

- i. Explore all opportunities to partner with local, state, and federal agencies and non-profit groups.

Obj. C: Establish a greenway or multi-use path between Wintergreen Resort, Stoney Creek, Nellysford, and Beech Grove.

- i. Explore all opportunities to partner with local community stakeholders; local, state, and federal agencies; and non-profit groups to establish a new recreational amenity.
- ii. Maximize the value of any such new amenity by successfully connecting with existing trails and other community assets.

Delete Objectives A & B (2 in agreement); Leave Objective A, but delete Objective B & C.

Goal C-4: Prepare for the specific needs of an aging population. ****

Obj. A: Address the changing needs of the community by specifically providing community services that are consistent with Nelson County’s demographic trends of an aging population.

Tighten up language/tell why; Should be more county-wide/include in Comprehensive Plan update.

Goal C-5: Protect and promote local history and culture. ****

Obj. A: Protect local historical resources and promote local cultural heritage.

- i. Support and promote the South Rockfish Rural Historic District.
- ii. Incorporate historical interpretative signage into any place-making project in the Nellysford area and at scenic overlooks.

Economy

Goal E-1: Recognize (and capitalize on) connections between local economic vitality and rural character. *****

Objective A: Continue to utilize the area's rural character, natural scenery, and attractive sense of place as the foundation for sustained economic vitality.

Obj. B: Preserve and protect the area's rural character as a critically important element of the local economy.

Needs to be merged with community goals

Goal E-2: Protect community identity and rural character from undesired change. *****

Objective A: Prevent land development and commercial or industrial growth from diminishing the area's special sense of place, by ensuring that development is compatible with existing landscapes and land uses, and also compatible with future land use plans.

- i. Update the "Future Land Use Plan" in the Comprehensive Plan.
- ii. Identify appropriate future development areas as well as rural preservation areas.
- iii. Encourage and facilitate the location of new development, redevelopment, and business expansion within designated future development areas.

Feel like these goals are county-based/comp plan not a specific location

Goal E-3: Capitalize on the Rockfish Valley's proximity to National Parks and other recreational amenities. *****

Obj. A: Position and promote the area as a gateway into the Blue Ridge Parkway, Shenandoah National Park & Skyline Drive, the Appalachian Trail, and the George Washington National Forest.

- i. Continue to coordinate with NPS, USFS, VDOT, VA DCR, and local partners to maximize the recreational and economic potential of the Blue Ridge Tunnel and Rockfish Gap area.
- ii. Explore opportunities to better capitalize on U.S. Bicycle Route 76, including potential connection(s) with the Blue Ridge Tunnel or other amenities and attractions in the Rockfish Gap area.

Goal E-4: Support and promote economic development opportunities in agriculture and agritourism. *****

Obj. A: Promote family farms and direct-to-consumer sales.

Obj. B: Promote agritourism as a way to sustain the profitability of farms and to preserve a rural landscape and lifestyle.

Obj. C: Offer partnership and collaborative leadership towards locating and developing a permanent, indoor/outdoor farmers market facility – ideally as a key component within a walkable place of commerce, recreation, leisure, and public amenities.

- i. Bring together major stakeholders and all interested community members; and help facilitate a coordinated "place-making" effort. This would most logically be focused on the Nellysford area.

Goal E-5: Support growth in the outdoor recreation industry. *****

Obj. A: Attract and locate outfitters, tour guides, or similar businesses that provide outdoor rec services and activities in the Rockfish Valley (and throughout Nelson County).

Obj. B: Promote the Rockfish Valley's many community assets to help attract outdoor rec industry jobs (including production and light manufacturing of gear and equipment, product assembly, product repair, etc.).

Goal E-6: *Support strong coordination and information-sharing among the business community.* *****

Obj. A: Create annual fact sheet(s) on new business creation and economic growth within the study area.

Obj. B: Enhance open channels of communication between business owners and County government.

Obj. C: Review/streamline requirements for new business registration.

County-wide

Goal E-7: *Emulate "best practices" and apply "lessons learned" from comparable rural VA communities.* *****

Obj. A: Research comparable rural Virginia communities, and identify relevant "lessons learned" and local "best practices."

i. Compare Virginia best practices to Nelson County plans and policies.

ii. Identify "low-hanging fruit" types of opportunities in the Rockfish Valley to adopt best practices (with local modifications).

