

Chair Jacobs said it is clear that the elected officials want this to happen as soon as possible. He said the issues about funding need to be addressed in the interim. He noted that if there are more people in the district, the rates would go down.

Commissioner Dorosin said there is water infrastructure in place, but not all of the 86 homes are connected to water. He said this needs to be considered, and the available funds need to be used to connect anyone who is not connected. He said the proposal needs to have an emphasis on providing the connection to the sewer line at no cost to homeowners.

Chair Jacobs clarified that this is part of the task force recommendation.

Alderman Gist left at 9:47.

5. Accommodating Appropriate Agricultural Support Enterprises in the Rural Buffer - Proposed Changes to the Orange County Unified Development Ordinance (Perdita Holtz)

Council Member Harrison left at 9:48.

Council Member Matt Czajkowski left at 9:49

Mayor Chilton left at 9:51.

Perdita Holtz reviewed the following PowerPoint slides:

Accommodating Appropriate Agricultural Support Enterprises in the Rural Buffer

Tonight's Purpose

- To discuss proposed changes to the County's Unified Development Ordinance that will accommodate appropriate "Agricultural Support Enterprises" in the Rural Buffer
- An opportunity to provide feedback that could shape the materials scheduled to be brought forward for formal public hearing on February 24, 2014

Rural Buffer Basics

- Established as part of the Joint Planning Area Agreement
- Rural Buffer is under Orange County's planning and zoning jurisdiction
 - Low density area
 - Rural in character and will remain rural (contain low-density residential uses)
 - Not require urban services

UDO & Rural Buffer

Changes to County's UDO that are applicable to the Rural Buffer are referred to the Towns for review and recommendation

- County may not adopt amendments until Towns have made their recommendations or until the expiration of 30 days following referral

Agricultural Support Enterprises

- County-wide program
- Propose to add some new uses to the RB general use zoning district
 - Uses permitted by right or with a special use permit, depending on use
- Propose to add a new conditional zoning district (ASE-CZ) that could also be applied to the Rural Buffer
 - A CZD is a rezoning that must be applied for with decision by BOCC after a public hearing process

- Eliminate some uses from consideration if property is located in the Rural Buffer

Use Value Parcels (Farms) in the Rural Buffer (map)

- 37,428 Acres in Rural Buffer
- 10,172 Acres in Use Value (27%; 345 parcels)

Proposed New Uses in RB General Use Zoning District

Page 4 of item packet

- Each proposed new use has a definition
- Each proposed new use has use-specific standards
- In addition to all requirements of the UDO

Proposed ASE-CZ Conditional Zoning District

Pages 5 and 6 of item packet

- Each proposed new use has a definition and use-specific standards
- In addition to all requirements of the UDO
- Uses in red text could not be applied for if property is located in the Rural Buffer

Perdita Holtz said the items in red on the charts in slide 8 indicate items that are likely to be removed for consideration for properties located in the rural buffer.

Chair Jacobs said the purpose of this is to allow more agricultural and farming options and to make it more profitable to farms in those in the rural buffer areas, while maintaining the character of the areas.

Commissioner Gordon said she would like the towns to study this proposal and bring comments before the Feb. 24th QPH.

She questioned the role of the Towns regarding the Joint Planning Agreement (JPA) and the Joint Planning Land Use Plan. She referred to the JPA section 1.2, section G regarding land use categories. She read the definition of a rural buffer. She also read section 2.6, section f, regarding changes to the agreement. She said everyone has to agree to changes in the JPA. Commissioner Gordon read the description of agricultural areas and rural buffers from the Joint Planning Area Land Use Plan.

Commissioner Gordon said her last point is that this development is quite intense in its uses. She said there needs to be a balance between allowing farmers to have productive use of their land, and the effect on neighbors. She said the key is that this was originally conceived of for areas out in the County with large lot sizes, versus subdivisions and neighborhoods. She said the impact on neighbors in suburban areas needs to be considered.

Commissioner Gordon said some uses might be better on public water and sewer, which are not allowed by definition in the rural buffer.

She said this is a balance, and events with a large impact could be fine in the rural areas with large lots, but not in the suburban areas.

Alderman Seils said it would be helpful for County staff, when sharing materials with the Towns, to give a narrative about some of the goals. He said it sounds like there will be some expectation that the Towns undertake their review soon. He said coordination with the managers would be helpful.

