

BERRYVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
Berryville-Clarke County Government Center
Work Session Minutes
September 26, 2023

A work session of the Berryville Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, September 26, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Berryville-Clarke County Government Center in Berryville.

ATTENDANCE: Members of the Planning Commission present: William Steinmetz, chair, Kim Kemp, vice chair, Michael Bell, Gwen Malone, Michelle Marino, Tom Parker, Sheryl Reid

Absent: no one

Staff present: Christy Dunkle, Community Development Director, Keith Dalton, Town Manager

Press present: None

Others in attendance: David Giovannacci (D.R. Horton), Priya Tiwari (D.R. Horton), Ty Lawson, Bryan Lilly (Dewberry), Les Adkins (Wells and Associates)

1. CALL TO ORDER – William Steinmetz, chair

Chair Steinmetz called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Presentation and discussion with D. R. Horton representatives concerning the Friant property

Chair Steinmetz recognized Ms. Dunkle who introduced Mr. Giovannacci to Planning Commission members.

Mr. Giovannacci said he wanted to update Commissioners on the project. He said there were approximately 200 attendees at the community meeting and the topic of most of the discussions was about traffic. He said other topics included the berms and buffers along the perimeter of the property, the addition of architectural features, and walkability. He introduced Mr. Lawson who discussed the Berryville Area Plan and specific requirements within the document. He referenced walkability, view shed protection, and utility planning. He said the applicants have been working with Clarke County Public Schools representatives concerning school capacities and other related items. Mr. Lawson discussed unused lots in the annexation area, anticipated water and sewer needs, and improvements on the east side of the Town.

Mr. Adkins discussed transportation matters. He described existing conditions at East Main Street at the Route 7 Bypass and East Main Street and Battletown Drive. He discussed the definition of levels of service and how they are determined. He discussed the increase in commuter traffic from the west on the Bypass and reviewed existing and anticipated peak hour traffic at the affected intersections.

Mr. Lilly discussed visibility of the proposed lots and water and sanitary sewer information including capacities, water pressure, and fire flow.

Mr. Giovannacci said that comments on the architecture of the buildings is likely based on the Shenandoah Crossing project due to its high visibility. He said the Hermitage development is incorporating different architectural features in the homes. He added that architectural proffers may be considered in order to diversify the homes in the proposed development.

Chair Steinmetz asked for questions from the Commissioners. Mr. Dalton clarified utility numbers that were discussed earlier in the meeting. Mr. Parker requested clarification on the traffic study levels of service. Mr. Adkins said that traffic on the bypass is increasing and that VDOT may choose to mitigate the intersection concerns through traffic signal timing. He added that this would affect the entire corridor and impacts would need to be studied by VDOT.

Ms. Reid said she was concerned about truck traffic. Ms. Marino referenced a VDOT discussion about mitigation efforts. Chair Steinmetz asked about architectural proffers. Mr. Giovannacci said that D.R. Horton is developing items that have been expressed to them in emails from neighbors. He asked what Planning Commissioners wanted to see in physical changes to structures. Mr. Bell asked what kind of input Horton had received. Mr. Giovannacci said that input included buffering, a variety of colors, and setback variations. There was a discussion about natural buffers along the Route 7 Bypass and at Shenandoah Crossing.

There was a discussion about houses adjacent to the railroad tracks. There was a discussion about school building capacities versus programming capacities, capital projects that may be triggered to renovate Cooley Upper Campus, and the need for additional busses and drivers.

Ms. Marino asked who determines the cost of the homes. There was a discussion about square footage and market forces. Mr. Parker noted that it appears that the house type in Hermitage V has moved to smaller, one-level designs. He asked where the playground would be located. Mr. Giovannacci said they have not determined its location but the facilities are identified in the proffer statement.

There was a discussion about agreements for road and utility easements on the adjacent property. Mr. Giovannacci indicated that Horton has come to an agreement with the property owner. There was a discussion about traffic control from the Bel Voi property. Mr. Bell asked when development would occur should Town Council approve the request. Mr. Giovannacci said it would be approximately one year for site development and a second year before the first house would be built. He added that the average timeframe for building is one house every three or four months. There was a discussion about accessibility to and from the site.

3. OTHER

There was no further discussion.

4. ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mr. Bell made the motion, seconded by Ms. Marino, to adjourn the work session. The motion passed by voice vote at 6:55 p.m.

William Steinmetz, Chair

Christy Dunkle, Secretary