

Board of Supervisors' Rural Areas Subcommittee
Meeting Summary
July 31, 2008
7:30 PM
First Floor Conference Room
Frederick County Office Building

Committee Members in Attendance: Richard Shickle, Gary Dove, Gary Lofton, June Wilmot, Cordell Watt, Paige Manual

Other Board and PC members in Attendance: Gene Fisher, Greg Unger, George Kriz, Lawrence Ambrogi

Staff in Attendance: Eric Lawrence, Candice Perkins

Public in Attendance: Margaret Douglas, Jesse Richardson, Bob Carpenter, John Marker, David Frank

During this initial organizational meeting of the recently formed Rural Areas Subcommittee, the following items were raised and/or discussed:

- The importance of informing the community of the purpose in discussing the RA ordinances
 - Answer the “why” and “what” questions
 - Why is the County discussing the rural areas?
 - What is the proposed course of action, and what is being considered for implementation?
- In an effort to inform the community of the intent, an informative presentation should be created. Assemble an informative presentation illustrating the purpose behind the effort. Evaluate growth trends (lot creation and building permit issuance) in the rural areas over the past decade; fiscal impacts on capital infrastructure (schools, fire and rescue, sheriff, roads); visual impacts on rural character and community; and challenges to future agriculture activities
- At the Subcommittee’s next meeting (Aug 7) there will be a presentation on the purpose of the study (of evaluating the RA regulations) as well as the impacts on the RA. With the Subcommittee’s endorsement, the presentation will be posted on the Web, and a public relations campaign will be engaged to inform the community of the effort and the presentation. The Subcommittee will also seek to utilize e-mail as the source for distributing on-going information about the effort
- The Subcommittee recognizes the importance of identifying all ideas (good, bad, and ugly), evaluating these ideas, and building consensus on the most appropriate course of

action for the County to undertake. Ideas will be solicited and captured via subcommittee discussion, and public comment (preferably in a written, or e-mail format).

- Ideas will be categorized to simplify the digestion and consideration process. Staff will maintain a comprehensive bullet list of all ideas to date, but will also maintain weekly lists of new submitted ideas.
- Subcommittee members are encouraged to review the materials from the July 31st meeting agenda, as a discussion starting point for the August 7 meeting.

Detailed listing on meeting comments

- Wanted to know how many people at the public hearing expressed the same ideas and wanted to know how many Planning Commission members were against the 60% set aside
- Ideas/comments should be categorized for consideration
- Felt that land owners didn't have a problem doing "something" and that they realize they have to pay, but they felt that the density change would be a big blow
- Felt the July deadline was a big issue; no longer an issue
- Timeline should be put on the table. Doesn't think that people will go out and subdivide their land right now because they can't sell it
- Some people would like to have the ability to sell property (1-2 lots per year) so they wouldn't have to sell their entire property
- Need to inform of the potential impacts subdivisions put on the county – doesn't think that most people think their land divisions create an impact
- Need a presentation to educate people about the impact each lot creates on the County
- Recognition that subdivisions have an impact on the County - This issue needs to be dealt with, it can't stay the same
- Need to be able to state the purpose of and for the study – key impacts – justification
- Some of the issues/impacts are fiscal, while some are the look and feel of the county
- Need to articulate goals for the effort – Stated that you can't buy land anymore to farm so should the goal really be to preserve farm land because who is going to actually farm
- This effort needs to move along and not stop like the RA study which had major opposition to pieces of the study
- Will need to test the proposal before it goes out to public hearing; public forum session may be the answer. This type of thing is easy to criticize but no one is providing solutions. People need to feel like they were heard.
- Not going to get much opposition if justification is understood
- The first goal should be a presentation outlining the goals of the RA effort. Educate the committee first about the goals for the RA; the committee needs to understand why.
- Following an informative presentation, will need to create a list of potential solutions

- While Impact fees could assist in addressing new residential impacts on the County, state enabling legislation does not exist. So the County is not able to charge impact fees to assist with addressing the impacts on schools, fire and rescue, public safety, parks, libraries, and other county facilities.
- Proffers are enabled to address impacts, but are linked to rezoning and not by-right uses
- Consider environmental impacts resulting from private health systems. Possibly use Jefferson County's study as a sample of where Frederick might be in terms of environmental impacts
- Present findings, in terms of purpose and suggested resolution, to public at forum(s)
- The group will need to digest the information and then seek public comments
- Should consider potential compensation alternatives if density is adjusted
- Effort should further land preservation for agricultural and open space benefits
- Would like a recommendation that the Board can look at- need to get community input and come out of this process with a finished product.
- Should utilize technology – webpage and e-mail – and possibly advertisements to inform the community about the effort, continual updates (via web and e-mail) important
- Informative PowerPoint should be created and then made available online
- Every idea needs to show up on “the list”. This list should be advertised in the paper or advertise where to find the list. We need to keep a record of what happens to every idea that is placed on the list (debated, taken off, etc). This committee needs to keep moving forward.
- Possibly utilize local farm markets to display information about RA effort. Reference webpage
- RA Subcommittee should meet the first and third Thursdays of the month, as needed, until effort is complete
- Concern about the removal of the ‘bonus’ lot. Need to clarify that the bonus lot did indeed allow a house to be constructed
- Current use of the Rural Preservation subdivision option does not appear to protect the best farmland – perc-able lots tend to work best on good farmland. People don't put the best area in preservation; the tracts are the junk of the property. It does nothing to preserve farm land because the preservation tracts winds up with the rocks, steep slopes, wet areas. This needs to be addressed or just call it open space.
- People have used rural preservation to get more lots by using up the good areas and not to meet the intent of the subdivision when it was created.
- Why are giving someone a bonus lot to develop their property, it needs to be eliminated
- People should be able to cut off one lot that is small (2 acres) to keep afloat.
- Shouldn't be farmer v. landowner, you can't look for “false farmers”. You need to look at the financial issues of landowners. Possibly look at a system that is linked to time owned to number of lots (history of ownership).

The meeting adjourned at 9PM