King George
Est. 1720

ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT COMMITTEE (ZOTAC)

March 19, 2025
3:00 PM

Members Present: Lisa Biever, Glenn Cramer, Chris DeLoach, Ed Frank, Julie Gibson, Shawn Palivoda, and Allen West

Staff Present: Matthew J. Smolnik, Kelli Le Duc, Jaclyn Fish, Lucie Tuthill, and Kenneth Vaughan

Call to Order

Mr. Smolnik called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. in the Revercomb Board Room, located at 10459 Courthouse Road, King George, VA.

Roll Call

A Roll Call was taken, and a physical quorum was present.

Introduction

All Committee and Staff Present made introductions.

Challenges of Growth Management and Zoning in King George: A Community Discussion

Summary: The recent meeting on growth management in King George focused on striking a balance between development and the preservation of rural character. Key discussions included zoning ordinances and the need for accurate data collection. Decisions were made to present options to the Board of Supervisors and explore voluntary land conservation strategies. Action items were assigned for data collection, legacy subdivision provision, and research on Purchase of Development Rights programs, with follow-up meetings planned.

Key Discussions

- Emphasis on a balanced approach to growth that maintains rural character while allowing necessary development.
- Diverse perspectives shared regarding zoning ordinances and their effects on land use and economic development.

- Highlighted the critical need for accurate data collection to guide decisions related to growth rates and housing requirements.

Decisions Made

- Agreement on presenting effective growth management options to the Board of Supervisors that do not compromise community values.
- A consensus was reached on considering voluntary land conservation as a strategy alongside potential zoning amendments, a comprehensive plan, update future land use maps, and legacy subdivision provisions.

Action Items

- **Data Collection Initiative**
  - Assigned to Lucie
  - Focused tasks include gathering precise data concerning housing needs and growth rates.
- **Legacy Subdivision Provision vs. Parent-tract**
  - Assigned to Kelli
- **Research on PDR Programs**
  - Assigned to Lisa
  - The task involves investigating funding mechanisms available for Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs.
- **Determine desired growth rate**
  - Speak with supervisors to determine the desired growth rate and the corresponding metric. i.e. Houses, population, green space, traffic
  - Assigned to Mr. Smolnik
- **Design Changes**
  - What are the proposed design changes to the Subdivision Ordinance Regarding Major Subdivisions?
  - Assigned to Allen
- **Review Existing Subdivision Ordinance**
  - Assigned to ALL
- **Needed data to make recommendations**
  - Assigned to ALL

Next Steps

- Schedule follow-up meetings every Wednesday at 3:00 PM in the Board Room at the Revercomb Building, located at 10459 Courthouse Road, King George, VA 22485, to discuss findings on action items unless otherwise stated.
- Continue refining strategies that align with community values regarding growth management.

Notes and Takeaways:

- Adam Lynch with NSF-Potomac: If the initiating resolution was a stopgap measure or an overall county-wide future land use vision.
    - Matt Smolnik stated that it is temporary until a comprehensive plan is completed.
- **Growth:** 1.4% per year, based on calculations of growth over the past year in KGC; schools are at 2%.
    - Infrastructure, such as schools, Fire and Rescue, Maintenance, Roads, and the Sheriff's Office, is impacted by the continuous development of subdivisions.
- **Voluntary land conservation and PDR (conversation led by Ms. Biever):** Virginia offers some of the best incentives in the country for individuals to permanently preserve their land in open space, including farmland, fields, trees, and wetlands.
    - Ms. Biever explained how land conservation determines conservation value and the tax incentives associated with easements.
    - People who are landowners are going to make their own decisions about what to do with their land, so it's not something that feels like taking something that belongs to someone else. The Department of Forestry and the Virginia Office of Farmland Preservation have merged. Still, they have programs in place to help localities establish a purchase of development rights program.
    - Stafford's growth has been faster than ours. They've been struggling with it longer, so they've had some trial and error. They do have a strong PDR program in place. In a PDR program, purchase of development rights program, the locality will purchase the easement from the landowner, so instead of getting 40% in state tax credits and then your federal deduction on those development rights or permanently locking up those development rights, the landowner is paid 100% of the value of that so it's very motivating for the landowner. I can find out for the next meeting how their PDRs are funded.
    - When land is placed into a conservation easement, it's locked in at its current land-use value. As long as the county doesn't change the land use, the value will remain at the current level.

- Mr. Smolnik stated that, based on the revenues collected from real estate, excluding land use, the County was approximately $1.6 million. Hence, it's a good program to prevent land use. Additionally, that's $ 1.6 million in revenue we don't have, so it's a double-edged sword.
- Down zoning is only effective as long as it remains in place; however, 10 years from now, another committee, just like this one, can change zoning again, or two years later, we may have a different board of supervisors.
- Ms. Biever stated that a conservation easement is intended to be permanent; they're written to be in perpetuity. This is another role that my organization plays for those we hold. Many individuals do the same with the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. We have funds in place to ensure that we're prepared for perpetual stewardship. We have a specific insurance policy in place that allows us to enforce the terms of these easements if someone attempts to take an action that is not in the best interest of the entire easement. I think there's something to be said about the permanent nature of it. I think it's something worth considering.
- If revenue is allocated to a program, such as the PDR. It would be a strong initiative, and that would preserve the land, but you're still compensating upfront for someone who's looking to retire or quickly sell to a developer or someone else, so it's a win-win.
- The Virginia Conservation Easement Act requires us to obtain confirmation from the county that the easement we're proposing with this landowner is in accordance with the comprehensive plan of the locality.

- **Acreage Size:** Managed growth is a viable approach to acreage size; however, what is the optimal number?
  - A future land use map is typically required as part of a comprehensive plan. Every parcel has land use and a future land use designation.
  - Need to be strategic with the board, with guidance and input from the community, to consider where growth is likely to occur and where it is desirable.

Conclusions:

The meeting emphasized the importance of striking a balance between development and community preservation, highlighted key actions necessary for informed decision-making, and established a collaborative path forward through scheduled meetings.

Adjournment:

4:37 PM