

December 29, 2005

PRESENT: Dr. Charles W. Curry, Chairman  
Charles C. Schooley, Vice Chairman  
William Bashaw  
Bruce M. Bowman  
Kitra A. Shiflett  
Larry C. Howdyshell  
Betty Jo Hamilton  
Mark Grove  
Larry Shiflett  
Garland Martin  
Clay Hewitt  
Dale L. Cobb  
Beatrice B. Cardellicchio-Weber

ABSENT: None

VIRGINIA: Meeting of the Agricultural Task Force Committee held on Thursday, December 29, 2005, at 7:00 P.M., in the County Government Center, Verona, Virginia.

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Chairman Curry stated that the first item on the agenda is to approve the minutes from the previous meetings.

Mr. Bashaw stated that he would like to change one recommendation on the minutes from the November 10, 2005 meeting. He stated that the recommendation should read: The county government working through the Director of Agriculture Development should identify historic and archeological sites and collect inventory located in General and Exclusive Agriculture zones along with the names and contact information of landowners.

Chairman Curry asked if there was a motion to approve all of the minutes?

Mr. Bowman moved that the November 1, 2005 minutes be approved.

Ms. Shiflett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Ms. Shiflett moved that the November 3, 2005 minutes be approved.

Mr. Martin seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Grove moved that the November 10, 2005 minutes be approved as amended.

Mr. Bashaw seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Bowman moved to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2005 meeting.

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Ms. Shiflett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Chairman Curry thanked the committee for cooperating with voting on the changes that came about from the public meeting. He stated that some of the votes were close. He stated that Mr. Cobb does have some concerns with some of the changes that were suggested. He stated that if anyone has any concerns with any of the changes they can bring them up tonight. He stated that he will give Mr. Hewitt some time to place his vote on the changes. He stated the committee will also need to vote on the Principles and Assumptions page as well as adopt the final report once the committee is finished discussing all of the issues. He stated that the committee should talk about how they want the report presented to the Board of Supervisors in January. He stated that he would like to see as many committee members present for that meeting as possible. He asked Mr. Cobb to follow up on the date. He asked if the meeting would be the 11<sup>th</sup> or the 25<sup>th</sup>?

Chairman Curry asked how the committee would like to dispose of the minutes from this meeting? He asked if the committee would like the minutes mailed and if nothing is heard back then he could just go ahead and approve them?

Mr. Shiflett stated that if nothing is heard back within a week Chairman Curry should just go ahead and approve the minutes.

Mr. Cobb stated that if changes need to be made to the minutes they should be mailed again to the committee members for approval.

Mr. Bowman moved that the committee members be given a period to make corrections to the minutes and then the Chairman could approve the minutes.

Mr. Martin seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Chairman Curry stated that there were some items on the changes that needed to be discussed. He stated that the first one is item #7. He stated that it included the addition of a new recommendation titled, Residential Cluster on Non-Productive Agricultural Land.

#### Item 7

The county should explore the feasibility of creating a sliding scale (10 acres out of 100 acres, for example) residential cluster zoning classification, specifically for nonproductive agricultural land in Exclusive Agriculture zones, where 90 % of the farm will remain in agricultural production.

Note: A neighbor who attended the input session but did not speak approached me with this suggestion. He said if the avian flu or other catastrophic event would happen and he could not make his mortgage payments he would like to be able to select an area where the land is not currently being used for agricultural production because it is too steep, rocky, or too eroded, and create a cluster of residential lots. Most farms have a little land like this. If this concept is legal it will serve several purposes. It would allow nonproductive agricultural land to be put to good use, keep dwellings in agricultural areas clustered, complement a more stringent lot limit ordinance, provide a zoning option for farmers without creating a loophole for developers, and provide an incentive for farmers to keep their land in exclusive agriculture.

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Mr. Shiflett stated that there will be loopholes with this recommendation especially for the developers. He stated that there is no protection for land that is zoned Exclusive Agriculture. He stated that he sees this as being counterproductive.

