



# Planning Commission Annual Report

July 2007 - June 2008  
Volume 1 Issue 1

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## Planning Commission

*Who they are and what they've been doing-*

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The Planning Commission meets the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 in the Board of Supervisors' Room in the County Administration Building. These meetings are open to the public. A joint Public Hearing is held with the Board of Supervisors the third Tuesday of every month.

Over the past fiscal year the Planning Commission has had 23 meetings to discuss and make recommendations to the Governing Body of Amherst County. The Planning Commission is responsible for implementing the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance and encouraging growth in compliance to the Comprehensive Plan. This fiscal year the Planning Commission has approved 11 rezonings, 13 special exceptions, 9 zoning text amendments, 10 subdivisions, totaling 302 new lots.

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## Mike Chandler

In April, 2008 the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors had a joint meeting at Sweet Briar College with Mike Chandler. Mr. Chandler was a Professor in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics at Virginia Tech and served on Blacksburg's Planning Commission and Town Council. He is now the Director of Education for the Citizens Planning Education Association of Virginia (CPEAV). In this role he conducts the Virginia Certified Planning Commissioners' Program, the Virginia Certified Boards of Zoning Appeals, the annual CPEAV Commonwealth Planning and Zoning Conference, as well as other training and educational offerings in various states around the country.

After a joint meeting between the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors with Mr. Chandler at Sweet Briar College in April of 2008 both parties felt it was necessary for the Amherst

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*The Planning  
Commission meets the  
first Thursday and third  
Tuesday of every month  
@ 7:00 PM*

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## Current Key Zoning Changes

You may have seen some changes around the County in the past year or so. These changes are a result of recent zoning changes being implemented around the county. These changes include the sign ordinance, landscaping ordinance and growth boundaries for public water and sewer. Many other changes are in the works in the Planning and Zoning Department. Currently the Department intern has been working on a sidewalk survey, a committee has been formed to update the site plan requirements for different processes and the staff is constantly adding text amendments to add permitted and special exception uses to the various districts in the County.



*Amherst traffic circle*

The new sign ordinance has been implemented to try to create a more attractive business climate and protect the natural beauty of the County. The illumination, setback, height and size in proportion to the building are all regulated by the new ordinance. Also the number of signs permitted for each business is regulated.

Landscaping is now required for any commercial or industrial construction including expansion. To help shield residential neighbors from such land uses it is required that the property be screened by either a privacy fence or dense row of trees. Also, in proportion to the amount of road frontage each business has they must provide a certain number of trees and shrubs. This ordinance has been implemented to enhance the outward appearance of all developed sites, create greater property values, protect groundwater and air quality, provide shade and windbreaks for conservation of energy, reduce damage due to UV radiation, noise and light pollution, decrease erosion and flood damage, enhance the beauty of vehicular and pedestrian transportation corridors and buffer unsightly development.

The changes currently being worked on by the staff should help to further enhance the County with better sidewalks, help people developing their property with simpler site plan requirements in the different application processes and make the current County Ordinance more thorough and comprehensive.

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Get to know your Planning Commission Members:

<u>District</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>E-mail</u>	<u>Attendance (date)</u>
1	Mitch Heishman	946.2451	<a href="mailto:mitch.heishman@greif.com">mitch.heishman@greif.com</a>	100% (2/08-6/08)
2	James Fulcher	277.9620	<a href="mailto:jpfulcher@countyofamherst.com">jpfulcher@countyofamherst.com</a>	87% (7/07-6/08)
2	Bonnie Limbrick	528.4111	<a href="mailto:bonnie@amcar-rental.com">bonnie@amcar-rental.com</a>	100% (7/07-6/08)
3	Donald Hedrick	846.6447	<a href="mailto:dlhedrick@countyofamherst.com">dlhedrick@countyofamherst.com</a>	96% (7/07-6/08)
3	Robert Fener	N/A	<a href="mailto:refener@countyofamherst.com">refener@countyofamherst.com</a>	100% (7/07-6/08)
4	Beverly Jones	929.7617	<a href="mailto:bcjones@countyofamherst.com">bcjones@countyofamherst.com</a>	89% (9/07-6/08)
5	Leon Parrish	845.6130	<a href="mailto:lparrish@countyofamherst.com">lparrish@countyofamherst.com</a>	87% (7/07-6/08)

