



MIDDLEBURG TOWN COUNCIL
Public Information Meeting
Tuesday, April 19, 2022



PENDING APPROVAL

PRESENT: Mayor Trowbridge M. Littleton
Vice Mayor Peter A. Leonard-Morgan
Councilmember Chris W. Bernard
Councilmember J. Kevin Daly
Councilmember Morris E. “Bud” Jacobs
Councilmember C. Darlene Kirk
Councilmember Philip M. Miller
Councilmember Cindy C. Pearson

STAFF: Danny Davis, Town Manager
Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk
William M. Moore, Deputy Town Manager
Ali MacIntyre, Director of Business Development & Community Partnerships
Estee LaClare, Planning & Project Associate

The Mayor & Council of the Town of Middleburg, Virginia held a public information meeting on Tuesday, April 19, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Sheila Johnson Performing Arts Center at The Hill School. The purpose of the meeting was to present the details of two (2) requested boundary line adjustments (BLAs) received by the Town. While a quorum of the Council was present, they held no discussion, and no action was taken by them during the meeting.

Mayor Littleton explained that the purpose of the meeting was to share information on each request at the same time. He thanked The Hill School and the Town staff for hosting and helping organize the meeting. Mr. Littleton explained that what was requested were not annexations, but rather were boundary line adjustments; however, the net effect was essentially the same – that being that the properties would be brought into the town’s corporate limits if approved. He advised that the Council’s goal was to determine how the community felt about the requests. Mr. Littleton stressed that no decisions had been made. He noted that this was only the beginning of the process and advised that no applications had been filed. Mr. Littleton announced that there would be opportunities for public input during the Council meetings over the next several months.

Mayor Littleton advised that there were two options on the table – bring the properties into the town limits or allow something else to happen to them. He stressed that no change was not one of the choices. Mr. Littleton explained that if the properties were brought into the town limits, the Town would have control over how they developed. He reiterated that if they were not, the properties would not stay as-is and would be allowed to develop under the County’s regulations. Mr. Littleton advised that each request was an independent proposal and noted that they both happened to be received at approximately the same time. He reiterated that this was not an all or nothing approach and likened it to the Salamander development request from twenty years ago in that the option was for two hundred fifty homes or the resort. Mr. Littleton asked that nothing in the proposals be taken as being hostile to the owners of the properties and reminded the audience that they had property rights. He asked that each application be judged on its own merits.

Mayor Littleton reviewed the challenges facing the town. He reiterated that development of the properties would happen and questioned whether the Town should control and shape it. Mr. Littleton noted that this could solve some of the challenges currently facing the town. He opined that what made the character of Middleburg so special was the people. He noted the diversity of people in the room and opined that they cared about the people, the town, and the sense of community. Mr. Littleton displayed photos of local residents and noted that based on current housing costs, 99% of them would be unable to live in town if they had to purchase a home today. He opined that at the end of the day, the question was *“What was the best way to keep people in Middleburg?”*

Mayor Littleton reviewed the growth and land use pressures that had occurred in Loudoun County over the past twenty years and noted that its population had grown at a rate of 5% per year, while the national average was only 1% per year. He displayed photos of developments and data centers in the County and noted that they were allowed by-right. Mr. Littleton opined that the citizens could not trust the County to re-write its zoning ordinances to solve the problems that existed. He reminded the audience that the Town could only control what was located within its borders. Mr. Littleton displayed graphs that depicted the growth that had occurred in Loudoun County over the past twenty years. He noted that the land surrounding Middleburg was zoned AR-2, which would allow for cluster development, as well as other permitted uses.

Mayor Littleton advised that years ago, people's income levels allowed them to make Middleburg their home; however, this had now changed. He noted the increase in housing costs and advised that while Middleburg was a desirable place to live, it lacked entry-level homes. Mr. Littleton further advised that while the average age of a Loudoun County resident was thirty-six (36), it was fifty-two (52) in Middleburg. He opined that housing costs were not allowing younger people to make their home here. Mr. Littleton noted that the average teacher's salary in Middleburg was \$57,000 annually, which meant a \$500,000+ home was not affordable for them. He reported that the local schools needed seventy (70) units just for their teachers; and, noted that this did not count the number needed for other professionals in the area.

