



Planning Commission Annual Report 2020

2020's Permit Numbers

In 2020 the Planning and Zoning Division approved the following¹:

- 474 Zoning permits
- 104 Single-family dwelling permits
- 21 Building Addition permits
- 74 Home Occupation permits
- 138 Accessory permits
- 8 Wireless communication facility permits
- 16 Sign permits
- 11 Site Plans

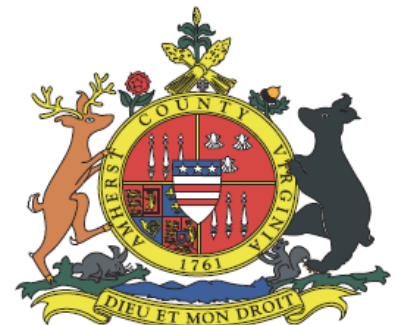
Census 2020

August 6, 2019 – The Amherst County Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 2019-001-R to support the 2020 Census and create a Complete Count Committee to plan and conduct local educational and promotional activities to increase community awareness and participation in the decennial census.

The Amherst County Community Development team spear headed the Complete Count Committee and was able to establish a wide range of engaged, Amherst County citizens to help with the process. These citizens represented a broad cross-section of the community and worked together to ensure everyone was counted.

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¹ For a complete breakdown of 2020's numbers please see Appendix A

Community Development's Citizen Portal

Amherst County's new Citizen and Contractor Community Development Portal is now available for public use. This user-friendly site will help residents save time by allowing them to submit applications at their convenience.

The portal can be used to apply for all County Building and Zoning permits. Users can upload documents such as plats, zoning setbacks and construction drawings. It allows contractors to request inspections online and process their permitting fees, saving citizens a trip into the office. The portal also serves as a research resource with project check lists and answers to commonly asked questions.

The Community Development Department partnered with iWorQ Software to make this resource available to Amherst County citizens. The site can be accessed on computers as well as mobile devices and will provide citizens and contractors with a convenient, one-stop resource for their projects.

Amherst County's Solar Ordinance

Solar generation facilities have been proposed all over the Commonwealth for years, but they have not been permitted in Amherst County. However, over the last few years, the General Assembly made several changes to state code that makes them more useful and beneficial.

During their October 6, 2020 public hearing, the Board of Supervisors discussed and passed a Solar Ordinance allowing solar generating facilities within the County. At the request of the Supervisors, Community Development staff and the County Attorney's Office worked diligently on the ordinance. The proposed ordinance went before the Planning Commission in September of this year.

The new ordinance allows for three types of solar generating facilities; small, agricultural, and utility scale. In most cases, small scale and agricultural solar facilities can produce solar energy for their own use without obtaining special permission from the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. Utility-scale solar facilities will be considered a special exception in most zoning districts and will therefore go before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to ensure that they do not have an unwanted impact on neighboring properties.

Meet the Planning Commission

Member	Phone Number	Email	District
Beverly C. Jones	929-7617	bcjones@countyofamherst.com	District 5
Derin S. Foor	941-7345	dsfoor@countyofamherst.com	District 2
Jim D. Thompson	841-7499	jdthompson@countyofamherst.com	District 3
Michael D. Bryant	929-4525	mdbryant@countyofamherst.com	District 4
Michael K. Martineau	941-7345	mkmartineau@countyofamherst.com	District 1
Catherine L. Gamble	946-5835	clgamble@countyofamherst.com	At-Large
David Pugh (Board Liaison)	509-2038	dwpugh@countyofamherst.com	District 4



Commission Spotlight

A message from the 2020 Planning Commission Chairman, Beverly Jones:

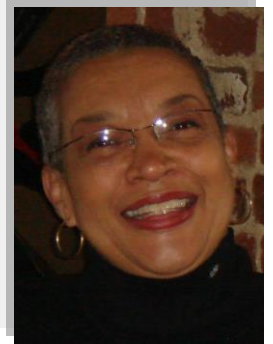
"Amherst County is a small rural community that faces challenges that the Planning Commission must deal with. We strive to encourage growth where businesses can thrive and at the same time protect our rural landscape, provide places for recreation and create tourist attractions that will bring investments into our local economy."