Chairman Curry stated that this would call for a new zoning classification.

Ms. Shiflett stated that this is in conflict with the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Martin stated that he is trying to farm his land but the area is being developed all around him.

Mr. Bashaw stated that he disagrees with this recommendation.

Mr. Grove stated that he disagrees with the recommendation. He stated that he thinks this would complicate the committee's efforts.

Vice Chairman Schooley stated that it does have some merit but this does have the potential for loopholes.

Ms. Shiflett stated that by creating less lots it will make the land more valuable.

Chairman Curry stated that if there is no motion on this item the committee will move on.

Chairman Curry stated that the next item that needs some discussion is item #17 to change the finding titled Market Animal Show and Augusta County Fair as indicated.

#### Item 17

Current wording:

The Market Animal Show and Augusta County Agricultural Fair continue to provide an educational opportunity for the non-farm community.

- ☒ Two countywide agricultural events that are held annually in Augusta County are the Market Animal Show in May and the Augusta County Fair held in August.
- ☒ The Market Animal Show is in its 59<sup>th</sup> year and enjoys significant support from a number of civic groups including Ruritan, Rotary, and Chambers of Commerce from across the County.
- ☒ The Augusta County Fair was re-started in the early 1990's and its livestock exhibition is not as large as the Market Animal Show. It has been suggested that the amount of time, resources, and energy required of participants, supporting adults, and organizations to put-on the Market Animal Show make it difficult to garner the same level of support for the fair. By contrast, the Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Clarke County Fairs are all hosts to that respective county's signature youth livestock shows.

New wording:

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The Market Animal Show and Augusta County Agricultural Fair continue to provide an educational opportunity for the non-farm community.

- ☒ Two countywide agricultural events that are held annually in Augusta County are the Market Animal Show in May and the Augusta County Fair held in August.
- ☒ The Market Animal Show is in its 61st year and enjoys significant support from the Hewitt family, local businesses, Augusta County's school system, Extension service, and a number of civic groups including Ruritan, Rotary, and Chambers of Commerce from across the County. It is the largest show of its kind east of the Mississippi River.
- ☒ The Market Animal Show provides local youth the opportunity to be involved in agriculture. Livestock project work gives youth the opportunity to explore career possibilities in agriculture.
- ☒ The Augusta County Fair was re-started in the early 1990's and its livestock exhibition is not as large as the Market Animal Show. Numerous businesses and individuals support the fair, which operates on a volunteer basis. By contrast, Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Clarke County Fairs have long histories of successful annual events.

Note: The statement regarding the Market Animal Show affecting support for the fair is invalid. The events are separate and neither affects the other. The MAS is held in May. Fair is in August. Seasonal difficulties (hot weather) make it hard to feed out animals to slaughter weights in summer months. If MAS were switched to an August date to coincide with the fair, it would likely cause the decline of MAS and we have no way of knowing if it would bring a boost to the fair. Many of the individuals who participate in MAS already participate in the fair livestock exhibitions. It is the lack of a proper livestock exhibition facility, which prevents (or discourages) participation in the fair. In general, the current facility used for the fair is inadequate for the event. Also many livestock exhibitors have to choose between exhibiting at the Augusta County Fair or participating in larger events (W. Va. State Fair) elsewhere. Also, with the fair schedule in the summer months (Rockbridge last week in July, Augusta first week in August, Rockingham second week in August) livestock exhibitors are faced with choosing ones in which they will participate. They are inclined to choose events that have better facilities to host them – Rockbridge is at the horse center, Rockingham is at fairgrounds. Augusta Expo does not have a livestock exhibition facility that appeals to livestock exhibitors. It is inadequate for livestock exhibitions.

Chairman Curry stated that the second bullet was changed to read 61<sup>st</sup> year instead of 59<sup>th</sup>. He stated that there is a new third bullet. He stated that 1990's should be changed to 1990s in the fourth bullet.