Mayor Littleton noted that in 1973, the average home in Middleburg was 1,700 square feet and contained three people; whereas today, the average home was 2,800 square feet and contained 2.5 people. He opined that this was part of what was driving the cost of housing. Mr. Littleton noted that the Ridgeview area contained smaller houses on smaller lots. He advised that real property tax assessed values increased by an average of 19% in one year and opined that this increase was driven by the demolition of the smaller houses and the reconstruction of larger ones in their place. Mr. Littleton advised that homes that used to cost \$500,000 were now \$899,000 or were being replaced with new construction that cost over \$1 million. He noted that the Town was losing lots as they were being consolidated to allow for larger homes. Mr. Littleton cited as an example, 204 Sycamore Street and noted that two years ago, the original 1,200 square foot house sold for \$440,000; however, it was replaced by a new 4,430 square foot house that was selling for \$1.465 million. He opined that this was something that needed to be addressed. Mr. Littleton acknowledged that the builders were doing what they were legally allowed to do and suggested it was up to the government to change the rules. He cited the house that was constructed at the corner of Martin/Walnut Streets as another example of a large house that was constructed on multiple lots. Mr. Littleton questioned whether the town had a balance of attainable housing.

Mayor Littleton opined that four types of housing were needed in Middleburg – subsidized, which included apartments; entry-level, which included condos; mid-size, which included townhouses; and, larger homes, which included single-family dwellings. He advised that the Town was missing housing in the first two categories. Mr. Littleton noted that the Windy Hill units were available only to those on a limited income and advised that once their income increased, there were no options for them in the area; therefore, they had to move elsewhere. He advised that the Mixed Use Village (MUV) that was proposed to contain sixty (60) workforce housing units was no longer being proposed for development in that manner.

Mayor Littleton noted that the County's Comprehensive Plan included language indicating the County would work with the Town on a greenbelt to provide protected space around Middleburg; however, that had not happened in the last twenty years. He opined that this was something the Town must do itself and suggested it needed to encourage land to be placed in conservation easements. Mr. Littleton displayed a map of Middleburg and the surrounding areas, including what had been developed, what could be developed and what was already in a conservation easement. He noted that the land to the west and east of town had already been developed and the land to the northwest was in a conservation easement. Mr. Littleton advised that the land to the north and south could potentially be developed. He reiterated that these parcels had been proposed for a boundary line adjustment to bring them into Middleburg's corporate limits.

Windy Hill Foundation Request for Boundary Line Adjustment

Mayor Littleton reported that this property consisted of thirty-three acres. He advised that the vision was to construct a 65+ age restricted facility, similar to the existing Levis Hill House, plus forty subsidized housing units, for a total of sixty affordable subsidized housing units. Mr. Littleton noted that the foundation was in the early stages of engineering the project. He advised that the remainder of the land would be placed in a conservation easement. Mr. Littleton noted that if approved, the developer would be responsible for all the costs of the development and would receive no special treatment. He reviewed the location of the property, which was behind Virginia Lane and between the Town's existing corporate boundaries to the east and Zulla Road to the west. Mr. Littleton advised that if approved for a boundary line adjustment, the portion that would be developed would be located adjacent to the current town boundary and would be behind a hill. He explained that the Windy Hill Foundation would manage and lease the units. Mr. Littleton advised that they would also construct trails that would lead into town.

Mayor Littleton took a brief break from 6:40-6:50 p.m.

