



according to law in the Friday, February 10, 2017 and Friday, February 17, 2017 editions of THE FARMVILLE HERALD, a newspaper published in the County of Prince Edward.

Chairman Townsend explained the procedure for public hearings.

Mr. Wade Bartlett, County Administrator, stated Prince Edward County received a special use permit application to permit the construction of a retail establishment along with an illuminated freestanding sign located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Prince Edward Highway (US 460) and Rices Depot Road on Tax Map Parcel 41-A-27, owned by Talmadge and Mary Yeatts.

The proposed Dollar General Store will be approximately 7,300 square feet and provide 31 parking spaces and have monument type illuminated signage. This is an allowed use in the A1, Agricultural Conservation District by Special Use Permit.

The store will operate between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., Monday through Sunday, receive one delivery by tractor trailer a week during normal operating hours, and utilize "Night Friendly" LED lighting.

Mr. Bartlett stated petitions were received over the past few days; one in support of the proposal has 292 signatures. He said this is a Special Use process, which enables the Planning Commission to put conditions on the applicant. Stormwater controls will be controlled by the County but will have to be approved through an engineering concept as is required by state regulations. There are also traffic controls; the applicant has a traffic engineering study and VDOT representatives are in attendance to answer any questions.

Chairman Townsend asked if there had been any other contact in addition to the petition with 292 signatures. Mr. Bartlett stated he had not; Mr. Fowler had not advised him of anything further.

Chairman Townsend opened the public hearing.

Kerry Hutcherson, Attorney for the Par 3 Development Group, presented an overview of benefits of the Special Use Permit and proposed Dollar General Store will have for the County and how the use generally conforms to the local Comprehensive Plan. He stated there is strong community support for the store, with approximately 300 citizens living in and around the area of Rice have signed the petition in support of the application. The store will bring jobs and boost the local economy; and the store will help expand the commercial tax base in the County; and this will be a location convenient for citizens, on a major corridor. The Comprehensive Plan designates the town of Rice as an Enterprise Zone and also where a village center would be appropriate.

Michael Lynch, Project Engineer with Engineering Concepts, stated the site development will comprise of 7,200 square foot building, 31 parking spaces; it will have on-site well and septic, stormwater management and will be adhering to the DEQ water quality regulations. He stated night-sky friendly lighting will be utilized, and described the proposed landscaping. Discussion followed on elevation and the architecture of the proposed building.

Joyce Yeatts, Lockett District, expressed her support of the proposed Dollar General. She cited statistics regarding the tax benefits of the commercial industry and employment in the County. She said additional traffic will not be generated as the citizens currently have to drive farther to shop in Farmville.

Kenneth Jackson, Lockett District, stated he is not opposed to growth or business and development, but is opposed to the proposed location due to traffic safety issues. He asked that growth in the Rice area be done correctly and safely.

Bemeché Hicks, Lockett District, asked the location of the proposed Dollar General be changed for safety issues. He said the County needs career jobs and is in support of the Dollar General coming to the county, but there will be an increase in traffic. He said the area is hazardous.

Jim Pohl, Lockett District, stated he feels this store is being set on a very small turf. He stated that during the Board of Zoning Appeals hearing, the parcel was allowed to be divided because of a hardship. He said this now becomes a hardship for the people that live behind and beside this proposed store. He said this could be built anywhere along

this corridor and that this will set a dangerous precedent for this corner. He cited traffic statistics and stated VDOT has been trying to make this a safer area since 2008.

Lori Pohl, Lockett District, expressed her opposition to the Dollar General being built at the beginning of Prince Edward County. She said it presents a poor representation of the County, and brings traffic safety issues and few jobs. She added that it will likely be a metal-shed type building.

Robin Buckalew, Lockett District, expressed her opposition due to safety issues. She said the traffic moves at a high rate of speed and if cars are backed up at all in the turning lane, it would be dangerous. She said this type of store is not reflective of the community or the future vision for Rice.

Shelly Farley, Lockett District, stated her concern is with the Rails to Trails [State Park], adding that customers would access Rices Depot Road to go to the Dollar General. In 2015, there were 550 vehicles that used Rices Depot Road daily according to a VDOT study. In 2016, there were 9,422 pedestrians, bicyclists and horsemen that visited the Rice Depot location of the Rails to Trails. Between 2,020 vehicles utilized the Trail parking lot on Rices Depot Road. The lack of public sidewalk and years of neglect near the trail need attention. She added people will travel through the Village of Rice to avoid Route 460.

Doug Farley, Lockett District, said he has no problem with the Special Use Permit being issued because people should be able to do what they want with their land, and he has no problem with the Dollar General store, but he does have a problem with the location. He said those that live within the vicinity of the proposed location do not want this to be built there due to safety concerns. He stated there are many other locations along the 460 corridor that are more appropriate and less dangerous. He said as a firefighter, he responded to many accidents at the Route 460 and Route 307 interchange. He stated he was told that a VDOT study was not required. He then expressed his concerns regarding people crossing on the Rails to Trails path, and asked why would you put a business in if you don't expect it to impact traffic.

