

Zoning Notices Mailed to All Scott County Landowners

For approximately four years, the Planning Commission has been working on drafting a zoning ordinance for consideration by the Scott County Board of Supervisors. The Commission has now completed the task and is prepared to proceed with presenting the finished product to the Board of Supervisors. Virginia Code requires any county considering adopting a zoning ordinance to notify (by first class mail) each landowner in the county prior to holding a public hearing. On Friday, April 25, those notices were mailed to Scott County landowners. A public hearing HAS NOT yet been set, but if and when a date for a public hearing is established, a notice will be placed in the local newspaper and on this website. The citizens and landowners of Scott County are invited to attend any public hearing

Zoning FAQ's

The Scott County Planning Commission has prepared the following questions and answers to assist you in understanding zoning ordinances and the many ways that zoning may affect land use within Scott County.

WHAT IS ZONING?

Zoning is a set of laws adopted by a local government. These laws govern how land can be used and the type and placement of buildings on a parcel of land. Zoning is a tool that local governments use to help ensure the orderly development of land.

HOW DOES ZONING WORK?

Zoning laws are comprised of both written text and a series of maps depicting all parcels of land within the County. The zoning text contains the rules that govern the use of land in each district. In each zoning district, some uses will be allowed by right; other uses will be allowed by special exception, or with the approval of the Board of Supervisors. The zoning maps show the locations of different zoning districts within the county (Agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, etc.) When a property owner proposes to construct a building or change how a parcel of land is used, the County reviews the property owner's plans to ensure that they comply with the zoning laws.

WHY IS SCOTT COUNTY CONSIDERING ADOPTING A ZONING ORDINANCE?

Scott County is growing, particularly in its southern portion. New water and sewer lines will further encourage growth in these areas. Zoning will allow the County to better plan for future growth. In addition, without zoning laws, the county has no legal means with which to control controversial and objectionable land uses. Without zoning, for example, land uses such as adult businesses or drug-treatment centers can locate anywhere in the county.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ZONING?

In addition to controlling objectionable land uses and helping the county plan for future growth, zoning also helps to protect property values. With zoning, all property owners know what land uses can locate on adjoining and nearby properties and will thus have some assurances that nearby development will not negatively affect their property values.

DO OTHER SW VIRGINIA COUNTIES HAVE ZONING ORDINANCES?

Over 90% of the counties in Virginia have adopted zoning, including many counties in SW Virginia. Lee, Wise, and Washington Counties all have zoning, as do the towns of Gate City, Dungannon, and Nickelsville in Scott County. The adjacent counties of Sullivan and Hawkins in Tennessee also have zoning.

I LIVE IN A RURAL PART OF THE COUNTY. HOW WILL I BE ABLE TO USE MY PROPERTY?

Rural areas of the county are likely to be zoned to allow agriculture (and related uses) and larger-lot residential development. In addition, other community uses, such as churches and small-scale commercial businesses that meet the needs of nearby residents, are likely to be allowed in rural areas. Ultimately, the Board of Supervisors will decide on allowable uses in each zoning district after receiving public comments and a recommendation from the Planning Commission.

HOW WILL ZONING AFFECT MY TAXES?

Zoning does not have a direct impact on taxes. Taxes on your property are based upon a tax rate established by the Board of Supervisors and your property assessment is based upon the property's fair market value.

CAN I SUBDIVIDE MY LAND AFTER ZONING?

Yes. Land can still be subdivided in communities that adopt zoning. A zoning ordinance may contain minimum lot size standards in some zoning districts. If minimum lot size standards are established, then those standards must be met when land is subdivided.

ONCE MY PROPERTY IS ZONED, IS THE ZONING PERMANENT?

No. Zoning is not permanent. Any property owner has the right to request that the zoning designation on his/her property be changed. The Board of Supervisors has the power to change the zoning text or maps after receiving a recommendation from the Planning Commission and holding a public hearing and receiving public comment.

HOW DO I REQUEST THAT THE ZONING ON MY PROPERTY BE CHANGED?

To request a change in zoning, you must file an application. You will need basic information about your property, such as its size, location, and legal description. The application form will also ask what zoning designation you are requesting, and your intended use of the property.

WHAT IS THE COMMISSION'S ROLE IN ZONING?

The Planning Commission plays an advisory role to the Board of Supervisors. The Commission recommends zoning standards and the location of zoning districts. When a rezoning or special-exemption application is filed, the Commission evaluates the application and makes a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.