Homewood Farm Request for Boundary Line Adjustment

Mayor Littleton advised that this property consisted of two hundred twelve acres, fifteen of which were already located within the town limits. He reported that the request was to bring an additional twenty-two acres into the town limits and to place the remaining one hundred ninety acres in a conservation easement. Mr. Littleton advised that if approved, access to the housing would occur via Foxcroft Road. He further advised that sixty-six units were proposed for construction, which would consist of forty-eight condos, located in two buildings; eight townhouses; and, ten single-family cottage style dwellings. Mr. Littleton noted that the existing barn would be used for commercial purposes. He advised that if the property were not brought into the town limits, fourteen lots could be developed by-right as a cluster development, in addition to a rural economy lot that could contain any of the AR-2 commercial uses that were permitted under the County's zoning ordinance. Mr. Littleton noted that these units would be served by well and septic. He advised that it would not be developed under the Town's control.

Council Considerations Related to Boundary Line Adjustment Requests

Mayor Littleton summarized the requests, including what properties would come into the town limits and what would be placed in a conservation easement. He noted that one of the considerations was the impact of the boundary line adjustments on the Town's operations. Mr. Littleton advised that the Town had the water and sewer treatment capacity to handle both developments. He further advised that there would be no capital expenditures on the part of the Town related to either, as the applicants would be responsible for all such expenses. Mr. Littleton opined that there would be sufficient revenues to offset any operational costs. He noted that the applicants would be responsible for paying water and sewer connection fees. Mr. Littleton advised that as to traffic, the applicant and Town would work with VDOT to assess and address any traffic related issues. He noted that pedestrian connectivity would be provided by the applicants.

Mayor Littleton reviewed the impact on available housing if the properties were brought into the town limits and the number of units were constructed as proposed. He noted that the number of apartments would increase by sixty, the number of condos would increase by forty-eight, the number of townhouses would increase by eight and the number of single-family dwellings would increase by ten. Mr. Littleton opined that this would address the first two categories, which the community indicated needed to be addressed during the Comprehensive Plan update discussions.

Next Steps

Mayor Littleton advised that the audience members would have an opportunity for a brief question and answer period at this time. He further advised that community input would be sought through a number of information gathering opportunities, including public comment sessions dedicated specifically for this purpose during the Council meetings over

the next couple of months. Mr. Littleton opened the floor for questions/comments. (Note: A number of speakers did not provide their name; therefore, they could not be identified in these minutes).

Don Woodruff questioned whether there would be any additional building envelope within the conservation easement. Mayor Littleton advised that he would have to determine that and would get back to Mr. Woodruff.

John Donovan inquired as to the lot size for the cottage style houses associated with the Homewood Farm request. Town Manager Davis advised that this had not yet been identified.

Will McCullough noted that single-family dwellings in Middleburg were going for \$1.2-1.6 million. He questioned what the problem was that the proposed buildings would solve. He questioned why consideration was not given to the landowner's history. Mr. McCullough questioned whether anyone wanted to save the properties. He suggested the Town find someone to purchase them and put them in a conservation easement so they would be protected.

Mayor Littleton noted that the history of the property owners was irrelevant to the requests before the Council. He advised that one individual had purchased a large amount of land surrounding the town and put it in a conservation easement; however, he couldn't purchase it all. Mr. Littleton noted the need for other tools to address the issues.

Laurie Peterson questioned how services would be provided to the residents of the proposed homes and cited the Safeway as an example. She questioned the setback for the units proposed by the Windy Hill Foundation.

Mayor Littleton advised that the plans were concepts only at this point. He noted that he would let the applicants know of her concerns related to services for the one hundred twenty houses. Mr. Littleton agreed with the need to consider whether Middleburg had the services necessary to meet the proposed developments' needs.

Jerry Wine questioned whether the Town would have any input on traffic. He cited the Salamander development as an example and noted that traffic could not get down Marshall Street. Mr. Wine advised that motorists went where they wanted to go. He questioned whether one-way streets or additional traffic lights would be necessary to support the developments. Mr. Wine questioned the amount of control the Town had over VDOT.