Annette Sameris, Lockett District, stated she is new to Rice, and expressed her concerns about the safety on Route 460 due to the speeds. She added the fire department is located near the access to the Dollar General and is concerned if the fire department must go on a call.

Mr. Lynch stated Par 3 Development appreciates the concerns. He said VDOT publishes a Daily Traffic Volume Estimate once a year and referred to Jurisdiction Report 73, Prince Edward County, Town of Farmville. He presented the statistics ten years ago at this location which showed a reduction over the past ten years. He said the accident reports maintained by VDOT which showed an accident rate in 2013 at Rices Depot Road at 0.00004%. In 2015 there was one accident with 4.74 million trips annually going through Rices Depot Road, which equates to 0.00002% of accidents. On the other side, there were six accident reports from 2010 to 2015; three were weather related, two were multi-vehicle accidents, with no fatalities; that equates to a 0.00004% accident rate. VDOT has guidelines for traffic impact and analysis regulation, and to "trip" a full analysis, there would need to be 5,000 vehicles or more, which is light industrial, 555 single family subdivision, 820 apartments, or a convenience store with gas station with 32 pumps. He said he researched the land use records with residential records and a small church and estimating the addition of a McDonald's store would not trip the TIA. He said the developers are working with VDOT to ensure traffic is off of Rices Depot Road as quickly as possible.

Commissioner Jones questioned the proposed turn lanes. Mr. Lynch said VDOT is allowing them to put in a 100 foot taper on Rices Depot Road as well as a turn lane on Route 460 to match the left turn lane going to Rices Depot Road, with the same geometric configuration, making that turn lane about 200 feet in length.

Commissioner Jones said there was concern that the truck traffic leaving the Dollar General store would turn into the Village of Rice instead of back out to Route 460; he asked if VDOT can install a sign directing truck traffic make a left turn only. Mr. Bartlett said that was discussed during a previous project but he was not sure if VDOT would do that. Discussion followed. Commissioner Jones said he realizes it isn't anticipated to be many trucks but it may help. Mr. Bartlett stated it could be a condition placed on large trucks leaving the site.

Commissioner Peery questioned when the improvements are expected for the Route 307 interchange. Mr. Bartlett stated the construction is scheduled to begin in 2020.

Carrie Shepherd, VDOT, stated nothing is public yet, but the plan is to make westbound traffic on Route 460 split the lane to make a dedicated right onto Route 307 and the left lane to continue on Route 460; coming off Route 307 will have a dedicated right and will be more perpendicular and a stop. She said there will be a public hearing as the schedule progresses. Mr. Bartlett added there is a plan to raise the center for improved sight distance. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Leatherwood questioned if there is a way to reduce the speed limit through that area. Ms. Shepherd stated the Board of Supervisors would have to request a speed limit change, which would initiate a study to look at the geometrics as well as vehicle speed, volume of crashes, among other things.

Discussion followed regarding the appearance of the proposed store.

There being no one wishing to speak, Chairman Townsend closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Mason stated he lived in that area for 19 years and has personally seen more accidents than Mr. Lynch reported on earlier in the meeting. He said he takes back roads to avoid Route 460 due to the safety issues. He said slowing the speed would benefit the area.

Commissioner Prengaman asked if any other sites were considered in the Rice area. Mr. Zach Ivey, Par 3 Development, stated a very intensive search for sites was conducted. He said Dollar General provides an area and a site is to be selected within a mile or two of that strategic area. He said there were multiple sites along the Rice area and this was the one that made the most sense based on accessibility and visibility.

Mr. Lynch stated the accident statistics can be found on the VDOT and DMV web sites. He presented copies of the reports to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Jones asked if the accidents are the ones which involve State Police. Mr. Bartlett stated the reports may not include all of the accidents; he said if the accident is handled locally and not reported to the State, it won't be on VDOT or DMV records. He said there is no one report that will be 100% accurate.

Commissioner Townsend stated the Planning Commission uses the Comprehensive Plan as a guide for development; he said the update includes a map which shows from 2008 to 2011 citing total vehicle crashes from Route 307 to Bush River. The total vehicle crashes during this period on this road is 113 which is the highest number in the county, and the road towards Nottoway, there were 72 total vehicle crashes, which is the second highest stretch of road in the county. He added the study also describes the crashes at Route 460 and Route 307 interchange and the Route 600 and Route 619 crossover, stating "geometric deficiency." He asked for clarification on "geometric deficiency."

Ms. Shepherd stated that could refer to many things, from type and condition to elevation and sight distance. Discussion followed.

Chairman Townsend stated this project checks all the boxes set forth in the Comprehensive Plan except the safety aspect of that intersection. He stated he is always hyper-vigilant about driving through this area.

Commissioner Watson stated the Planning Commission makes recommendations to the Board who in turn makes the decisions. He referenced the location of the Burger King in town in regards to safety; he said all regulatory bodies were used to get that built.