## Erosion & Sediment Control

Some changes are also coming for the Erosion and Sediment Control department within the County. With the addition and training of new staff, the County plans to condense the department. Currently Kenneth Campbell is the Program Administrator who works in the Building Safety Department, Anne Marie Clark is the Plan Reviewer who works for the Robert E. Lee Soil and Water Conservation District and the Inspectors are Grant Massie for commercial projects and Kenneth Campbell for single family projects. If a project disturbs more than 10,000 square feet of land an erosion and sediment control plan is required by the State and County for a land disturbing permit. If a single family home disturbs 10,000 square feet then an agreement in lieu of erosion plan can be signed and turned in agreeing to best management practices to ensure no excessive runoff.

The County just hired a new Assistant Zoning Administrator/Planner, Theresa Jorgensen, who will become certified in November of 2008 to become the new Erosion and Sediment Control Administrator and Plan Reviewer. Currently she is taking the classes offered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation and has been "shown the ropes" by Grant Massie and Anne Marie Clark. Everyone looks forward to condensing the program into the Building Safety and Planning Departments, who already work together, for more customer ease and program continuity.

*Mike Chandler* from page 1

County Zoning Ordinance to be updated. Mr. Chandler has agreed to offer his planning consultative services to the County to bring the County's Ordinance into compliance with the Comprehensive Plan which was adopted in 2007. Mr. Chandler is currently meeting with the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors to discuss each of their concerns and visions for the County and the weaknesses and strengths of the current Code. Mr. Chandler's recommendations should be completed fall of 2008 and discussed by the County within the following months. These updates should include, but not limited to, Cluster Zoning, lot sizes in the Agricultural District, and helping the County zone properties to comply with the Comprehensive Plan.

The Planning Commission will point the staff toward their priorities. After staff has written the proposed code changes the Planning Commission will make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. All of these changes will be advertised and public hearings will be held to hear citizen feedback.



*Erosion Control Measures.*

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*"Mr. Chandler's  
recommendations will be  
completed in fall 2008"*

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## Tidbits of Knowledge

Some interesting facts about what is going on in the County:

- According to VDOT traffic counts along Business 29 from 2004 to 2007 have decreased:
  - 31% just north of Lynchburg
  - 33.5% at 130 crossing
  - 50% in Faulconerville area
- In the past fiscal year the Planning/Zoning Department has issued the following permits:
  - 89 single family dwelling permits.
  - 5 multi-family dwelling permits.
  - 78 home occupation permits.
  - 2 wireless communication facilities.
  - 82 accessory structure permits.
  - 9 new sign permits.
- Land Disturbing Permits issued:
  - 74 residential.
  - 7 commercial.
  - 1 industrial.
  - 3 institutional.
- Amherst County Service Authority in fiscal year 2007 has installed:
  - 341 public water connections.
  - 35 public sewer connections.
- The County website is being updated and should be completed late summer of 2008.
- Along with a new website the County is working on a GIS map to be made available on the website for the public.
- Two Planning Commission members are retiring: Jim Fulcher after 8 years of service and Bonnie Limbrick after 5 years and two new members will be appointed by September of 2008.



### Planning and Zoning Department

Planning Director/Zoning Administrator:  
Jeremy Bryant  
[jsbryant@countyofamherst.com](mailto:jsbryant@countyofamherst.com)

Assistant Zoning Administrator/Planner:  
Theresa Jorgensen  
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Erosion Inspector/Special Projects:  
Grant Massie  
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Administrative Assistant:  
Sheila Austin  
[staustin@countyofamherst.com](mailto:staustin@countyofamherst.com)