Ms. Hamilton stated that this is not to draw a comparison from Augusta County to Rockingham County. She stated that the successful annual events should be omitted from the fourth bullet. She stated that she was careful not to tread on the Market Animal Show and the Augusta County Fair.

Vice Chairman Schooley stated that the fair has had their share of problems.

Mr. Shiflett stated that the Augusta County Fair being re-started in the early 1990s should be omitted.

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Ms. Shiflett stated that she does not like the last statement that reads: By contrast, Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Clarke County Fairs have long histories of successful annual events.

Mr. Bowman stated that he agrees with Ms. Shiflett.

Mr. Martin and Mr. Hewitt stated that they agree as well.

Mr. Bashaw stated that the fourth bullet states that the Augusta County Fair was re-started in the early 1990's and its livestock exhibition is not as large as the Market Animal Show. Numerous businesses and individuals support the fair, which operates on a volunteer basis. By contrast, Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Clarke County Fairs have long histories of successful annual events. He stated that it is unnecessary and it should be removed.

Ms. Hamilton moved that the new wording be included in the report changing the fourth bullet to read: The Augusta County Fair was re-started in the early 1990s and its livestock exhibition is not as large as the Market Animal Show. Numerous businesses and individuals support the fair, which operates on a volunteer basis. She stated that the last sentence in the bullet should be omitted.

Mr. Bashaw stated that the date should be changed to 1995.

Mr. Bowman seconded the motion that the wording be approved as amended, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Howdyshell stated regarding item #16 if all of the groups could not be listed then none should be named. He stated that this committee should not want to offend anyone.

Ms. Hamilton stated that is why she listed local businesses so that no one is left out.

Chairman Curry stated that the committee can reconsider any of the other items.

Mr. Cobb stated that he did have several concerns about some of the items listed. He stated that they are as follows:

#### Item 1

Only four of the ten actually voted in favor. If the Board of Supervisors is going to appoint an Agriculture Industry Council, the Board should be the one who decides who needs to be put on the Council.

#### Item 4

Five of the ten voted to approve. This recommendation that the County should commit to redeveloping areas like Middlebrook as a priority over developing new communities in our Urban Service Area where the County wants 80% of our development. He stated that he thinks this does not need to be in the Agricultural Task Force report but should come as a letter from the Chairman of the Agricultural Task Force to the Steering Committee.

#### Item 9

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Only four of the ten voted to approve and this again should be considered as an ordinance change during the Comprehensive Plan process. He stated that he thinks this does not need to be in the Agricultural Task Force report but should come as a letter from the Chairman of the Agricultural Task Force to the Steering Committee.

Item 10

This statement is too broad. He stated that the committee needs to wait until the ordinance has been developed. The County does not know the ramifications the ordinance may have on Augusta County. He stated that Mr. Howdysshell serves on this committee regarding water source protection.

Item 11

This should be left up to the Agriculture Industry Council to decide on the criteria. If not, the committee should add the language that they should consider these items but not limited to only these items.

Item 16

The committee needs to add club after rotary and take the "s" off of chambers.

Item 19

Only five of the ten voted in favor.

Item 21

Only five of the ten voted in favor.

Item 30

Only four of the ten voted in favor.

Item 38

Only four of the ten voted in favor.

Mr. Howdysshell asked if the James River goes to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed?

Vice Chairman Schooley stated that it is in the watershed.

Mr. Howdysshell stated that regarding item #27 to add a new recommendation titled, Watershed Survey to read the Director of Agriculture Development should survey our watersheds in cooperation with the Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District and recommend development limits based on the natural resources available. He stated that this is a complicated issue.

Mr. Bashaw stated that the water sources are critical particularly to agriculture. He stated that the Director of Agriculture Development should look at water sources as they are associated with agriculture.

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Mr. Howdysshell stated that the committee that he is on is working out these issues. He asked why should this committee duplicate the fact?

Ms. Hamilton stated that this is already underway.

Mr. Howdysshell stated that is correct.

Chairman Curry stated that there was not a motion for this item so the committee will move on. Ms. Shiflett moved that item #1 be reconsidered.