Commissioner Jones stated the trips to the Dollar General store would not all be newly generated trips; some will be people making that trip whether it be to the Dollar General or not. He asked for clarification on the assumption that it would create one car every five minutes.

Mr. Lynch stated the stores have their registers configured to average 15 transactions an hour; some of those transactions are walk-ups, and that would equate to one car every four minutes. He said when VDOT looked at the speed limit, they didn't think it would be dangerous. He stated the facts do not show that this intersection is the location of the accidents reported. If it were, VDOT could deny the proposal. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Jones asked for discussion on possible conditions. He said one should be “no right turns out of the site for truck traffic; a buffer on the neighbors’ side such as Leland Cyprus; a monument sign. Discussion followed regarding a six-foot fence be added to the Cyprus buffer. Discussion followed regarding DEQ and VDOT requirements and inspections.

Commissioner Jones then asked about the materials used for the building, stating the building will likely be metal. Mr. Ivey stated it will be metal; it will have a brick façade on the front with a storefront canopy system with wainscoting, and which can be requested for addition along the sides.

Chairman Townsend inquired about signage on the building. Mr. Ivey stated there will be Dollar General signs facing Route 460 and Rice Depot Road, on the top of the building itself. Discussion followed.

Mr. Hutcherson stated the truck traffic enforcement will have to be by County police; he stated the Dollar General truck drivers can be instructed to turn towards Route 460 and not through the village of Rice.

Chairman Townsend reviewed the diagram of the proposed eastbound right turn lane on Route 600 and the 100-foot taper going into the Dollar General property on the Route 600 side. He said the meeting between VDOT and the developer resulted in the proposal from VDOT to put in a right-hand turn lane on the eastbound side of Route 460 to turn into Rices Depot Road, as opposed to having a right turn lane into the property from Rices Depot Road. Mr. Bartlett stated VDOT will have to make a final approval before they can grant an entrance permit for this operation. Discussion followed. Mr. Bartlett stated the Planning Commission can make it a condition imposed upon the project; VDOT will review and either accept or impose further conditions if required.

Ms. Shepherd stated that in January [2017], there was a meeting for a proposal for a right turn lane on Route 600 into the Dollar General. The distance between the intersection of Route 460 and the entrance of the Dollar General doesn’t meet VDOT access requirements. In order to mitigate that, VDOT suggested that instead of putting a full-blown right turn from Route 600 into Dollar General, VDOT could improve the taper that is currently on Route 460 into a turn lane that mimics the left turn lane in the crossover, and provide a 100 foot taper into the Dollar General. She said she hasn’t received a final submittal or full plan set.

Mr. Ivey stated they cannot submit a full submittal until they receive approval from the Board of Supervisors; they can provide a preliminary. He stated they need to receive approval from DEQ, VDOT, County, and the Health Department; once those are approved, then after the developer pays the assurances, then they can start moving dirt. Approvals normally take 90 days from the DEQ, and 90 days from VDOT, and 45 from the Health Department. He said theoretically it will be three months before they can start moving dirt.

After some discussion, Commissioner Jones made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Leatherwood, to approve recommendation to the Board of Supervisors regarding a request for a Special Use Permit by Par 3 Development Group, LLC to operate a Retail Sales Establishment and have illuminated signage, located on Tax Map 41-A-27, with the following conditions:

- No right hand turn large truck traffic out of the premises
- Buffering of the neighboring residential sides with Leland Cyprus and a six-foot landscaping fence
- Monument sign, backlit with fixed message
- Brick veneer front with wainscoting on front (on Rice Depot Road side)
- Extend the right turn lane on Route 460 eastbound to match the dimensions of the eastbound left turn lane at the intersection as part of the VDOT plan approval
- Add a right turn taper at the commercial entrance at Rices Depot Road as part of the VDOT plan approval
- VDOT shall approve the proposed facility and the applicant will provide all required improvements

The motion failed:

Aye: Robert M. Jones  
Clifford Jack Leatherwood

Nay: Donald Gilliam  
Chris Mason  
John "Jack" W. Peery, Jr.  
John Prengaman  
John Townsend, III  
Cannon Watson

Absent: Preston L. Hunt, Mark Jenkins

Chairman Townsend said the Special Use Permit will go to the Board of Supervisors without a recommendation from the Planning Commission. Mr. Bartlett stated the motion was to approve it with those conditions; the Planning Commissions can look at it again with other conditions or just drop it.

Chairman Townsend said this issue will be taken up at the March meeting of the Board of Supervisors.

**Old Business**

(None)

**New Business**

(None)

Chairman Townsend made a motion and adopted by the following vote:

Aye: Donald Gilliam  
Robert M. Jones  
Clifford Jack Leatherwood  
Chris Mason  
John "Jack" W. Peery, Jr.  
John Prengaman  
John Townsend, III  
Cannon Watson

Nay: (None)

Absent: Preston L. Hunt, Mark Jenkins

the meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

**Next Meeting: March 21, 2017**