

Board defers Upper Swift Creek Plan to October

By Greg Pearson
STAFF WRITER

The Chesterfield Board of Supervisors last week deferred the controversial Upper Swift Creek Plan until its Oct. 10 meeting. It also agreed to defer all rezoning cases impacting the Upper Swift Creek Watershed to no earlier than its Oct. 24 meeting.

A half a dozen speakers endorsed the board's action, but the Brandermill Community Association wanted the plan remanded back to the planning commission. One affected property owner called the plan "an assault on property rights" and called for the board to "vote this plan down."

Over the next two months, the planning department will continue to work on the plan, seeking further "input from stakeholders," said Planning Director Kirk Turner. The county will also discuss the plan with Powhatan County officials since part of the watershed extends into that county.

The land use plan has been over four years in the making, delayed largely because of slow water quality data on the Swift Creek Reservoir. Some commissioners have blamed the board and top administrators for the delay while several board members pointed their fingers at the commission, accusing some of them of "playing politics."

Last month, the commission unanimously recommended denial of the draft plan to the board. There are two major sticking points. Many commissioners doubt that the proposed amendment establishing "no net increase in phosphorous runoff" or .16 pounds of phosphorous runoff per acre annually is attainable, particularly for commercial property.

The plan also sets aside 4,900 acres as a deferred growth area - meaning no development can occur until sometime in the future. Some property owners in that area are strenuously objecting, saying the plan violates their property rights.

The plan also reduces the amount of acreage for residential development by 8,560 acres while increasing the amount of commercial acreage by 2,260 acres. The plan area starts

at the route 288/360 intersection and extends eight miles west, including the western Route 360 corridor. The plan is designed to help maintain the water quality of the Swift Creek Reservoir, which provides about 25 percent of Chesterfield's drinking water.

School review

With the county currently undergoing an evaluation of management practices and procedures, the board, with a recommendation from Board Chairman Kelly Miller, asked County Administrator Jay Stegmaier to ask the Chesterfield school system to join the evaluation to make the county more efficient with taxpayers' money. The suggested scope includes school costs for administration, construction and food services. In the past, Miller has indicated cutting the costs of county government would have to include the school system since school spending accounts for over half of the county budget.

Courthouse Road plan

The board has extended the time period for the commission to study the proposed Northern Courthouse Road Plan because a Virginia Department of Transportation traffic study will not be completed until Nov. 1. The board has scheduled a public hearing on Dec. 18, the final meeting of the year for the supervisors.

A board majority is reportedly in agreement with the planning staff and wants more commercial development along the roadway north from the Powhite Parkway to almost Midlothian Turnpike. A majority of the commission previously recommended a draft plan that permitted the opportunity for a more limited increase in commercial space.

Ramsey honored

The board announced the county administration building will be named in honor of former County Administrator Lane B. Ramsey. On Aug. 14, Ramsey retired after 20 years as county administrator and 35 years with the county. At the board meeting, a plaque was unveiled to be placed on the building. With his wife and family present, Ramsey also was given a resolution recognizing his leadership and dedication to the county.

Board of Supervisors okays church rezoning

By Greg Pearson
STAFF WRITER

The Chesterfield board last week approved a 30-acre rezoning for New Bethel Christian Fellowship Church despite a negative recommendation from the planning commission and the planning department because of the site's proximity to the Chesterfield County Airport. The airport manager and economic development director had previously spoken against the rezoning.

During questioning by Board Chairman Kelly Miller, who is an attorney, it was learned that the church bought the site on Belmont Road without legal counsel. The attorney at closing failed to inform New Bethel that it could not build a new church on the site because it's zoned industrial. The attorney was not named.

The church offered a letter promising not

to object to future airport growth or noise, but the county attorney said the letter isn't legally enforceable. Miller cautioned that the approved rezoning "should not be considered as a precedence."

More multifamily

The board approved a 72-acre rezoning for condos and townhouses in the southeast quadrant of routes 288/360 partially behind Haley Toyota. The rezoning was recommended by the planning commission, but opposed by the planning staff because the land is designated for commercial zoning.

"There is not the demand for commercial development," development attorney Jim Theobald told the board. Two other quadrants of the intersection are heavily commercial.

360 Capital Partnership, LLC will build up to 575 units and pay \$9 million in proffers. The development is expected to generate 306 students.

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