#### Item 1

Add more specific wording about the makeup of the Agricultural Industry Council.

Current wording:

Augusta County needs to establish an organizational framework to address and manage the problems identified by this task force on a current and ongoing basis. To do so, the County should establish an Agriculture Industry Council and Director of Agriculture Development. The Agriculture Industry Council should be comprised of individuals who are farmers or who work in agriculture related areas. The Augusta County Board of Supervisors should determine the number of members needed to effectively operate the council with its members appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The Agriculture Industry Council should work at the discretion of and in concert with the Board to review issues related to the preservation and promotion of agriculture in Augusta County.

Augusta County should establish the Director of Agriculture Development as a full-time staff position. This individual will work with the Agriculture Industry Council to consider issues related to agriculture in the County. The Director of Agriculture Development will serve as the executive director of the Agriculture Industry Council which will function with a chairman and a vice chairman.

New wording:

Augusta County needs to establish an organizational framework to address and manage the problems identified by this task force on a current and ongoing basis. To do so, the County should establish an Agriculture Industry Council and Director of Agriculture Development. The Agriculture Industry Council should be comprised of individuals who are farmers or who work in agriculture related areas. There should be one voting representative from each of the magisterial districts, and one additional representative from districts in which more than one half of the land is zoned exclusive agriculture or in which there is a prevalence of agricultural and forestal districts. Also, the council should have non-voting representatives from agriculture support services, such as, the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, the United States Department of Agriculture, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Farmers Market, the farmland preservation organizations, the agricultural lending institutions, the Augusta County Planning Commission, and the Augusta County Board of Supervisors. The Augusta County Board of Supervisors should determine the number of members needed to effectively operate the council with its members appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The Agriculture Industry Council should work at the discretion of and in concert with the Board to review issues related to the preservation and promotion of agriculture in Augusta County.

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Augusta County should establish the Director of Agriculture Development as a full-time staff position. This individual will work with the Agriculture Industry Council to consider issues related to agriculture in the County. The Director of Agriculture Development will serve as the executive director of the Agriculture Industry Council which will function with a chairman and a vice chairman.

Mr. Shiflett seconded the motion to reconsider. Six of the committee members were in favor of reconsidering item #1 and four were not.

Ms. Shiflett stated that she liked the way it was worded in the current wording.

Ms. Hamilton stated that this is just making a new recommendation. She stated that the committee will just be giving the Board of Supervisors a suggestion on how the council might be made up.

Mr. Bashaw stated that the new wording is too complicated.

Ms. Hamilton moved that the committee use the current wording for item #1.

Ms. Shiflett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Ms. Hamilton moved that item #4 be reconsidered.

#### Item 4

Add a new recommendation titled, Community Redevelopment.

In the current comprehensive plan revision, the county should commit to redevelopment of its various communities as a priority over new community developments.

Ms. Shiflett seconded the motion to reconsider item #4. Six of the committee members were in favor of reconsidering item #4 and four were not.

Ms. Hamilton stated that she agrees with Mr. Cobb.

Mr. Bashaw stated that the County should expand the communities they already have instead of creating new ones.

Chairman Curry stated that he thought this had merit.

Mr. Howdyshehl stated that the committee should let Community Development deal with this.

Ms. Shiflett moved that item #4 be disapproved.

Mr. Bashaw seconded the motion to delete item #4, which carried unanimously.

Ms. Hamilton moved that item #9 be reconsidered.

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Item 9

Keep the above recommendation titled Special Use Permits and add the following statement:

If the homeowner must relocate due to employment but wants to keep house and land with plans to return here after retirement or if employment changes. The homeowner should be able to lease the dwelling in his or her absence.

Ms. Shiflett seconded the motion to reconsider item #9, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Cobb stated that this would be hard to regulate.

Vice Chairman Schooley, Mr. Shiflett, Ms. Shiflett, and Mr. Howdysshell stated that they agree.

