

**Buckingham County  
Planning Commission  
February 22, 2021**

At a regular meeting of the Buckingham County Planning Commission held on Monday, February 22, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the Peter Francisco meeting room, located within the Buckingham County Administration Complex, the following members were present: John Bickford; James D. Crews; Patrick Bowe; Alice T. Gormus; Steve Dorrier; Ashley Shumaker; Joyce Gooden and Board of Supervisors' representative Danny Allen. Also present were Nicci Edmondston, Zoning Administrator, and E.M. Wright, Jr., County Attorney.

**Re: Call to Order, Quorum Present, Invocation, and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Patrick Bowe called the meeting to order. Joyce Gooden gave the invocation, Alice Gormus led the Pledge of Allegiance and it was said by all who were in attendance. Patrick Bowe certified there was a quorum- eight of eight members were present. The meeting could continue.

**Bowe:** Adoption of the agenda?

**Allen:** So moved.

**Bickford:** Second.

**Supervisor Allen moved, Commissioner Bickford seconded and was unanimously carried by the Commission to approve the agenda.**

**Bowe:** All in favor, raise your right hand, unanimous. Approval of minutes January 11 2021 joint public hearing.

**Bickford:** Moved to approve as presented.

**Shumaker:** Second.

**Bowe:** We have a first and a second. Any discussion? Let's vote. Raise your right hand. unanimous.

**Edmondston:** Chairman Bowe, may I just interrupt, don't forget. Dabney.

**Bowe:** Dabney are you on the line? Would you like to vote on that? The approval of minutes.

**Crews:** Yes.

**Commissioner Bickford moved, Commissioner Shumaker seconded and was unanimously carried by the Commission to approve the minutes as presented.**

**Bowe:** Thank you. Approval of January 25 minutes.

**Allen:** So moved.

**Shumaker:** Second.

**Bowe:** We have a first and a second. All in favor. Dabney?

**Crews:** Yeah.

**Supervisor Allen moved, Commissioner Shumaker seconded and was unanimously carried by the Commission to approve the minutes as presented.**

**Bowe:** Unanimous. Public comment. Want to go ahead and read that?

**Edmondston:** Yes, sir. Mr. Chairman, the planning commission would like to remind all speakers that they have a First Amendment right to speak however, speakers do not have indemnification. If the statements are made with actual or constructive knowledge that they are false, or with reckless disregard for whether they're false. We ask all speakers to keep to what they know to be the truth. And by signing up for comment, you are acknowledging your understanding and agreement with the above? Mr. Chairman, we actually do not have anyone signed up for public comment tonight.

**Bowe:** Thank you. New business.

**Edmondston:** Yes, sir. Tonight the one item of new business that we have is the introduction of case 21SUP282 our landowner is Steven Wicks and he resides at 5532 Summer Crescent, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23462. And our applicant is John M. Wicks at 5350 Cove Garden road in Coveseville, Virginia 22931. The property information consists of tax map 80-40 which contains as a whole property 74.85 acres the site for this business for the SUP request will consist of 1.06 acres. And it's located at 2451 Banton shop road, which is State Route 617. It's currently zoned A1 and the request tonight is to apply for a special use permit to operate a custom woodworking shop as a small business for custom and heirloom furniture. Mr. Wicks is

asking the Planning Commission to hold a public hearing for this request. Once again, the zoning ordinance does not permit custom woodworking shops as a by right permitted use however within an A1 agricultural zoning district custom woodworking shops may be permitted by the Buckingham County Board of Supervisors by a special use permit following recommendation by the Planning Commission in accordance with this ordinance in the code of Virginia. The planning commission may recommend and the Board may impose conditions to ensure protection of the district if the special use permit is approved. Mr. Wicks as indicated in his written narrative that he wishes to open a small self-contained woodworking shop or studio in order to create unique custom and artistic sets of furniture. he anticipates being a one person operating shop not to exceed a three-person operation Mr. Wicks does not expect more than 10 customers and visitors per month for low volume impact to the traffic in the area. Mr. Wicks has no plans to construct housing on the 1.06 acre site for the woodworking shop. I have listed 10 conditions that are a suggestion of things that you may consider. Our landowner and applicant are with us tonight in the audience. I would like to add that Mr. Wicks, John Wicks, who's our applicant does have some slides that he'd like to show that consist of the furniture that he produces and his woodworking shop.