Mayor Littleton noted that the entrance for the Salamander development was off Pendleton Street. He confirmed the Town would work with VDOT to assess the impact of the traffic from the two proposed developments. Mr. Littleton acknowledged that VDOT would identify what transportation related items were needed. He advised that if the Town approved the requests, it would work with VDOT to understand the traffic impacts and do what was necessary to address them. Mr. Littleton noted the need to consider the big picture and to raise issues related to the developments.

An unidentified individual opined that the Windy Hill Foundation's proposed project would be great. He questioned why access for Homewood Farm's proposed project would not be off Route 50. He further questioned whether the applicant wanted it to be on Foxcroft Road.

Mayor Littleton advised that the community expressed concern about having an entrance on Route 50 when a previous project was proposed. He noted that this was not off the table and advised that if VDOT said it was needed, the Town would ask the community for their thoughts on it. Mr. Littleton explained that the Town would be an information conduit.

Carter Wiley questioned who would win with the "other development." He further questioned where the money was coming from.

Mayor Littleton advised that the developer would pay for all the infrastructure costs. He confirmed the Town had plenty of excess water and sewer capacity to support the development. Mr. Littleton explained that what was in it for the Town was that this was not a choice of nothing or something – it was a matter of which choice did the Town prefer. He advised that if the Town did not approve the boundary line adjustment, it would not have control over the development of the

property; it would not have a greenbelt surrounding the town; and, it would not address the need for affordable housing. Mr. Littleton suggested the need to look at the long-term implications. He advised that there would be no more land to annex/boundary line adjust once these properties were addressed.

In response to an inquiry as to what the property owner could currently do with the property (Homewood Farm), Mayor Littleton advised that he could develop it at one unit per fifteen acres. He noted that for the 220-acre parcel, the property owner could subdivide it into fourteen lots, plus a rural economy lot.

An unidentified person opined that the Town did not have control over the development that was already occurring in the town. She questioned why the properties should be brought into the town limits. She further questioned the benefit to the developers.

Mayor Littleton advised that if the properties were boundary line adjusted into the town limits, they would be developed at the will of the Town. He further advised that the Town would put controls in place. Mr. Littleton explained that the difference between this and the redevelopment of existing homes in the town was that the property owners could do what they wanted with their properties. He noted that he would not impugn the intent of the property owners. Mr. Littleton advised that the question was “*what would be good for the town in the long-term.*”

Mike Morency questioned how the Town would guarantee the Homewood Farm property would be developed with affordable housing.

Mayor Littleton opined that affordability would be driven by the size of the units and suggested that smaller ones were worth less. He advised that the price of the units would be market-based; however, he reiterated that there would be limits on their square footage.

An unidentified person noted the stream on the Homewood Farm property. He questioned who had the say with regard to environmental issues associated with the proposed development. He further questioned whether the Town would have any environmental control if the property were brought into the town limits.

Mayor Littleton advised that the Town would work with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality to address any water runoff issues. He noted that if the development occurred outside of the town limits, the houses would all be on septic systems.

Town Manager Davis advised that the Loudoun County Building & Development Department handled erosion & soil control issues and the State issued wetlands permits. He confirmed that Loudoun County was the controlling authority for environmental issues.

An unidentified lady questioned whether the fifteen-acre portion of the Homewood Farm that was already in the town limits could be developed. She further questioned what could be built there if it remained as is.

Deputy Town Manager Moore advised that only agricultural buildings could be constructed on it as it was currently zoned.

Patty Thomas questioned whether sixteen homes were still proposed for development on the Hunters Hamlet property. She further questioned whether a request would be received to annex that property into the town limits.

Mayor Littleton advised that the Hunters Hamlet property was purchased by the Lost Barrel Brewery. He confirmed they could ask that the property be annexed; however, he opined that there was no reason for the Town to do so.

Ms. Thomas questioned whether the Wolverton property had been placed in conservation easement. She noted that workforce housing was proposed to be constructed in Salamander's MUV property and advised that that burden had now been shifted back to the Town. Ms. Thomas questioned whether she could see the Salamander zoning proffers. She opined that they made promises that had not been fulfilled.

