

**13. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE TIMING OF
THE CITIZEN COMMENT PERIOD**

As you may recall from your January 3, 2012 organizational meeting, a policy was adopted providing for the receipt of citizen comments at each regular session at the conclusion of the open meeting, but prior to a closed meeting, if any.

Chairman Jones has asked to revisit this policy with consideration given to moving the citizen comment period to the beginning of each meeting.

Accordingly, I've placed it on your agenda for discussion. Excerpts from your January 3, 2012 meeting minutes are attached for reference.

MOTION REQUIRED: If the Board is so inclined, a motion is required to amend the Citizen Comment Period policy.

Supervisor Phillips seconded the motion with it being carried unanimously.

Chairman Jones stated the next item of business under appointments was B. Planning Commission.

Mr. Michael Johnson stated as you may be aware, Supervisor Jones resigned from the Planning Commission on December 8, 2011. The Commission's bylaws provide that one member shall be a member of the governing body. Section 15.2-2212 of the Code of Virginia further provides that the term of the appointee representing the governing body shall be coextensive with his term of office, unless the governing body, at the first regular meeting each year, appoints another.

A motion is required to appoint one member of the governing body to the Planning Commission.

Supervisor Phillips made a motion that Dr. Edwards retain his position as a member of the governing body.

Supervisor Updike seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Chairman Jones called for item C. Board of Zoning Appeals.

Mr. Michael Johnson stated that before we leave item B. Dr. Edwards had indicated that he was prepared to make a nomination from his district – the Jerusalem District.

Supervisor Edwards stated that since he would be moving to the seat that leaves a seat in the Jerusalem District. He would like to nominate a fine young fellow who has roots in the county and is well educated. He would like to nominate Mr. John T. (Jack) Randall to take that seat.

Supervisor Faison seconded the motion with it being carried unanimously.

Chairman Jones stated that the next item of business under appointments was C. Board of Zoning Appeals.

Mr. Michael Johnson stated that Section 15.2-2308 of the Code of Virginia provided that members of the Board of Zoning Appeals shall hold no other public office in the locality except that one member may be a member of the local Planning Commission. Whereas Mr. Updike was appointed to represent the Newsoms District prior to his election as a Supervisor, it will be necessary for him to resign the position and recommend a new appointee to represent the Newsoms District.

A motion is required to recommend an appointee to the Board of Zoning Appeals from the Newsoms District.

Supervisor Updike made a motion to appoint Brian Darden to the Board of Zoning Appeals from the Newsoms District.

Supervisor Edwards seconded the motion with it being carried unanimously.

Chairman Jones stated that at this time we would discuss having a public comment period.

Supervisor Edwards stated that as everybody knows they have a public comment period at the end of the Planning Commission Meetings which give people time to come up and talk concerning any issues they have regarding the county. The people like it and they would like to see it at the Board level too. He wanted to see if we could start that tonight. Nobody can say I didn't get a chance to say anything about what's bothering me. He would like to bring that up and see what the Board thinks about it.

Chairman Jones asked Supervisor Faison what he thought about it.

Supervisor Faison said he hadn't really thought about it, but we have in place already a process where you can request to speak if you have something to speak about. No one has been denied that opportunity. As far as opening it up for anyone to come up and talk, he just doesn't see the necessity.

Supervisor West stated he kind of prefers that there was a time for input from county residents, but with a time limit on it of two or three minutes or some small amount of time so people do have time to express themselves. Some people may develop a thought during the meeting. He would kind of like (and this is contrary to what he just said) people to sign up prior to starting the meeting so you would have a list to work with.

Chairman Jones called on Supervisor Updike.

Supervisor Updike said he was definitely in favor of it. Maybe two minute presentations **at the end of the meeting** would be good. He didn't think it would be necessary to sign up because there may be some information to come up during the meeting that gives someone an idea on something they are for or against. If anyone wants to speak for longer than two minutes, let them sign up through the regular channels.

Chairman Jones called on Supervisor Phillips.