**Bowe:** Do you want to step up Mr. Wicks?

**John Wicks:** Here is a simple dozen or so photos to give a good general idea. Seems to be stuck on a small loop for some reason? Well I can just simply show you I guess through a more manual process. Suffices to say that what I'm aiming to do is to the realm of custom and artistic shall we say is doing entire sets of furniture as to be sold as a whole nothing to be mass produced, usually everything should be, in essence, a one off as in nothing will be really repeated. And so this is an example of one set Shall we set and upon which I've also re upholstered the furniture as well to go along to match a certain theme. And I'm planning on using a combination of domestic woods which Buckingham is quite sufficient with. along with the accents of slight exotic woods such as in this case, you can see with the yellow that is a wood called yellow heart. And some of this joinery as well around here it's a wood called win gate this would be another example of in this case, the beginnings of bedroom set and again using domestic woods and then using exotics and such for the highlights and also showing you this I guess you'd say the builders such doing carving and the like which is just something I find the don't often quite find in most furniture stores or anything else so I'm trying to provide a simple outlet that most places don't really have a full fine furniture. Do you have any questions initially?

**Bickford:** Mr. wicks, do you have specific orders? Or do you just another words what generates your ideas here as far as your work?

**Wicks:** By generating ideas?

**Bickford:** Yeah.

**Wicks:** Usually it is taking for instance, the case of something along the lines of this is I have traveled extensively so this is a combination of made cultures that have been around for instance, a headboard has a combination of mowdy or New Zealand woodworking. I can zoom in here, you can't quite see it along this headboard has a very traditional mowdy version, also the Pacific Northwest with for instance, the posts, you know, which does the such and so, the general in this particular case, is pulling off the central picture here by artist named Jeff Jackson, upon which you have all succeeded in upgrading those lights and everything else to go along with it as well. Does that answer your question?

**Bickford:** Yeah, pretty much I would just say asking for in the future if if you do get approved, how you would someone be able to contact you?

**Bowe:** How do you market?

**Bickford:** Yeah.

**Wicks:** So basically, I would do a few things which is one you are more than welcome to come to the shop itself. And then also I plan on using a lot of social media as well such as Etsy, Instagram, the full bracket Facebook and basically making myself available to pretty much anyone within the country. Well, I would say lower 48 Yeah. upon which they can purchase anything.

**Gooden:** I have a question you mentioned re upholstering. So are you going to be re upholstered furniture there also?

**Wicks:** Not as a main but I have more than easily have the capability of doing so. reason I mentioned reupholstering is because furniture I made can be upholstered as well. The both equipment and ability to make upholstered equipment as well as just fine woodworking. Does that answer your question?

**Gooden:** That does and the furniture designs are whatever you see in the wood?

**Wicks:** I guess you could call that yes it's just you know, I have a vivid imagination sometimes going, to come and go and playing sometimes it's one of the fun parts.

**Dorrier:** I have a question. For your shop. Would you require any special electrical needs as far as three phase or do you operate on single phase?

**Wicks** I've been considering that but I went ahead and have set everything up to be able to work off single phase

**Dorrier:** Okay.

**Wicks:** No, no logical needs that are above and beyond what is normal.

**Dorrier:** I'm wondering though, if you have any large equipment, you know that you may need three phase.

**Wicks:** The equipment I've chosen is typically considered the question of single versus three phase. And I have chosen out equipment that is while large equipment, again function off single phase.

**Gormus;** Mr. Wicks do you make your finish? Do you custom make that because these pieces are absolutely gorgeous.

**Wicks:** Thank you.

**Gormus:** But they're not colors that I have seen.

**Wicks:** So these finishes are actually just clear finishes their primary tung oil with a little bit of poly. And I sometimes use a brand named waterlox, which is very good in that and it doesn't really affect color or anything else. And a lot of these colors are actually the natural colors of the wood. That's kind of the fun part. I have not stained anything that you've seen.

**Gormus:** Okay. Wow.

**Wicks:** Yeah, that's just kind of to give you an idea. And he's example is, which is why I included which is this one here, upon which you can see, you know, green, pink, purple, a full range of colors. I think about, you know, some of these woods is that we can easily preserve that and you don't have to do anything such as stains.