Capitalizing on improving our broadband areas to create economic opportunities was one of our priorities as well as streamlining land development codes and ordinances to encourage businesses to invest in Amherst County."

Jones also serves on the Route 29 Business Beautification Committee and looks forward to the challenges it may bring the group.

"The Route 29 Corridor Beautification Committee has worked tirelessly to improve and beautify the gateway to Amherst County that welcomes individuals as well as new businesses to our community."

We still have a lot more work to do, but with community support, the tasks are achievable."



Special Exceptions, Site Plans & Rezoning Cases

Ten (10) special exceptions were reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2020, and all but one was recommended for approval. A complete list of the 2020 special exceptions can be seen below in Table 1. In addition to the 10 special exception cases, eleven (11) site plans were also approved by the Planning Commission in 2020. Among the site plans that accompanied previously or simultaneously approved special exceptions, was a solar farm proposed by SolAmerica on Union Hill Road, an auto repair garage on Lakeview Drive and a trucking business on N. Amherst Hwy. The other eight approved site plans include the construction of a new Popular Grove Restaurant, a new warehouse for an already existing commercial building, a new industrial building for VA Foam Insulators in the Amherst County Industrial Park, a transfer station at the already existing County landfill, a convenience center on Boxwood Farm Road, and two minor site plans. One of which, was for a new commercial building for Grief Brothers Corporation and the other was an addition to Merrediths' Restaurant in Madison Heights, Va.. Table 2 identifies the eleven approved site plans for 2020. Lastly, the Planning Commission voted on three rezoning cases in 2020 and all were passed. Table 3 provides a complete list of the 2020 rezoning cases.

Table 1 Special Exceptions, 2020

Date	Classification	Use	Zoning District	Status
1/15/2020	Residential	Dog Kennel	A-1, Agricultural Residential	Approved
5/27/2020	Residential	Air b&b/Retreat Destination	A-1, Agricultural Residential	Approved - pending agency approval
6/2/2020	Commercial	Auto Repair Garage	B-2, General Commercial	Approved
7/1/2020	Commercial	Used Car Lot	B-2, General Commercial	Approved
7/14/2020	Commercial	Auto Repair Garage	B-2, General Commercial	Approved - pending agency approval
8/14/2020	Commercial	Trucking Business	A-1, Agricultural Residential	Approved
8/20/2020	Commercial	Dog Kennel	A-1, Agricultural Residential	Approved
9/21/2020	Residential	Air b&b	A-1, Agricultural Residential	Approved
9/25/2020	Commercial	Solar Farm	A-1, Agricultural Residential	Approved - pending agency approval
11/6/2020	Commercial	Convenience Center	P-1, Public Lands	Denied by PC/Postponed

Table 2 Approved Site Plans, 2020

Date	Classification	Description	Zoning District	Status
1/7/2020	Industrial	Additional Industrial Building	M-1, Industrial	Approved
3/11/2020	Commercial	Waste Convenience Center	P-1, Public Lands	Approved
3/11/2020	Commercial	Transfer Station	P-1, Public Lands	Approved
6/8/2020	Commercial	Restaurant	A-1, Agricultural Residential	Approved - pending agency approval
6/22/2020	Commercial	Restaurant Addition	V-1, Village Center	Approved - pending agency approval
7/14/2020	Commercial	Auto Repair Garage	B-2, General Commercial	Approved - pending agency approval
8/13/2020	Commercial	Warehouse Addition	B-2, General Commercial	Approved - pending agency approval
9/25/2020	Commercial	Trucking Business	A-1, Agricultural Residential	Approved
10/6/2020	Industrial	New Industrial Building	M-1, Industrial	Approved
11/6/2020	Industrial	Awning	M-1, Industrial	Approved
11/6/2020	Commercial	Solar Farm	A-1, Agricultural Residential	Approved - pending agency approval

Table 3 Approved Rezoning Cases

Date	Tax Map Number	Use	Rezoning
10/21/2020	51-A-12	Public Lake	A-1, Agricultural Residential to P-1, Public Lands
10/22/2020	42-A-1	Public Trail	A-1, Agricultural Residential to P-1, Public Lands
10/23/2020	49-A-29	Public Lake	A-1, Agricultural Residential to P-1, Public Lands

Central Virginia Training Center Master Plan

Amherst County is working with the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance to launch the Training Center Redevelopment Plan with the aim to redevelop the Central Virginia Training Center.

