

Scottsville Planning Commission

Regular Meeting
Monday, December 7, 2015, 7:00 p.m.
Victory Hall
401 Valley Street
Scottsville, Virginia

Members:
James V. Kerlin, *Chair*
William S. Hyson
Stuart C. Munson
Joshua Peck
Ronald L. Smith

Minutes

1. Call to order – Mr. Kerlin called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.
2. Establish a quorum – Mr. Kerlin, Mr. Hyson, Mr. Munson, Mr. Peck, and Mr. Smith were present. Also in attendance were Town Clerk Amy Moyer and Town Administrator George Goodwin.
3. Review and approval of meeting minutes of November 2, 2015 – Mr. Smith noted a date error in the minutes. Upon a motion by Mr. Peck, seconded by Mr. Munson, the corrected minutes were approved.
4. Matters not on the agenda from the public.

Isaac Shelley spoke regarding his potential proposal to build a self-storage facility on parcel 36A A 19. This parcel is on the town-county line on Route 6 East. He took a lot of dirt out of it to import to the Food Lion site, and it has sat there since. He keeps an erosion and sediment control bond on the property with inspections by Fluvanna County. He would like to propose self-storage on that lot, but there is not a classification in the zoning ordinance that speaks to self-storage. Mr. Shelley introduced Andy Duke, who owns several self-storage facilities and is consulting with him on the project.

Mr. Hyson asked how this would be done, if the facility would be visible from the road, would there be lighting, etc.

Andy Duke stated that Mr. Shelley asked him some months ago if this piece of land would be prospect for self-storage. Mr. Duke did a demand analysis to determine if the market would support it and whether there is a need in the community for it. After that analysis he determined that there is a need and an unmet demand in the area, as the nearest self-storage facility is a minimum of 15 miles away in any direction. The parcel was a borrow site and has a fair amount of frontage on Route 6, and he thinks it would be a good site and a good use for the land. Mr. Duke explained that the proposal would be a two-phase build out.

Depending on engineering, he thinks the site would develop out to 30,000 square feet of rental space maximum, with the initial phase being 12,000 to 14,000 square feet.

Mr. Duke stated that the facility would be fenced entirely with gated access only by entry code. The site would be fully lighted at night, with CCTV surveillance. There would be no employees on site. Units could be rented on the internet and at an on-site kiosk. Mr. Duke shared pictures of his similar facilities in Glen Allen and Montpelier, noting the pitched metal roof, rollup doors, split-faced block, and a 24-hour rental station kiosk with touchscreen live support. He asked for the Planning Commission's advice on whether they would permit this as a use and whether to propose it by conditional use permit or by right.

Mr. Munson asked for clarification on the site location. Mr. Duke and Mr. Shelley further described the location.

Mr. Hyson asked if they had talked to the neighbors about their opinions on this. Mr. Shelley replied no, this is the first they have talked to anyone other than asking how to apply. Mr. Shelley said there is only one neighbor that he knows about, and he is not sure if that house was rebuilt after a fire. Ms. Moyer said that all of the adjacent property owners would be notified during the review process.

Mr. Smith asked about the size of the units. Mr. Duke replied that he would probably recommend four or five different sizes, ranging from 5 feet by 10 feet as the smallest and 10 feet by 20 or 25 feet as the largest. The initial phase would include some climate controlled units and some not, of varying sizes.

Mr. Duke commented that the self-storage business is a low traffic generator, estimating that four to seven vehicles per day would access the site in the initial phase. A traffic count in his largest facility in Richmond showed less than 50 vehicles per day for 1000 units, so with 100 to 120 units proposed here, he anticipates a daily vehicle count of 5 percent of the number of units. No one will live on site, but someone will visit the site almost every day. Rentals would be done online, by phone, or at the kiosk.

Mr. Munson asked about the town line. Mr. Shelley pointed it out on the map, noting that the town boundary shown on Fluvanna GIS is not accurate. Mr. Shelley said it is 50/50 town-county. Fluvanna County handled the E&S for the borrow pit, he keeps a bond posted there, and they inspect the site monthly. Mr. Shelley said that providing that they get a positive response from the town, he will then go to Fluvanna County.

Mr. Munson commented that conceptually it is not a bad idea, as it is a clean business; but he is concerned about the appearance and lighting, as he saw one built in Washington that was very unattractive. He asked if the Planning Commission can require vegetative screening to preserve the wooded appearance of the area.

Mr. Goodwin noted that the ARB requested brick accents for the Dollar Store, a similar type of construction.

Mr. Shelley commented that he understands the concern about appearance, as there are some unattractive facilities. Mr. Hyson noted that there is a storage facility in Buckingham. Mr. Shelley commented that Mr. Duke has 30 years of reputation in this business and the pictures do not do justice to the nice appearance of Mr. Duke's facilities.