Chair Jacobs said he would hope staff will know what needs to be an amendment to the joint planning agreement and what is at a staff level.

Council Member Ward said he would like to better understand which of the identified uses are high water users, or high users of septic tanks that could cause problems in the near future. He expressed concern that wells could run dry. He asked if this list is comprised of the uses that the Board supports, or if it is just a general laundry list of options.

Chair Jacobs said this is a laundry list of options. He said with the help of feedback from the town, some of the uses can be eliminated if there are concerns. He mentioned Maple View Ice Cream Store as an example of success in the rural buffer.

He said it is a great idea to consider water and sewer use. He said hopefully an agreement can be made to increase possible uses.

Council Member Ward asked if any uses are already allowed outside the rural buffer or corporate limits.

Chair Jacobs said no. He said the Board will be informed by what the Towns say.

Commissioner McKee said he would have concerns over a regional meat processing plant in a rural buffer. He said the other use that is a concern would be a saw mill, but the impact of this depends on the size.

He said the Board needs to look at additional uses that people in the agricultural sector can access to make their farms more viable. He said economic viability is one of the drivers of the loss of farmland, and farmers must have the ability to adapt.

Council Member Greene said everyone who is a party to the rural buffer has a strong interest in what happens there. She said it seems to her that the Towns ought to have a lot of say about this. She fully supports the need for economic flexibility with these properties, but she has concerns about some of the uses listed with "Minor Events". She said some of these look as if they might be too high intensity to be consistent with the rural buffer.

Commissioner Gordon said neither she nor the Board of County Commissioners have seen this rendition before. She said the high septic and high traffic users have to be considered to make sure the use will be acceptable on well and septic. She said it is important to look at the standards for development.

Commissioner Pelissier said the Commissioners have never had a discussion about this. She said the rural buffer was created in a different era, and the elected bodies woke up a few years ago and decided that something needed to be done. She said there are efforts to work on economic development districts; however it is also time to look at all the other land in the County to find ways to promote entrepreneurship and small scale businesses that are appropriate for rural areas, including the rural buffer.

She said the restaurants are a major driver for businesses in the area. She said it is important to think about ways to provide more income for the farmers providing some of this food. She said it is important to consider what uses are good to have in the rural buffer to preserve the rural character.

Mayor Kleinschmidt said he appreciates the opportunity to give feedback. He thinks that this rural agriculture and agriculture related businesses were what was intended to happen in the rural buffer, versus large lot subdivisions. He said this is a fantastic way to leverage one of the community's greatest assets to improve economic well being.

Council Member Ward said he would like to hear from the farmers about what provides them the most useful options.

Commissioner McKee encouraged everyone to keep an open mind. He said if compatible operations are not allowed, the rural buffer will turn into a residential buffer. He said this is already happening.

Chair Jacobs reviewed what he had heard. He said it would be useful to identify what the Board of Commissioners would like to see, versus just a general list.

He suggested the best way might be to go to the QPH in February and ask the agricultural preservation board to review this and provide statements and analysis.

Chair Jacobs said it would also be helpful to have staff look at the other impacts, such as water use and traffic. He said all of this information can be shared with the towns before they are asked to give comments. He said anything would be an improvement on the current situation. He said the goal is to encourage local agricultural economy.

Commissioner Gordon noted there are other advisory boards, in addition to the Agricultural Preservation Board, who should be asked to review the agricultural enterprises proposal.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS (No Specific Presentation or Discussion)-

ATTACHMENTS

- A) Southern Campus Master Plan Development Update
- B) Potential Bond Issue
- C) Older School Facility Needs
- D) Southern Branch Library Siting Process Update
- E) 911/EMS Assessment Update
- F) Locally Owned and Operated Trunked 700MHz Radio System
- G) Morinaga America Foods, Inc. Update
- H) Potential Orange County Fair

Commissioner McKee said one of the good things occurring in the County is the co-location of ambulances in fire stations. He said the emergency services manager has worked with Orange Rural and Orange Grove and is currently working on co-locating with Carrboro. He said this is improving response times. He said it would have been helpful to mention in the Rogers Road discussion that the Carrboro station is only a mile from that community.

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 pm.

Barry Jacobs, Chair

Donna Baker
Clerk to the Board