Supervisor Phillips said his idea is changing as they go through this. He agrees. In the past he attended both the Planning Commission and the Board Meeting. He would be in favor of some type of limit, two or three minutes, where we give people an opportunity if something had been **touched on during the meeting** that they wanted to comment on briefly because it could help the Board in forming their decisions. He would therefore be in favor of some opportunity for the citizens to speak.

Chairman Jones said they do have the closed meeting **at the end of the meeting** which would make people have to stay that much longer. We could do it sometime in the middle of the meeting or before the meeting begins. They have the agenda and know what's going on. He would think about before the meeting or somewhere during the meeting because you wouldn't want to make the people wait until after they have a closed meeting because sometimes they are long and sometimes they are short.

Supervisor West said he wanted to come back on a thought. He said he was developing thoughts as we consider this idea as well. Sometimes if you allow someone to comment **at the end** of the meeting or during that point it may be used as a time to chastise. When in fact the person comes to the meeting he should plan prior to it if you have something to say and get your name on that piece of paper saying let me sign up and do this. That way you can still obviously say I didn't like what you did, you made a mistake da, da, da, and da. That's fine; however, when you develop it doing a meeting and people say that was crazy you shouldn't have done that and someone says let me say I agree. We have already gone through the process, we have already spoken, we have already dealt with the issue; and then you get chastised. It just seems counter-productive. He still thinks it's fair to have citizens input. He still thinks it's fair to limit it to no more than three minutes. That is greatest a plenty. He agrees with Chairman Jones at some point to have it as item no 7, 8, 9, or 10 in the middle of the meeting.

Chairman Jones asked if anyone else had a comment on it.

Supervisor Porter said he felt the same way as Chairman Jones. It should be done before the closed meeting. He also felt they should put a strict time limit on it and if they are not done in the time limit they would just be cut off. They would have to understand that.

Supervisor Phillips said again he would agree with what Supervisor Porter said. He said there should be a time limit and it should be done sometime before going into the closed session. He asked do we have to make this an item on the agenda or can you as Chairman simply call for comments so we can just modify it as it develops.

Chairman Jones said he thought they could just do it before the closed meeting. We would strictly have to allow them no more than two or three minutes because the longer we allow them the longer we will have to stay and sometimes they have been here to 12:00 a.m. almost. He is in favor of it.

County Attorney Railey stated that it is the Chairman's prerogative to limit it to any time.

Supervisor Updike stated he thought they should go ahead and set a maximum time limit of two or three minutes and he would prefer to stick to two minutes. He further made it a motion.

Chairman Jones asked if he had a second to the motion.

Supervisor Edwards seconded the motion with it being carried unanimously.

Mr. Michael Johnson said he wanted to make sure he was clear on this. The way he understood it was if someone wanted to speak longer than two minutes they still need to follow the process that we already have in place.

Chairman Jones stated that was correct. They would have to write to Mr. Michael Johnson stating what they wanted to talk about. If they just wanted to comment they could speak for two minutes.

Supervisor Porter said he would like to make a motion to ask Mr. Michael Johnson to investigate and present to us the possibility of replacing our manual agenda with an electronic agenda. He stated he had some discussions with Mr. Michael Johnson and he thinks it is time to look at this. He also thinks that at this time it's probably more economic. He thinks the payback time is probably very short. We are investing money in our systems group so now let's try to make use of it. I think this is one way of the ways we can show we are.

Chairman Jones asked Supervisor Faison if he had a comment.

Supervisor Faison said he didn't know about this.

Chairman Jones called on Supervisor West.

Supervisor West said that is electronic. He asked if they were providing a computer for him. He said he was going to let you in on a secret he doesn't have one.

Supervisor Porter stated that you do understand these books are expensive. He said you would have some kind of electronic device.

Supervisor West said a computer.

Supervisor Porter said it may not be a computer. It may be a tablet.

Supervisor West said close enough. He asked then what do I do with that thing.

Supervisor Porter said you take care of it.

Supervisor West asked who it belongs to.

Supervisor Porter said it belongs to the county but you are responsible for it – you keep it.