

Buckland Overlay Considered

By EDWARD T. HEARN

JM Staff Writer

The effort to preserve historic Buckland got a boost Wednesday when the Prince William Planning Commission agreed to review proposals that would stiffen building regulations within the small village.

In a 7-0 vote, the commission agreed to hold a public hearing Feb. 3 on a county plan to set Buckland's boundaries and apply the toughest zoning controls within it to protect historic buildings.

If approved, the protection plan — called a zoning overlay — would allow the county's Architectural Review Board to pass judgment on new construction or demolition plans in Buckland.

Founded in 1798, Buckland is an old mill town that served as a wagon stop between Alexandria and Warrenton. With about 21 historically important buildings, Buckland remains a link to the county's past — a bond the commission wants to strengthen.

The commission's move came about a month after Buckland was added to the Virginia Landmarks Register by the state's board of Historic Landmarks. Still pending, however, is Buckland's inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, county planner Mavis Stanfield said.

Although a few residents have voiced concern about restriction on their property, most of Buckland's 25 citizens have urged the county to continue the preservation work the state started.

Many Buckland residents appeared at the commission

meeting Wednesday, but left disappointed when the original public hearing had to be canceled because of a procedural foul-up.

During an unofficial hearing, Buckland resident James Toth said the zoning restrictions were worth the inconvenience if they proved to secure Buckland from development.

"We believe that's a small price to pay to preserve the village as a whole," he said.

Under the proposal, the Buckland historic overlay would comprise about 20 acres, a district divided by Lee Highway and Buckland Mill Road. Under the provisions of the overlay, any building or demolition in the zone would require ARB approval.

An applicant denied ARB approval may appeal to the Prince William Board of County Supervisors and ultimately to Prince William Circuit Court. However, county planners expect such a small volume of construction in Buckland that ARB approval could be handled by staff.

Yet, the need to provide protection to Buckland comes as the large Robert Trent Jones golf and residential resort starts going up just east of the historic village.

"The magnitude of the Trent Jones could very possibly place considerable pressure on the Buckland area for more intense development. If part or all of the village is lost, so will a microcosm of the county's heritage," a planning department report to the commission states.

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REFERENCE

Prince William Public Library

Manassas, Va. FILE:BUCKLAND

PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC LIBRARY S.

RELIC/Bull Run Reg Lib Manassas, VA