**Shumaker:** You mentioned people coming and to be welcomed to come to your shop, do you envision having a showroom of some sort, or just kind of what's under production at the time?

**Wicks:** What I've more so set up as I have set a corner of my shop aside, in order to stage, but as for a showroom now not at this point in time. Maybe if I'm wildly successful or something, then I might build an auxiliary building for show room. But suffice to say, considering that I'm aiming

to make most of my products available both online. And such is you know, it's just having a main area upon which to display for photo purposes and the like.

**Gormus:** You don't see a need for extensive parking lot?

**Wicks:** Nope honestly, What I've kind of gone ahead and sketched out is just simply something that could fit maybe up to three cars for. Something that is this is meant to be small, and I don't want it to be large.

**Gormus:** Okay, and you don't have big delivery trucks that come are

**Wicks:** No equipment has already been delivered, which was the extent of our delivery. And that was just to the end of the driveway. And that was just moving in some of the larger pieces of equipment. So no, there won't be any delivery trucks beyond the occasional maybe if I buy a larger bulk of wood at a wholesale price then but also within this, I've gone ahead and ordered out a mill and the like so hopefully I can make most of the stuff I need on my own. And as I've kind of made my statement and just trying to make everything self-contained.

**Gormus:** So if I was in another state, and I purchased from you, how would I get that piece?

**Wicks:** I would bring it to you myself.

**Gormus:** Oh, okay. Okay. So you deliver? Okay. So you don't have to worry about big trucks turning around and loving it. Okay, cool.

**Bickford:** If there are no more questions from the commission. I'm going on make a motion to move this forward to public hearing.

**Gormus:** I'd like to second that

**Bowe:** Any discussion? All in favor, raise your right hand. Dabney?

**Crews:** Yes.

**Bowe:** Thank you. unanimous. You will go before them on do we have a date here Nicci?

**Edmondson:** It's actually a public hearing for the Planning Commission on March 22, at 7pm

**Wicks:** Thank you all so much.

**Bickford:** Thank you.

**Commissioner Bickford moved, Commissioner Gormus seconded, and was unanimously carried by the Commission to move SUP-282 on to public hearing.**

**Bowe:** Old business there is none. Reports?

**Edmondson:** In your packet, you have your building permits report for informational purposes. And as far as the zoning administrator report, I do not have anything new to bring up at this time.

**Bowe:** I have one question.

**Edmondson:** Yes, sir.

**Bowe:** In the Curdsville district Energex is building a \$17 million building, what is that all about?

**Edmondson:** That's the solar farm. It just commenced construction six to eight weeks ago.

**Bowe:** Okay. So the one down on 60.

**Edmondson:** That's Buckingham two solar that SUP was approved in 2017. Yes, sir.

**Bowe:** Okay, thank you. Commission matters.

**Bickford:** Mr. Chairman, its my understanding. We've had a few discussions in regards to maybe some modifications to our public speaking time. And it's my understanding from talking to you that Mr. Wright was going to research and give us some possibilities of things that we perhaps could adopt.

**Edmondson:** Mr. Wright I actually brought up with him two to three weeks ago, when this matter was brought to our attention. And apparently there may be more than one avenue as far as I know that the question was to reduce the amount of speaking time allowed, or was it to move the public comment from the beginning of the agenda to the end of the agenda? Mr. Wright.

**Wright:** The only conversation I've had about this topic was a very informal conversation with the planner zoning administrator, I am not aware of that request, and I apologize to you.

**Bowe:** Okay, well, the thought is, anytime that there's 10 or more speakers signed up, or a conglomerate of 10. In other words, six in person two with email and four with telephone. Anytime there's 10 or more, the podium time would be reduced to one minute. Is there any problem with that?

**Wright:** A problem is very bare word. I'm assuming what you're asking me. Is there any legal problem with that?

**Bowe:** Yes.

**Wright:** I don't know the answer to that. It needs to allow enough time for a fair discussion and otherwise, but so as I say, I've not spent any time other than a very informal conversation on when you may be willing to do it at the beginning of the meeting, the end of the meeting, those types of things, I don't have a definitive answer for you. So I would ask for a little leave to do a little bit of work on it and make sure that I give you sound advice.

