

**Albemarle County Planning Commission
Final Minutes February 15, 2022**

The Albemarle County Planning Commission held a public hearing on Tuesday, February 15, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

Members attending were Karen Firehock, Chair; Corey Clayborne, Vice-Chair; Julian Bivins; Fred Missel; Daniel Bailey; Luis Carrazana; and Jennie More.

Members absent: None.

Other officials present were Charles Rapp, Director of Planning; Kevin McDermott; Scott Clark; Andy Herrick, County Attorney's Office; and Carolyn Shaffer, Clerk to the Planning Commission.

Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Ms. Firehock said the meeting was being held pursuant to and in compliance with Ordinance No. 20-A(16), "An Ordinance to Ensure the Continuity of Government During the COVID-19 Disaster." She said opportunities for the public to access and participate in the electronic meeting were posted at www.albemarle.org/community/county-calendar when available.

Ms. Shaffer called the roll.

Ms. Firehock established a quorum.

Other Matters Not Listed on the Agenda from the Public

There were none.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Firehock said there was one item on the agenda—the approval of the minutes from January 18, 2022 and February 1, 2022.

Mr. Clayborne moved to adopt the consent agenda. Mr. Bivins **seconded** the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Public Hearing

SP202100016 CVEC Cash's Corner Substation

Mr. Clark said he was presenting a special use permit request for an existing substation. He said the proposal was to upgrade the substation by slightly expanding the equipment pad and adding equipment for 25 kilovolt distribution. He said the location map shown on the slide was an area on Gordonsville Road in the northeastern portion of the County. He said as shown, the substation was located about 1,800 feet away from Gordonsville Road in the Cash's Corner area. He said this was an existing, nonconforming use; it was a substation that predated the zoning ordinance

requirement for special use permits for these utility facilities. He said it currently converted power from the transmission lines of the site to 12 kilovolts for local distribution. He said there was a use for a gas pipeline station in Louisa County on this same circuit that would need an upgrade to 25 kilovolt distribution in order to cover its improved operation, and this would require some of the additional equipment to this site and within the one-acre square that was this parcel, the pad for equipment would increase by 13,104 square feet to 35,300 square feet. He said this required a special use permit to bring the use into compliance, but there were no parking or entrance changes, so it did not require a new site plan if approved. He said it would be subject to County approval of stormwater plan and a grading plan for the expanded pad.

Mr. Clark showed a view of the site from Gordonsville Road. He said it was about 1,800 feet away from Gordonsville Road and the existing equipment went as tall as 70 feet. He said the new proposed equipment would be about 40 feet, which is lower than what was there now. He showed an aerial image to show what was on the site. He noted that there was a Dominion substation adjacent to this site, but the special use permit only applied to the site highlighted in blue on the screen, parcel 45-C. He said there were also a few small trees on the southwest side of the parcel, which was where the pad would expand. He said the access was a gravel access road that let out to the public road. He showed another aerial image showing the conceptual plan. He said shown in gray was the existing pad, and also shown was the 63-foot expansion for the pad, which included the area where the new equipment due to the step-down from the transmission lines to the 25-kilovolt distribution.

Mr. Clark said he would briefly summarize the impacts of this proposal. He said the character of the existing use would not change and the proposed additions would be lower than the existing equipment, so the visual impact would not be significant. He continued that there would be County stormwater oversight for the impacts of the expansion of the pad. He said since there were basically two one-acre substations there already and this was just an expansion of one of those sites, staff did not feel the expansion would change the character of the surrounding area, which was largely agricultural. He said the electrical distribution was compatible with permitted uses in the district.

Mr. Clark said in summary, the one favorable factor was that the proposed upgrade met the utility's need for upgrading electricity distribution without creating significant new impacts on the rural area. He said staff identified no unfavorable factors. He said that staff recommended approval with one condition, which referred to the layout shown on the conceptual plan he showed earlier. He said he would now take any questions, and said the applicant was ready to answer questions as well during the hearing.

Ms. Firehock asked if anyone had any questions before they heard from the applicant.

Mr. Bivins asked to see the overhead image of the site again. He said that the two pads would basically be the same now. He said it appeared that the CVEC path was a little smaller than the Dominion path, so now they would be the same width. He asked if that was correct.

Mr. Clark said that was correct.

Mr. Bivins said he understood all they were doing with this addition was squaring up the site and the plan. He asked if it was correct that this was for a natural gas company in Louisa.

Mr. Clark said that was what necessitated the upgrade to 25 kilovolt distribution. He said that happened to be the first use that came along first that needed an upgrade to this long-existing distribution system.

Ms. Firehock said she did not see anyone else who had questions, so she asked for the applicant to address the Board.

Mr. Ward introduced himself as Chuck Ward, the manager of engineering services at Central Virginia Electric Co-Op. He said the gas compressor station was an existing station called the "Boswell gas station." He said it was located approximately seven circuit miles from the substation, but from the substation to the site would be around three to four miles. He said there was a set of railroad tracks it would have to cross because it was to the east of the tracks. He said they were upgrading their facility by reinstalling a 1,250-horsepower motor, and the starting of that motor would cause a certain amount of flicker. He said it was similar to a heat pump starting in a house and causing the lights to flicker, but this motor was of a much larger scale, so it could cause more flicker. He said in order to minimize and keep the flicker within the allowable limits, and to keep the noticeable flicker down for the consumers around there, the substation must be upgraded, and part of the upgrade was to convert it to 25 kV. He said that would keep the flickering to the limits required and should be of very little notice to nearby neighbors. He said all of the property that was shown on the maps was currently owned by CVEC, and it was just expanding the fence on their own property, so they did not need to purchase any additional property.

Ms. Firehock asked if that was the conclusion of his comments.

Mr. Ward said yes, and if anyone had any questions, he would be happy to answer them.

Ms. Firehock said she did not see anyone who had questions. She said it was a pretty straightforward application with straightforward comments. She said she would now open the public hearing to members of the public.

There were no speakers, so Ms. Firehock closed the public hearing.

Ms. Firehock asked the Board if there were any comments or if anyone was prepared to make a motion.

Mr. Bivins said as a good neighbor to the county east of them, he was in favor of this, because he would certainly not want Louisa not to get a new business if they said no to this expansion of the particular lot.

Ms. Firehock said she believed they had clients in their own County.

Mr. Clayborne moved the Planning Commission recommend approval of SP202100016 CVEC Cash's Corner Substation with the condition listed in the staff report. The motion was seconded by Mr. Missel and passed unanimously (7-0).

Adjournment

At 9:40 p.m., the Commission adjourned to March 1, 2022, Albemarle County Planning Commission meeting, 6:00 p.m. via electronic meeting.



Charles Rapp, Director of Planning

(Recorded by Carolyn S. Shaffer, Clerk to Planning Commission & Planning Boards; transcribed by Golden Transcription Services)

Approved by Planning Commission
Date: 03/15/2022
Initials: CSS