Mr. Bashaw stated that this is too complicated.

Ms. Hamilton moved that item #9 be deleted.

Mr. Martin seconded that item #9 be removed, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Howdysshell moved that item #10 be reconsidered.

Item 10

Add a new recommendation titled, Water Source Protection.

Current and potential water sources should be identified and provided long-term protection from development by an appropriate ordinance.

Ms. Hamilton seconded the motion to reconsider item #10.

Mr. Howdysshell stated that this is more appropriate under PDRs so that the areas can be protected.

Chairman Curry stated that this would be included under item #11.

Ms. Hamilton moved that item #10 be deleted.

Mr. Howdysshell seconded the motion to delete item #10. Nine of the committee members were in favor of the motion and one in opposition.

Ms. Shiflett moved that item #11 be reconsidered.

Item 11

Add a new recommendation titled, PDR Selection Criteria.

A point system should be established for ranking PDR applications and priority should be given to fulltime traditional family farms, intensive farming operations such as dairy and poultry, farms with

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prime soil types, farms in agricultural and forestal districts, farms in exclusive agriculture zones, farms that protect water sources, farms with professionally managed forests, farms that provide assurance that the land will remain in agricultural production, and farms that protect historical and cultural resources.

Ms. Hamilton seconded the motion to reconsider item #11.

Mr. Bashaw stated that since the committee omitted item #10 then item #11 should be included in the report.

Ms. Shiflett stated that the wording that states farms that protect water sources should be omitted and replaced with protecting water sources.

Mr. Cobb stated that the committee should consider all of those items but include a statement that it is not only limited to those items.

Mr. Bashaw asked if this item would be limited to only Exclusive Agriculture?

Chairman Curry stated no.

Ms. Hamilton moved that item #11 be changed to read: A point system should be established for ranking PDR applications. When ranking priority should be given to, but not necessarily limited to, the fulltime traditional family farms, intensive farming operations such as dairy and poultry, farms with prime soil types, farms in agricultural and forestal districts, farms in Exclusive Agriculture zones, protecting water sources, farms with professionally managed forests, farms that provide assurance that the land will remain in agricultural production, and farms that protect historical and cultural resources.

Ms. Shiflett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Bashaw moved to reconsider item #22.

#### Item 22

Augusta County should locate property and build an exposition center, tailored to the needs of the agriculture community, which can be used for county agriculture events and which could serve as a center in Virginia to host statewide agriculture events.

Ms. Hamilton seconded the motion. Only two of the committee members were in favor of reconsidering item #22. The motion failed.

Mr. Howdyshehl moved that item #14 be reconsidered.

#### Item 14

The county should add incentives to encourage the creation and support of additional agricultural and forestal districts.

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The motion failed due to lack of a second.

Ms. Hamilton moved to reconsider item #38.

Item 38

Problems with conservation easements should be studied and addressed by the Board of Supervisors.

Ms. Shiflett seconded the motion to reconsider item #38. Six of the committee members were in favor of the motion and four being in opposition.

Mr. Shiflett stated that conservation easements are not what they seem to be. He stated that the first thing that you are asked when land is being put in a conservation easement is how many building sites are wanted on the land.

Chairman Curry stated that a citizen sent him a copy of their conservation easement agreement and it lists five building sites on the land. He stated that the committee could create a finding that states conservation easements are approved with a number of building sites.

Mr. Hewitt moved that item #38 be removed from the report.

Ms. Shiflett seconded the motion with eight committee members being in favor and two abstaining from the vote.

Ms. Hamilton stated that if a dwelling is going to be put on the property with a conservation easement a survey should be required.

Ms. Shiflett stated that only the conservation easements that are in conflict with the Comprehensive Plan go before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Cobb stated that the last conservation easement that the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors heard was land that was in a Community Development Area and had public water in the front of the property.

Chairman Curry stated that currently the conservation easements do not go before the Board of Supervisors for a final decision and maybe it should be lobbied so that they could hear those requests. He stated that several recommendations in the report state that the Board of Supervisors should seek legislation.

