

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
SUSSEX COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
OCTOBER 30, 1996

A special meeting of the Sussex County Planning and Zoning Commission was held on October 30, 1996, in the Court of Common Pleas Courtroom, the Courthouse, Georgetown, Delaware, at 7:30 P.M. with the following present: Mr. Allen, Mr. Lynch, Mr. Phillips, Mr. Ralph, Mr. Schrader - Assistant County Attorney, Mr. Lank - Director, and Mr. Abbott - Assistant Director.

Thomas Shafer and Dennis Haskins of Whitman-Requardt & Associates were present to explain the revised draft of the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Schrader advised those parties in attendance that this meeting was a workshop for the Planning and Zoning Commission members and was not a public hearing, that no testimony was to be taken from the floor, that the public comments were heard on September 19, 1996 at the Commission's public hearing, and that written comments were excepted until October 11, 1996.

There was a consensus of the Commission that they review each page of the revised draft.

Mr. Shafer explained how items were changed and reviewed each change.

In reference to the revisions on pages 1 through 5, the Commission made no significant changes.

In reference to the revisions on page 6, there was a consensus of the Commission that the density for multi-family uses be the same as in existing ordinances - 12 units per acre, and not different densities for each type of multi-family use.

In reference to the revisions on page 7, Mr. Shafer advised the Commission that references to manufactured housing have been added per the suggestions of the Manufactured Housing Institute. The Commission made no significant changes.

In reference to the revisions on page 11, Mr. Shafer advised the Commission that they have changed the Conservation District to a Conservation Overlay Zone and have revised the wording to reflect the existing ordinances to reference tidal water and mean high water lines, discussed densities in Conservation Overlay Zones, and exhibited typical areas along the Inland Bays and the Nanticoke River. The Commission made no significant changes and referred this issue for discussion later.

In reference to the revisions on pages 12 and 13, Mr. Shafer advised the Commission that they have changed the DNREC Proposed Resource District to a Resource Area since the areas are parcels that the State DNREC is interested in purchasing or controlling, that if DNREC does not purchase the owners should have the right to develop the parcels, and that a

time limit should be placed on the State DNREC to make decisions on the parcels. The Commission made no significant changes.

In reference to the revisions on the remainder of page 13, pages 14 through 16, and Figures 3A, 3B, 3C, and 3D on page 17, Mr. Shafer described the options that could be included with the guidelines to density. The Commission made no significant changes.

In reference to the revisions in the Mobility Element, pages 18 through 22 and Figures 7 and 8, Mr. Shafer advised the Commission that DelDOT representatives provided the corrected wording, and that Figure 7 was revised to depict extensions to the recommended transit corridors between Frankford, Selbyville, and Fenwick Island, and that traffic counts were changed on Figure 8. The Commission made no significant changes.

In reference to the revisions on pages 23 through 26, the Commission made no significant changes.

In reference to the revisions on pages 27 and 28, Mr. Shafer advised the Commission that they revised the wording based on recommendations provided by the Center for the Inland Bays. The Commission made no significant changes.

In reference to the revisions on pages 29 and 30, Mr. Shafer advised the Commission that the revisions are actual excerpts from the existing zoning ordinance relating to conservation zones and that the County and other agencies should initiate the development of a conceptual plan for the future of the Inland Bays area using the resources of the Center of the Inland Bays, DNREC and public participation. The Commission made no significant changes.

In reference to the revisions on pages 31 through 34, the Commission made no significant changes.

In reference to the revisions on pages 35 and 36, Mr. Shafer advised the Commission that the Plan has been changed to suggest parity between single family housing types, dwellings and double wide manufactured homes. The Commission made no significant changes.

In reference to pages 37 through 47, the Commission made no changes.

Mr. Shafer and Mr. Haskins described the amendments to the Land Use Map.

Mr. Allen referenced earlier statements by Mr. Shafer relating to Intergovernmental Coordination, and added that the County presently contacts the Towns, that the Towns do not contact the County, and questioned if a need exist for possible legislation.

Mr. Lynch questioned why the development district stopped at Williamsville in the South Coastal area.

Mr. Shafer advised Mr. Lynch that the area mapped is a planned area for future phasing of sewer projects, that additional lands could have been included, that this is a 25 year plan, that the area suggested is not getting any development pressure at this time, and that the area can be reviewed every five years when the Plan is reviewed and updated.

Mr. Allen questioned the amount of acreage proposed in the Agricultural Protection District.

Mr. Shafer advised the Commission that the Agricultural Protection District contains approximately 55% of the County or 330,000 acres, that the Agricultural Residential District contains approximately 12% of the County or 8,000 acres, and that the growth area contains approximately 21% of the County or 100,000 acres, that the growth area is larger than needed for the next 25 years, that you can't be exact in anticipating the location of developments, that since the growth rate is anticipated at 60% - 40,000 acres are needed, that the entire population will fit within the proposed development district which is adequate for 50 to 100 years, and that areas were enlarged per DNREC suggestions for future areas in need of central sewer.

Mr. Allen stated that the staff reviewed all subdivisions submitted between January 1995 and September 1996 and that only 680 acres of farmland acreage are proposed for conversion to developments, and added that strip development needs to be controlled.

Mr. Shafer stated that in 1987 there were 1,729 farms in Sussex County and that in 1992 only 1,515, that if approximately 1,600 acres are lost per year - 40,000 acres will be lost in 25 years, and that additional crop lands are created by conversion of woodlands to farmland.

The Commission, Mr. Schrader, and Mr. Shafer discussed manufactured housing control in existing housing project with deed restrictions.

Mr. Wheatley questioned the development rings around the towns.

Mr. Shafer stated that natural boundaries should be utilized, i.e. roads and streams, to simplify boundaries.

Mr. Lynch questioned why 2 acre lots are proposed in Conservation Overlay Zones.

Mr. Shafer stated that concerns have been expressed by the public for areas around the Inland Bays, that the larger lot size should encourage central sewer which will decrease the impact on the Inland Bays.

There was a consensus of the Commission to retain the existing one (1) acre lot size in the Conservation Overlay Zones referenced on page 11.

The Commission discussed the proposed density in Agricultural Protection Districts, concerns were expressed about impacts on farmer landowners and their ability to develop in the future.

Mr. Shafer stated that they started with the basics of the adopted Coastal Sussex Land Use Plan and Western Sussex Land Use Plan, reviewed suitable soils, that changing densities make some cases better and some worse dependent on the location, that it may even be appropriate to stay with the adopted plans, that they originally were attempting to protect the farm and have suggested some changes by adding areas and lowering density to protect the farmer landowner.

Mr. Allen asked if the Commission was ready to make a decision.

Motion by Mr. Lynch, seconded by Mr. Wheatley, and carried unanimously to defer action and recommend that the Sussex County Council request a time extension from the Cabinet Committee.

Motion by Mr. Wheatley, seconded by Mr. Ralph, and carried unanimously that the meeting be adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 P.M.