Mr. Munson said it would be nice to visually camouflage the facility with trees or shrubs. Mr. Shelley replied that he does not want to camouflage it so much that people cannot find it, but it will be discreet and classy. Mr. Kerlin noted that the project will require ARB review.

Ms. Moyer explained that the first step is a zoning text amendment to add the use to the district, either by right or by special permit. After going through that process and approving the special use permit if necessary, then the site plans would be reviewed by the Planning Commission and Architectural Review Board, and that is where they would take up the appearance concerns. Mr. Munson asked if they could condition the approval of the use. Ms. Moyer replied yes, they could make appearance requirements a condition of the special use permit.

Mr. Munson asked how far off the road. Mr. Duke replied that it is hard to say at this point because they have to get the site engineer here to see how the building will fit on the parcel, but the property has long road frontage and is only about 150 feet deep, so it would have to be fairly close to the road. Mr. Munson said that his concern is that it will look industrial. Mr. Duke replied that he can show them his other facilities and they do not look industrial.

Mr. Duke stated that one out of ten households in this country rent self-storage. Of that number, 60 percent of customers are women, and they want safe, dry, and appealing. The typical "cow pasture" type self-storage seen in some rural areas is not they image that they want. This would be paved and fenced, and they could possibly do some architectural fencing over the vinyl-coated chain link. The lighting is engineered so that it does not spread.

Mr. Shelley added that the lights are low and soft-colored and will shine into the site.

Mr. Munson reiterated his concern about changing the appearance of the entrance corridor. He said he is okay with doing that as long as they can preserve the experience.

Mr. Peck asked if there would be time restrictions on access. Mr. Duke replied no, generally it is a 24-hour service. Mr. Duke said the facility is always gated, and the kiosk and a couple of parking spaces are outside the gate.

Mr. Smith asked if the security system tracks access. Mr. Duke replied yes, explaining the security procedures. Mr. Smith stated that is good in case something goes missing in the middle of the night. Mr. Duke said that unauthorized access to units does happen but is rare.

Mr. Hyson asked if he has other facilities in rural areas. Mr. Duke replied yes, Montpelier has a population of about 250. Mr. Hyson asked about the typical rental charge. Mr. Duke replied that the rates depend on demand and market conditions, but a 10 by 10 unit averages

\$90 to 100 per month. Mr. Duke anticipates fairly high utilization because about 40 percent of town residents are renters.

Mr. Shelley will apply for a zoning text amendment to define self-storage facility and add it as a use by special use permit.

Mr. Hyson remarked that his main concern is preserving the night sky. Mr. Goodwin commented that lighting was limited well at Dollar General.

Mr. Kerlin asked about advertising requirements. Mr. Moyer reviewed the notice requirements and potential public hearing dates.

Mr. Duke discussed the typical site lighting, noting that lighting is important for safety but there is little spillover with the lights mounted low on the building. Depending on VDOT and sight distance, he anticipates a wide entrance with a stacking lane.

Mr. Smith asked about rules for what renters can store or do. Mr. Duke replied that it is governed by the Virginia Self-Service Storage Act. Units cannot be inhabited, renters cannot keep live animals in them, and renters cannot have a business that is accessed by the public. Vehicle storage is allowed if the fuel tank is either pumped empty or full. Businesses may use the space for merchandise storage or equipment.

Mr. Peck explained how businesses may use a runner to pick up from a storage locker. Mr. Duke gave the example of antique dealers.

Mr. Duke stated that they use 30-day contracts and can get rid of problems fast.

Mr. Shelley asked if he can submit the applications for the zoning text amendment and special use permit tonight. Ms. Moyer asked if Mr. Shelley has the text for a definition of self-storage facility he would like to propose, or if staff should send definitions from other localities to him for review. Mr. Duke said that would be fine.

Mr. Duke commented that the industry is 35 years old, and when it first started in the 1970s most of the facilities were in industrial areas, but now it has become more of a commercial use, and as 70 percent of customers are residential, it needs to be convenient to where people live.

Mr. Kerlin asked if there is a definition in the Code of Virginia. Mr. Duke recommended looking at the Virginia Self-Service Storage Act for the definition.

5. Public hearing on amendments to Zoning Ordinance Section 4.14 (Signs).

Mr. Kerlin opened the public hearing. No one from the public wished to speak, and the public hearing was closed.

Mr. Peck moved to forward the amendments to Zoning Ordinance Section 4.14 (Signs) to the

Town Council with a recommendation for approval. Mr. Smith seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

6. Adjourn – The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.