Mayor Littleton advised that the conservation easement for the Wolverton property would be finalized within a month. He confirmed the Salamander proffers were available for review.

An unidentified person questioned whether the soil perked at the Homewood Farm property. He suggested that if not, it could not be developed.

Mayor Littleton advised that it could be used for other uses allowed in the AR-2 District.

Helen McMahon questioned how the Town would dictate that the units developed on the Homewood Farm property would be affordable. She disagreed that size would drive their affordability.

Mayor Littleton explained that the boundary line adjustment must be approved by the Town. He suggested that covenants could be used to restrict what could be done on the property.

Ms. Peterson opined that location drove the price of housing. She opined that a \$600,000 house was not affordable.

Mayor Littleton suggested that generally people started life in one location and moved to a bigger one as their incomes increased.

An unidentified person opined that there were no restrictions on the size of a house that could be built in the Ridgeview area.

Mayor Littleton confirmed there were. He noted that what had been the norm had changed over the years and advised that the Town was looking at its zoning ordinances for the residential districts to address that change.

An unidentified person noted that there were other ways in which the price of housing changed. She advised that it changed as the house transferred from one owner to another. She opined that it would be strange to drive through the less dense development to get to the apartments in the proposed Homewood Farm development.

Mayor Littleton explained that the idea was to hide the apartments behind the hill; however, he noted that what was presented was only a concept plan. He advised that the applicant would be provided with the community's feedback. Mr. Littleton opined that the same conversations that were now occurring, occurred in 1910 when the Ridgeview Farm was proposed for development. He reiterated that the question was "*how the community wanted to shape the change to these properties.*"

Ms. Peterson opined that cluster development on the Homewood Farm property may not be horrible. She noted that Middleburg depended on tourism and suggested that visitors would not come if it had a subdivision as a buffer. Ms. Peterson questioned what the development would do to tourism.

Mayor Littleton opined that if the property were not brought into the town limits, the developer would look to maximum the number of units that could be constructed. He further opined that he would develop the property at the least cost and in the easiest manner, which could mean the housing would be close to the road. Mr. Littleton noted that the County's AR-2 regulations allowed for more uses than they previously did.

An unidentified person opined that the ten small cottage style houses could not be constructed unless the property was brought into the town limits due to the steep slope of the property. He further opined that the property could not be built upon unless the topography was changed. He suggested the need to investigate that further. He opined that it was being implied that unless the property was brought into the town limits, horrible things would happen; however, that was not a definite.

Mayor Littleton opined that the developer would not build the houses in that location unless it was brought into the town limits. He noted the need to look at everything. Mr. Littleton reiterated that the idea was to collect the community's concerns and see what people thought about the requests. He advised that, if approved, the idea behind bringing the properties into the town limits was to control and define their future development.

Ms. Peterson questioned whether the Town was choosing high density development.

Mayor Littleton advised that the development of the property was not the Town's choice. He reiterated that in the case of Salamander, the choice was a resort or three hundred homes, the latter of which the community did not want. Mr. Littleton opined that while there were some negatives, the result was still a net positive. He agreed there were negatives and positives associated with these requests and reiterated that the Town was trying to determine what the community wanted.

Jane Cooke opined that the Town would have the opportunity to protect itself by bringing the properties into the town limits. She noted that otherwise, it would lose control and the development would be built in accordance with Loudoun County's regulations. Ms. Cooke suggested the Town should not give up that control.

An unidentified individual opined that if control meant sixty-six units on twenty acres, he thought it was a bad deal.

Jilann Brunett questioned whether it was possible to negotiate a reduction in the number of units, to which Mayor Littleton confirmed it was.

Mayor Littleton advised that he would hang around for a while in case anyone wished to speak with him individually. He closed the public information meeting at 7:44 p.m.

APPROVED:

Trowbridge M. Littleton, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk