

# Planning commission recommends denial of higher planning fees

By Greg Pearson  
STAFF WRITER

The Chesterfield Planning Commission last week unanimously recommended against a higher fee plan to review certain residential and commercial rezoning cases. The increase is estimated to generate about \$500,000 more to pay for additional planning staff.

The board of supervisors will now have to decide if the fees should be raised and by how much. As proposed, Assistant Planning Director Glenn Larson said the fee for a 100-acre residential rezoning would increase \$2,000 to \$14,300 and "be the highest in central Virginia" while a 20-acre commercial site fee would increase from \$2,060 to \$2,800, which is also "on the high end."

Calling it "a legislative decision," Dale Commissioner Bill Brown said, "Those [amounts] are too large of an increase for one year."

The board policy is for development fees to recapture 80 percent of the department's cost for reviewing

residential rezonings and 65 percent of commercial rezonings, but far less than those goals is currently being collected. The commissioners questioned the recovery rates the planning department inherited from the previous board.

"[What's proposed] is extremely high," said Matoaca Commissioner Wayne Bass.

Planning Director Kirk Turner has said some members of his staff are working long hours, and it's affecting their morale. The budget approved by the county board on Apr. 9 did not include funding to hire additional planners.

## Hull Street Road retail

Rezoning for a proposed maximum of 43,000-square-foot of retail on seven acres of vacant land in front of the Lakepointe condominiums was deferred to July 17. The departments of planning and transportation opposed the rezoning because it doesn't conform to the Upper Swift Creek Plan and doesn't address road access concerns.

The site is across from Hancock Village on Hull Street Road where a

Wal-Mart and a JCPenney are being built, which would have appeal to many retailers.

## Other actions

The commission recommended two parcels totaling four acres in Midlothian Village be approved for office zoning with a conditional use permit for a restaurant site. The lots are adjacent to each other on Midlothian Turnpike just east of Charter Colony Parkway. Mi Hacienda would fill the restaurant site.

The commission went against the planning department and recommended approval of a 9.8-acre site on Route 10 across from Harbour East Village near Rivers Bend. Bermuda Commissioner Sam Hassen said he thinks the road frontage is better suited for commercial uses than the existing industrial zoning. A zoning proffer limits the use of the site to motorcycle sales, rental and service.

The staff opposed the rezoning because the area plan calls for industrial uses, and commercial zoning is not compatible with anticipated zoning in the area.



Lisa Billings/Chesterfield Observer

Planning Administrator Greg Allen looks over blueprints for a proposed development. Some planning staff are reportedly spending long hours reviewing site plans for proposed developments. The department is asking for an increase in review fees, so it can hire more planners to take the pressure off current employees.

## Cooperative Extension offers Gardening for New Residents program

The Chesterfield Cooperative Extension Office is offering a Gardening for New Residents program. If you are a county resident and have been living at your current residence for two years or

less, you may register for the program. The program, which costs \$25, includes a site evaluation from a master gardener with a basic landscape inventory, a follow-up consultation and a landscape

reference binder personalized for your yard.

For more information or to register, visit [www.chesterfield.gov/HumanServices/ExtensionServices/exthome.asp](http://www.chesterfield.gov/HumanServices/ExtensionServices/exthome.asp).

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