More of a mission and not a goal.

Transportation

Goal T-1: *Continue to implement priority recommendations in VDOT's 2013 Route 151 Study.* *****

Objective A: Collect more accurate roadway data for Rte. 151 and Rte. 6 traffic.

i. Coordinate with VDOT to conduct traffic counts that better capture seasonal and weekend conditions, to complement the existing traffic data which only represents mid-week traffic patterns.

ii. Evaluate split between personal vehicles and commercial truck traffic.

Obj. B: Continue to request transportation funding through VDOT's SMART SCALE competitive funding program.

i. Consider the cost-effective strategy of committing County funds as a one-time "local match" for SMART SCALE projects. That would significantly strengthen the SMART SCALE application scoring, and significantly improve project(s) feasibility.

Goal T-2: *Improve road safety.* *****

Obj. A: Coordinate with VDOT and other stakeholders to reconsider reduced speed limits along the Rte. 151 tourism corridor.

i. Evaluate the possibility of reducing the speed limit from 55 MPH to 45 MPH between Rte. 250 and Brent's Gap.

Obj. B: Conduct speed study to identify appropriate speed limits in Nellysford.

i. Evaluate the possibility of reducing speed limit from 45 to 35 MPH through Nellysford.

Obj. C: Coordinate with public safety officials to improve safety and reduce risks.

i. Assess possibility of enhanced highway patrol enforcement (with specific focus on speeding as well as impaired driving).

ii. Utilize available resources or programs to increase public awareness and information about safe driving.

Goal T-3: Improve public signage throughout the Rockfish Valley and at important “gateway” locations. ****

Obj. A: Coordinate with VDOT to evaluate and improve existing signage.

- i. Identify location(s) of outdated signs; remove or replace such signs.
- ii. Identify opportunities to consolidate or otherwise simplify existing public signage.
- iii. Identify any situations requiring maintenance or repair.

Obj. B: Implement a new community signage project, with improved wayfinding and tourism information using attractive and consistent new signs.

- i. Design and install welcome signage at “gateway” locations to create a sense of arrival and to strengthen the area’s tourism brand. This would also alert drivers of their entry into a high-activity tourism zone with challenging road conditions (hills/curves).
- ii. Design and install milepost signage to help tourists navigate the roadways and find their destinations more safely.

Needs to be a focus on county-wide Comp Plan.

Goal T-4: Support Park-n-Ride lots. ****

Obj. A: Improve and formalize existing Park-n-Ride lots at appropriate locations.

- i. Evaluate existing informal lots, including locations at the intersection of Route 6 and Route 151; the intersection of Route 6 and US-29; and along Route 664.
- ii. Identify needed improvements at each location, including possible surface treatment, lighting, trash and recycling features, or other improvements.

Obj. B: Evaluate the demand and the value of establishing new Park-n-Ride locations.

- i. Partner with VDOT, TJPDC, and RideShare to identify potential locations and to pursue available resources and assistance.

Goal T-5: Improve transportation alternatives and options for all users. *****

Obj. A: Continue to support regional transit service (i.e. JAUNT), including fixed routes and on-demand service, to address needs of an aging population and the mobility-impaired.

Obj. B: Encourage addition of sidewalks, bike lanes, or similar “multi-use path” in Nellysford, especially during new development and redevelopment activities.

- i. Incorporate “best practices” that maximize safety, including design details and also signage to alert drivers about increased presence of pedestrians, bicyclists, etc.

Obj. C: Plan for a more complete and better-connected transportation network.

- i. Evaluate opportunity(s) to implement parallel service roads, including bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, in appropriate locations that have higher concentrations of commercial activity and traffic congestion.

Objective C is unrealistic. Sidewalks?

Natural Resources

Goal NR-1: Ensure the sustainable use and protection of water resources quantity and quality. ****

Objective A: Protect groundwater resources from depletion and pollution.

- i. Partner with regional and state agencies and universities to evaluate the Rockfish Valley’s groundwater resources, including analysis of the local carrying capacity for residential, agricultural, recreational, and industrial uses.

ii. Incorporate the Groundwater Pollution Prevention Map as a tool in long-range planning and current development review activities.