A website was created to allow the community to follow the planning process and Redevelopment Plan. Creating a Redevelopment Plan is helping guide policy makers, developers, and stake holders in the future. All parties involved are working hard to create a space that will add value to both the Madison Heights and Lynchburg regional communities.

The community has also participated in the redevelopment process by providing feedback to the project team. This feedback will provide the project team with an understanding of what the community hopes to see and assist the planners as they determine the future growth and development of the Training Center site.

**AMHERST
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Broadband Expansion

The County has been awarded additional broadband funding pursuant to the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) in the amount of \$1,370,000.

This grant will fund three different projects in the Gladstone, Boxwood Farm, and Piney River/Temperance areas and bring high speed broadband to underserved portions of eastern Amherst County. Combined, these projects will bring fiber optic broadband access to 466 homes.

The work will be performed by Firefly Fiber Broadband, which was previously awarded a \$500,000 contract for a separate project that will bring broadband access to 251 homes.

In 2021, the Amherst County Planning Commission will meet on the third Thursday of every month at 7 PM at the Amherst County Administration Building.

Madison Heights Master Plan

At the Board of Supervisors' September Planning Workshop which took place on September 30, 2019, Board members requested a Master Plan be created for that area of Madison Heights that lies between the highways 29 and 29B and between SR130 and the James River. This planning began January 30, 2020 at an informational meeting for landowners that hold property surrounding an undeveloped area known as the Tyler tract which is being considered for development. The meeting was conducted by the County Administrator and the Community Development Director.

Geographically, the parcels of land being discussed are located within the County's growth boundaries for public water and public sewer. The parcels are in an area of the County that has good access to public roads, water, sewer, electricity and gas. The County is working with landowners to develop a comprehensive master plan that would consolidate all the parcels together.



Figure 1. Tyler Tract, between the highways 29 and 29B and between SR130 and the James River.

Appendix A



Figure A1. Total Number of Zoning Permits, 2016 – 2020.

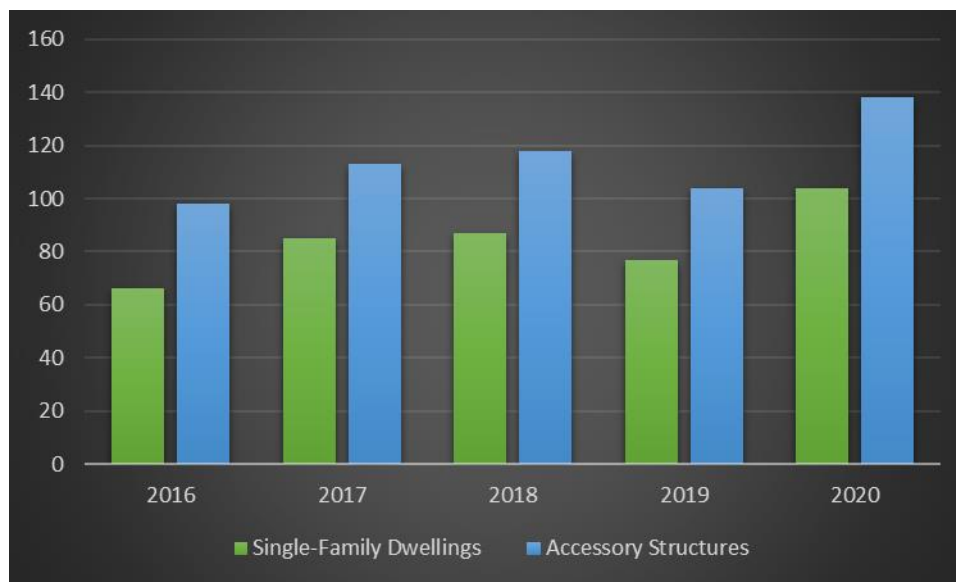


Figure A2. Total Number of Single-Family Dwelling and Accessory Structure Permits, 2016 – 2020.