

Morgan County Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 22, 2011

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Carl Cowgill, Mary Ellen Largent, Jack Soronen, Jim Hoyt, Brenda Hutchinson, Amy Lane, Wayne Omps, Susan Parker, Scott Swaim, Eric LaRue

Members Absent: Thomas Stinebaugh

Others present: Alma E. Gorse

Meeting opened at 7:01 p.m.

Planning Commission President Jack Soronen introduced recently appointed Planning Commission member Eric Larue to the group.

II. MEETING MINUTES

On an Amy Lane/Susan Parker motion, the Planning Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the January 25, 2011 meeting.

III. DISCUSSION / PRESENTATION

- A. Herb Peddicord
West Virginia Division of Forestry
Chesapeake Bay Watershed Forester

Jennifer Garlesky
West Virginia Conservation Agency
Conservation Specialist

Herb Peddicord has been the state forester for Morgan County for about five years now. He has recently taken the position of Chesapeake Bay Watershed Forester, a new position created by the West Virginia Division of Forestry.

As a forester, he oversees logging operations throughout the county which includes a detailed state permitting and inspection process. Each logger must be certified and meet the state permitting requirements in order to operate. To date, Morgan County is about 78% forest. There are about 500 to 1,000 acres of forest logged per year.

He is now involved with the Environmental Protection Agency efforts to meet the Potomac Tributary Strategy to reduce pollutants entering into the Chesapeake Bay. The recently published Watershed Implementation Plan, developed by the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, lists strategies to be implemented by the eight counties within the watershed to aid in the pollution reduction effort. These strategies must be met by 2025.

Mr. Peddicord, along with his forester duties, is now also involved in the promotion of riparian forest buffer restoration, promotion of tree planting operations, conservation of existing forests along all streams and shorelines, promoting the expansion and connection of contiguous forests through conservation easements and greenways, just to mention a few.

Ms. Jennifer Garlesky, who is with the West Virginia Conservation Agency, primarily handles watershed and stormwater issues. She works with the farming community and provides assistance to homeowners to educate them on best management practices that can be used on their property such as rain gardens and the use of rain barrels. The agency provides free soil testing for property owners and conducts educational programs on a variety of topics

She is currently involved in an Urban Tree Planting Program at Cacapon South along with the implementation of a demonstration site to be located at the Morgan County Industrial Park Mountain View Solar and Wind business site, to promote the use of porous pavement as a type of driveway material.

Her agency is currently wrapping up the Sleepy Creek 319 Program which provided financial assistance to property owners located within the Sleepy Creek Watershed to assist with the pumping, repair and/or updating or possible replacement of their existing septic systems. Due to the detection of fecal coli form within the stream, grant funding was made available for this program. The project will end in September, 2011.

The question was posed as to how the Environmental Protection Agency and WVDEP monitors the implementation of best management practices within each county. It was explained that each year, a review of the county will be conducted and a worksheet will be completed listing all the best management practices implemented within that year such as stormwater efforts, creation of wetlands, and other various practices promoting the reduction of pollutants and sediment runoff. This data will then be forwarded to the EPA.

IV. OTHER DISCUSSION / BUSINESS

A. Discussion and review of draft set of by-laws

Staff had prepared a draft set of bylaws for the Planning Commission to review. The by-laws consisted of language taken from Hampshire County, Mineral County, Grant County and the West Virginia Code Chapter 8A.

The Planning Commission reviewed the by-laws and a few revisions were proposed. Staff will make these changes for the Commission to consider next month. Once the Planning Commission approves the by-laws, they will then be forwarded to the County Commission for enactment. See attached revisions.

B. Morgan County Rural Water Report

Planning Commission President Jack Soronen, who is also the Chairman of the Rural Water Committee, presented to the members a copy of the Rural Water Committee status report that was prepared by Mr. Soronen and staff. The status report consists of a listing of individuals and members involved with the committee throughout the years, a listing of all the reports produced by the committee and a timeline of the goals accomplished.

The report has been presented to the County Commission for their review and to consider what the next step will be to carry forth the work that has already been accomplished by the group.

C. Stormwater Management Model Ordinance

The Planning Commission members all received a copy of the West Virginia Stormwater Management Model Ordinance that was recently completed and funded by the Region 9 Planning and Development Council. This model ordinance was produced to provide recommended stormwater management practices to the three panhandle counties in an effort to meet the requirements of the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection Watershed Implementation Plan that incorporates EPA Chesapeake Bay mandates.

Planning Commission President Jack Soronen suggested that the members delay any discussion relating to the ordinance until next month when the county engineer, Richard Parks, could be in attendance.

D. Letter from Urban Engineering Requesting Determination

Staff had received a letter from Joseph Johnson of Urban, LTD. requesting a written determination of West Virginia Code Chapter 8A-5-12(f), which now states that approved plans and/or plats that were approved prior to January 2010 are now valid until July 1, 2012, and how this addition to the Code effects the validity date of the Phased Preliminary Plat for Creekside Village (Sleepy Creek) Subdivision. Currently, to meet the requirements of the Morgan County Subdivision Regulations, Creekside Village is required to submit a preliminary plat for Phase I by May, 2010.

Staff had received approval from the County Commission to forward this request to legal counsel for review and an opinion. Legal counsel had determined that due to this 2010 change in the Code, the Phased Preliminary Plat for Creekside Village is now valid until July 1, 2012.

Staff also stated that this change in the Code will have an impact on other preliminary plat approvals for various developments. Staff will notify each developer in writing who is affected by this change.

E. West Virginia Ethics Commission Seminar

Staff reminded the members that there will be a seminar on April 12, 2011, 6:00 p.m. at the Berkeley Springs High School Auditorium that will review West Virginia Ethics rules and regulations.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.