Obj. B: Protect surface water resources and surrounding riparian corridors, floodplains, and wetlands.

i. Update and improve floodplain management program and policies.

ii. Explore potential value of participating in (voluntary) “Community Rating System” program with NFIP and FEMA.

ii. Include Wetlands as an available Layer on the County’s online GIS.

Merge with Comp Plan
Objective B already done

Goal NR-2: Protect the quality, integrity, and connectivity of the natural landscape network.

Obj. A: Support the protection of the area’s “natural landscape network” and “green infrastructure cores.”

i. Consider adoption of updates to Comp Plan and amendments to Zoning Ordinance, as recommended in the *Nelson County Policy Guide* and *Nelson County Stewardship Guide* (Green Infrastructure Center, 2011).

ii. Incorporate green infrastructure resource mapping and analysis into the County’s Site Plan review process.

iii. Create *performance incentives* in the Site Plan review process for project details that incorporate Low Impact Development practices, conservation of high-quality green infrastructure resources, and protection of steep slopes.

Goal NR-3: Recognize (and take advantage of) the connections between scenic resources, viewshed protection, tourism, and rural economic vitality. ****

Obj. A: Identify and protect priority scenic viewsheds along Scenic Byways.

Obj. B: Ensure that new commercial and industrial development is planned, designed, and constructed with appropriate context-sensitive details.

i. Adopt new Site Plan Checklist standards applicable to new development projects within a “RV Corridor” area, in order to:

- Create a clear, consistent set of *required minimum standards* for details such as screening, landscaping, setbacks, signage, and exterior lighting; and

- Create *performance incentives* in the

Site Plan review process for project details that exceed minimum “RV Corridor” requirements.

Agriculture

Goal A-1: Increase and strengthen the agricultural economy within the Rockfish Valley, as measured by number of ag operations, volume of ag products, or value of ag products. ***

Objective A: Ensure that County plans and policies support the protection and productive use of lands that are most suitable for farming.

i. Update the Comprehensive Plan to identify “prime” agricultural soils, and other soils most suitable for ag operations.

ii. Ensure that the Zoning Map and Zoning Ordinance adequately support and protect agricultural landscapes and family farms in the Agricultural A-1 zoning district.

iii. Consider adoption of specific recommendations identified by the Green Infrastructure Center’s 2011 “Nelson County Policy Guide” and “Nelson County Stewardship Guide.”

Obj. B: Expand the following agricultural sectors within the Rockfish Valley: tree fruit/orchards; grapes/vineyards; and barley (or other grains for malting or distilling).

- i. Increase all three target sectors by 10% or more within 5 years, as measured by production volume, sales volume, or total value of products.
- ii. Increase one or more target sectors by 50% or more within 5 years, as measured by production volume, sales volume, or total value of products.
- iii. Increase amount of land in tree fruit/orchards production and in grapes/vineyards production at existing farm wineries.

Objective A is unrealistic
Goal A-1 & A-2 need to be merged

Goal A-2: Identify and support key resources, activities, and partnerships that will strengthen and increase the success of existing farms and ag operations. *****

Obj. A: Improve local opportunities for direct-to-consumer agricultural sales.

- i. Promote and support the development of a permanent year-round community farmers market location in the Rockfish Valley.

Obj. B: Increase awareness among property owners and ag operators about relevant resources, programs, and info.

- i. Assemble and provide educational resources on voluntary land use practices, such as conservation easements and Agricultural & Forestal District programs.
- ii. Assemble and provide educational resources on farming best practices.
- iii. Assemble and provide contact info for agencies and organizations that provide property owners and ag operators cost-sharing opportunities or technical assistance.
- iv. Conduct an annual event for local ag producers and agritourism operators to discuss best practices; promote Nelson agriculture; and foster collaboration among local producers. This annual event would incorporate FFA and 4-H participants; and would be conducted in partnership with all relevant farm-related organizations such as Virginia Cooperative Extension, VDACS, Virginia Tech, Farm Bureau, TJSWCD, NRCS, Virginia Cattlemen's Association, Virginia Wineries Association, Virginia Craft Brewers Guild, and others.

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Board of Supervisors Report: Mr. Bruguire noted that the Board of Supervisors approve the cell towers that the Planning Commission had recommended to them.

Adjournment:

Commissioner Allen made a motion to continue the meeting to 5:30 pm on October 11th at 8:07pm; the vote 4-0.



Emily Hjulstrom
Secretary, Planning & Zoning