**Bowe:** Okay. Any of the commission have anything to say about that thought was?

**Bickford:** Well, I'd like to say the intentions, or at least in my thinking is not to squash, public discourse and discussion. It's just to make utilization of the time more efficient. And that's what, you know, I sort of look, I can see a need for that. So you don't... your times more effectively used by discussing the fact. And it may discourage if you cut the time back, I was thinking about this after we discussed that it might encourage more groups to form in other words, they've got five minutes, I believe, is that right? If I recall.

**Gormus:** No, everybody had three,

**Allen:** Unless you're a group.

**Bickford:** Yes, right now but if you're a representative of group you get five minutes, I can see that would be a more efficient way of making use of the time if have a spokesman for a group so they can discuss it, you know, that way they can list it, they got a little bit more time, and they can hit all the points that they want to versus 10 people trying to hit those points and maybe being redundant, because they don't know what the other person is going to say. So that's where my train of thought, and I'm just, that's just my opinions.

**Gooden:** And my thoughts on that would be having done public comments, I come in, I practice my three minutes to get everything in. And to come in and not know whether I would have three minutes or a minute is going cause me some anxiety, because, you know, just depends on who's showing up. And now I've got to edit down something that I've, I usually carefully work on what I am going to say. And having read a package that we had, and I looked at the configurations of people saying the same thing over and over again. You kind of look at it... And so I think keeping it at three minutes is important. And because I don't want someone to come in, I know how I would feel. If I came in and we say well, you got three minutes. No, you got one and I Worked and practiced.

**Edmondson:** Another way to look at this historically with other controversial issues that during times of public hearing or public comment, what has the county done to address a large number of citizens or constituents making those comments have we said in excess of or we anticipate a large volume? And we're going to give 30 days notice at one meeting for the other one, so that people would be prepared? What has typically been done in the past?



**Gormus:** Again, if memory serves correct, for last time, we had a big group it was it was already decided that groups would have three minutes. And individuals three. Somebody please look into that.

**Bowe:** Well, this would probably require a change to our bylaws.

**Gormus:** But I don't personally, I'm kind of like Joyce, I don't feel like you could unpack your thoughts in a minute. And I don't, I don't feel like that, that would be fair. And I understand, you know, the, the one group that gets everybody roused up, and they bring 20 people and all of us get three minutes. You know, I understand that, but I don't feel like it would be fair for the average Joe, to get penalized because of a group that has done that. I think we have to be very careful how we tread on that.

**Gooden:** And I agree with that. Also, because thinking of the group that usually takes a lot of time and had many statements, all they're going to do is reorganize and figure a way around it.

**Gormus:** Yeah, and I think that's why we went with three and three. For the group, and they have visual.

**Gooden:** There'll be some other way to do it. Because in the minutes, there were individual speakers, and then there was a video, but the video contained people who had already spoken.

**Bowe:** Yeah it did.

**Gormus:** That may be where we need to address. You know, if you're a speaker, you have three minutes. If you're a presenter, then that's a whole different category. And I feel like if you do a video, then your presenter.

**Allen:** Yeah, presentations most time is totally different. Yeah. It is no time on it. You just get up and do what you do,

**Gormus:** Right. But if you're going to present, you need to be on the on the docket like Mr. Wicks was.

**Shumaker:** Thinking back to the last meeting, when we had a lot of comments, you know, for the voicemails, we were able to cut them off at three minutes, right. But how do we enforce that with written emails or letters?

**Edmondston:** So the email to look at those guidelines and the agenda, and we'll let you know that we cut it off at 500 words, I believe is what the emails I think it's included here, or it may not be but the three minutes will be stopped after the voicemail is played. And it's the email comments, here they are number two, please limit word count to 500 words.

**Shumaker:** Does that adequate? I mean, roughly reading it

**Edmondston:** As roughly reading it at a normal speed be approximately three minutes.

**Shumaker:** Making reading something in one minute might be pretty difficult.

**Edmondston:** But it's really going to limit anyone's time to pull their thoughts together. Because it takes a few seconds to say Hello, I am ABC from this particular district. And I'm here tonight to speak I mean, that's going to take them anywhere from 10 to 20 seconds.

