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HOUSE BILL NO. 954

Offered January 9, 2008

Prefiled January 8, 2008

A BILL to amend and reenact § 15.2-2303 of the Code of Virginia, relating to conditional zoning; purchase of development rights.

Patrons—Scott, E.T., Athey, Cole, Gilbert, Lingamfelter, Miller, J.H. and Sherwood

Referred to Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 15.2-2303 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 15.2-2303. Conditional zoning in certain localities.

A. A zoning ordinance may include reasonable regulations and provisions for conditional zoning as defined in § 15.2-2201 and for the adoption, in counties, or towns therein which have planning commissions, wherein the urban county executive form of government is in effect, or in a city adjacent to or completely surrounded by such a county, or in a county contiguous to any such county, or in a city adjacent to or completely surrounded by such a contiguous county, or in any town within such contiguous county, and in the counties east of the Chesapeake Bay as a part of an amendment to the zoning map of reasonable conditions, in addition to the regulations provided for the zoning district by the ordinance, when such conditions shall have been proffered in writing, in advance of the public hearing before the governing body required by § 15.2-2285 by the owner of the property which is the subject of the proposed zoning map amendment. Reasonable conditions may include the acceptance of cash proffers for the purchase of development rights to preserve farmland or open space. Reasonable conditions shall not include, however, conditions that impose upon the applicant the requirement to create a property owners' association under Chapter 26 (§ 55-508 et seq.) of Title 55 which includes an express further condition that members of a property owners' association pay an assessment for the maintenance of public facilities owned in fee by a public entity, including open space, parks, schools, fire departments, and other public facilities not otherwise provided for in § 15.2-2241; however, such facilities shall not include sidewalks, special street signs or markers, or special street lighting in public rights-of-way not maintained by the Department of Transportation. The governing body may also accept amended proffers once the public hearing has begun if the amended proffers do not materially affect the overall proposal. Once proffered and accepted as part of an amendment to the zoning ordinance, such conditions shall continue in effect until a subsequent amendment changes the zoning on the property covered by such conditions. However, such conditions shall continue if the subsequent amendment is part of a comprehensive implementation of a new or substantially revised zoning ordinance.

B. In the event proffered conditions include a requirement for the dedication of real property of substantial value, or substantial cash payments for or construction of substantial public improvements, the need for which is not generated solely by the rezoning itself, then no amendment to the zoning map for the property subject to such conditions, nor the conditions themselves, nor any amendments to the text of the zoning ordinance with respect to the zoning district applicable thereto initiated by the governing body, which eliminate, or materially restrict, reduce, or modify the uses, the floor area ratio, or the density of use permitted in the zoning district applicable to such property, shall be effective with respect to such property unless there has been mistake, fraud, or a change in circumstances substantially affecting the public health, safety, or welfare.

C. Any landowner who has prior to July 1, 1990, proffered the dedication of real property of substantial value, or substantial cash payments for or construction of substantial public improvements, the need for which is not generated solely by the rezoning itself, but who has not substantially implemented such proffers prior to July 1, 1990, shall advise the local governing body by certified mail prior to July 1, 1991, that he intends to proceed with the implementation of such proffers. Such notice shall identify the property to be developed, the zoning district, and the proffers applicable thereto. Thereafter, any landowner giving such notice shall have until July 1, 1995, substantially to implement such proffers, or such later time as the governing body may allow. Thereafter, the landowner in good faith shall diligently pursue the completion of the development of the property. Any landowner who complies with the requirements of this subsection shall be entitled to the protection against action initiated by the governing body affecting use, floor area ratio, and density set out in subsection B, unless there has been mistake, fraud, or a change in circumstances substantially affecting the public health, safety, or welfare, but any landowner failing to comply with the requirements of this subdivision shall acquire no rights pursuant to this section.

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59 D. Subsections B and C of this section shall be effective prospectively only, and not retroactively,
60 and shall not apply to any zoning ordinance text amendments which may have been enacted prior to
61 March 10, 1990. Nothing contained herein shall be construed to affect any litigation pending prior to
62 July 1, 1990, or any such litigation nonsuited and thereafter refiled.

63 E. Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect or impair the authority of a governing body to
64 (i) accept proffered conditions which include provisions for timing or phasing of dedications, payments,
65 or improvements; or (ii) accept or impose valid conditions pursuant to provision 3 of § 15.2-2286,
66 provision 5 of § 15.2-2242, or other provision of law.

67 F. In addition to the powers granted by the preceding subsections, a zoning ordinance may include
68 reasonable regulations to implement, in whole or in part, the provisions of §§ 15.2-2296 through
69 15.2-2302.