

Sussex County Buffers and Wetlands Working Group

December 9, 2019

On December 9, 2019, beginning at 1:00 p.m., the Sussex County Buffers and Wetlands Working Group held a workshop at Sussex County's West Complex.

The following were present:

David Baird	Robert Tunnell, III
Chris Bason	R.C. Willin
Jay Baxter	Janelle Cornwell, County Planning & Zoning Director
Rich Borrasso	Jim Eisenhardt, RK&K
Jeff Clark	Todd Lawson, County Administrator
Ed Launay	Hans Medlarz, County Engineer
Steve Marsh	Vince Robertson, Assistant County Attorney
Evelyn Maurmeyer	Sari Rothrock, RK&K
Danielle Swallow	

There were six members of the public in attendance.

Todd Lawson welcomed everyone. Copies of previous minutes were distributed and were approved with one change to the attendance list.

The workshop today will focus on Resource Buffer Maintenance and Management - Section H from line 203 forward. The draft Ordinance was displayed on screen for attendees to view.

The discussion about the Resource Buffer Maintenance included possible outcomes of exchanging management of maintenance from the Developer to the homeowner's association. There was further discussion about how the Developer should prepare the buffer for HOA management. An attendee suggested that the group remove the specificity of native woody species and include the wording native and non-invasive species.

During the discussion about the maintenance and drainage of the buffer, it was suggested that there be a dedicated grass area within the buffer and along the stream. The grass area would allow for food stock for wildlife and to help reduce the cost of maintenance for Homeowners Associations. It was stated that it is important to identify trees that can be removed to allow equipment to have access to the area. One concern raised was that this might create new tax ditch areas. Other concerns were raised regarding this topic.

The group agreed that the guidelines for the buffer maintenance and management should be attached to deed restrictions for perpetuity.

When discussing section H-2-C the group agreed to replace the word “functions” with “existing conditions of a buffer” and in section H-2-D that the first sentence be removed as it is addressed within another section of the Ordinance, that the words “appropriate parties” should be clarified.

There was discussion about the desired appearance of the buffer. Some contended that it ought to retain existing forest with exceptions and permitted uses while some contended that a meadow be planted and allow the natural succession of it eventually becoming a forest.

The group discussed taking another look at incentives and one suggestion was that buffer averaging would not be allowed if trees had been cleared. It was the consensus of the group that the right crafted incentive could help to maintain forested areas.

An updated draft will be circulated in the new year and committee members will have an opportunity to send final comments before it is presented to Council.

The meeting adjourned.