**Edmondston:** I mean, and how do we determine that 10 is the number I mean? You know, we do want to encourage our citizens to participate in this process.

**Allen:** All right so after 30 minutes. So what do you....

**Gormus:** Well, probably...

**Bowe:** If it were just 30 minutes it wouldn't be a problem. But there's been nights we've set up here for two hours hearing and the same thing over and over and over.

**Allen:** We Maybe it's set a time of an hour of public comments, and then maybe they can come back later on. I don't know. I wouldn't worry about cutting the three minutes more than I would be cutting the time for us say an hour of public comments, and then it's over.

**Bowe:** That could work.

**Allen:** That way, people still get to speak to three minutes. till they get to that hour, and then you go shut down everybody else. Yeah, that's going to be a problem and the issue too. But do you wait until after the meetings gone farther like at the end of the meeting and let them come back down? I don't know what you do. But you don't want to cut anybody off.

**Gormus:** Well, it could be that, that we've moved the business to the front end. And the comments to the back end back that way, people who actually have business are not sitting and listening to the same people talk and talk and talk.

**Allen:** But most of your public comments are for stuff that we're going to be doing so we will be already finished by the time they comment.

**Gormus:** If it has a public comment section for that case, then that is something that they don't need to bring into the public comment, because we have the public comment for that section.

**Allen:** You mean a public hearing.

**Gormus:** Yeah a public hearing.

**Allen:** Then anybody can speak thing, right? We've been having a lot of people just not in Buckingham speaking. For that its okay. Only on public comment, can you keep people in the county, after the public comment it's over.

**Gormus:** Right? Perhaps we can look to that.

\*Inaudible comment from crowd\*

**Bickford:** That's a suggestion with the problem you run into is if you have enough people, as just like Joyce indicated and they practice for three minutes, and they're the last ones to sign up, then they only got a minute. And they have to, you know, change all they had to try to shorten up their talking and hit only the high points. I could see that not being... it's a great suggestion. But I can see the problem with it because if you have enough people, somebody is going to have to only going to have a minute and they prepared for three.

**Gooden:** I think we need to be very careful in our wording to because I'm looking down here we refer to presentation. And this was a video, it was considered a presentation. And so just if we're careful in our wording, and we call it it's not a public comment, it's a presentation. And then I know when people are signing up for public comment, there are people who want to wait to be the last one so they can comment on everybody else's comment. I've seen that happen. So there are a whole lot of games that are game strategies, I'm sorry, that are used when people sign up for public comment too. And we just need to be careful. But I remember the one when we had the hunting, hunting gun owning community coming in, and this place was literally packed. You know, from here out, and everybody wanted to talk.

**Gormus:** And I think we have to be very careful that we don't step on, you know, the amendment rights, right. And, and the, you know, the democracy of our country. It's already being traded on lots of other places. We don't want to be guilty of that. Even after we have to stay you know, later. They already think we don't listen to him. Especially that group. So if someone will look back and make sure that because as I remember the last time this came up, that we addressed the groups for three minutes in the individuals for three also. So if somebody will look back into that, I would appreciate it.

**Edmondston:** I'll do that, Alice.

**Gormus:** Okay. Thank you, Nicci. I appreciate that. And now that Mr. Wright, probably has a better handle on where this discussion is going in more of a formal manner. He and I can get together if it's agreeable.

**Wright:** Specifically, what is it you want to know from me legally?

**Bowe:** Is three minutes cast in stone?

**Wright:** That we can tell you when the time comes after a little work.

**Gormus:** Thank you, Mr. Wright.

**Wright:** Thank you.

**Bickford:** Chairman, if there's no more discussion on that....

**Bowe:** Looking for an adjournment motion.

**Bickford:** So moved.

**Gormus:** Second.

**Bowe:** We have a first and a Second. All in favor, raise your right hand. Dabney are you with us? Dabney? We've got seven out of eight. That's enough. Adjourned.

**Commissioner Bickford moved, Commissioner Gormus seconded, and was unanimously carried by the Commission to adjourn the meeting.**

There being no further business, Chairman Bowe declared the meeting adjourned.

ATTEST:

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Nicci Edmondston  
Zoning Administrator

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Patrick Bowe  
Chairman