

VRE commuters won't lose parking area at Leeland Station

BY KATIE THISDELL / THE FREE LANCE-STAR | Posted: Friday, August 16, 2013 3:06 pm

Commuters who use the Leeland Virginia Railway Express station will be able to continue parking in a temporary gravel lot until commercial plans for the nearby subdivision move further along.

Changes to the Leeland Station subdivision approved by the Stafford County Planning Commission Wednesday allow for a new permanent commuter parking lot, to be built by VRE on three nearby acres.

But in the meantime, the county can lease at no charge the gravel lot that sits at Primmer House and Leeland roads.

That was one of the changes made to the south Stafford subdivision's long-term plans. The Planning Commission voted unanimously in favor of the amendments Wednesday, but the Board of Supervisors still has the final say.

K Hovnanian Homes, the current developer of the site, had asked to decrease the total number of residential units by removing some age-restricted duplexes and replacing them with single-family homes.

Included in the application were slight changes to the proffers, the promises from a developer to offset impacts of growth on county services.

Cash payments were increased to a total of \$700,000 from an original \$500,000.

Revised proffers also dedicate three acres of land to be used as a county park and/or for the expansion of the commuter lot. The temporary lot can be used up to six months after a final site plan for any portion of the commercial area is submitted, according to the Planning Commission's authorized changes.

Plans call for a minimum of 45,000 square feet of commercial space on six acres that include the gravel lot.

Previous plans for Leeland Station had called for a total of six acres to be dedicated to the county—three for a library and three for a park or parking lot. The Central Rappahannock Regional Library now says it has no plans to add a building in the area.

In September, VRE riders gained 196 new spots at Leeland Station, thanks to a state-funded \$2.2 million expansion that brought the total number of paved parking spaces to 845.

Leeland Station was rezoned in 1995 to a planned development zoning district and is now partially developed. Alongside the maximum 743 residential units, plans had called for a library, age-restricted housing, commercial sites and three fields.

The application approved by the Planning Commission would decrease the total number of residential units by 34. That would happen by replacing 48 duplex units and 70 congregate care age-restricted units with 64 non-age-restricted single-family homes, and by increasing a section of homes north of the CSX tracks from 34 to 54.

A public hearing was held July 10.

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