Chairman Curry stated that there still needs to be another recommendation in place of item #38.

Ms. Hamilton stated that she would move to recommend that easement holders in Augusta County are encouraged to survey conservation easements and present to the Augusta County Agriculture Industry Council and Director of Agriculture Development findings regarding easements in use for production agriculture by landowners or tenant farmers and those which

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are held for open space. Forested easements are to be considered production agriculture but should be differentiated from other types of production agriculture. If an easement includes allowances for dwellings, this information also should be included in survey data.

The motion failed due to lack of a second.

Ms. Hamilton stated that conservation easements benefit the production of agriculture in the County.

Mr. Bashaw stated that the committee should add to the statement for item #38. He stated that a new recommendation should read: Problems with conservation easements should be studied and addressed by the Agriculture Industry Council and the Director of Agriculture Development and recommendations made for future ways to deal with conservation easement agreements.

Mr. Hewitt moved that the recommendation in place of item #38 read: The Board of Supervisors should be encouraged to lobby for legislation for local control of conservation easement agreements.

Mr. Shiflett seconded the motion. Seven of the committee members were in favor of the motion, two abstaining from the vote, and one committee member being absent.

Ms. Shiflett moved that a new finding be included in the report to read: Many conservation easement agreements are being granted with numerous building lots.

Ms. Hamilton stated that all easement agreements are different.

Vice Chairman Schooley seconded the motion. Nine of the committee members were in favor of the motion and one abstaining from the vote.

Mr. Hewitt excused himself from the meeting.

Chairman Curry stated that Mr. Hewitt should give his votes to staff so that they could update the document for the count.

Chairman Curry asked if there were any other recommendations or changes from the committee?

Ms. Hamilton moved that a new recommendation be created in the report to read: The Agriculture Industry Council and Director of Agriculture Development should study the feasibility of building an exposition center tailored to the County's needs.

Ms. Hamilton stated that there is an issue of the County providing funds for athletic facilities located around the County and that young people who participate in the Market Animal Show should have a place to practice their sport, in this case, it being a facility to hold the Market Animal Show.

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Mr. Howdysshell stated that the facilities built in the County for these purposes (ball fields, etc.) are built when private individuals come forward with funds to put toward the effort and then the County puts funds toward these projects.

Mr. Bashaw seconded the motion.

Chairman Curry asked if there was some discussion?

Ms. Shiflett stated that it is not the County's responsibility.

Mr. Shiflett stated that he agrees with Ms. Shiflett.

Chairman Curry stated that the committee needs to vote on the motion.

One was in favor and eight in opposition to the motion. The motion failed.

Chairman Curry asked if there were any other new recommendations that the committee would like to add?

There being none, Chairman Curry stated that the committee needs to vote on the Principles and Assumptions.

Mr. Shiflett moved that the Principles and Assumptions be approved.

Mr. Bowman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Vice Chairman Schooley moved that the committee approve a letter stating that staff did a good job supporting the Agricultural Task Force.

Mr. Bowman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Howdysshell wanted to thank the staff on all of their hard work.

Chairman Curry thanked the committee for their dedication and their outstanding hard work.

Chairman Curry stated that staff should notify all of the committee members on when the Board of Supervisors meeting will be to present the report. He stated that he would like to have as many of the committee members present as possible.

Chairman Curry that the next item on the agenda is to approve the final report. He asked for a motion.

Ms. Shiflett moved that the completed document be presented to the Board of Supervisors and she hopes that some of the items are implemented as soon as possible.

Ms. Hamilton seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

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Ms. Shiflett stated that the Steering Committee will be having their next set of Comprehensive Plan public meetings at each of the high schools in January and she would hope some of the committee members could attend a meeting.

Chairman Curry asked how the committee members would like the report presented to the Board of Supervisors?

Vice Chairman Schooley moved that Chairman Curry present the report to the Board of Supervisors with committee members being in attendance.

Mr. Bowman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Chairman