WEST VIRGINIA CODE CHAPTER 8A ARTICLE 4

WV Legislature

§8A-4-1. Subdivision and land development ordinances authorized.

(a) The governing body of a municipality or a county may regulate subdivisions and land development within its jurisdiction by:

(1) Adopting a comprehensive plan and enacting a subdivision and land development ordinance; or

(2) Establishing a planning commission, enacting a subdivision and land development ordinance, and adopting a comprehensive plan for the area included in the subdivision and land development ordinance within three years of the enactment of the subdivision and land development ordinance.

(b) A municipality may adopt, by reference, the subdivision and land development ordinance of the county in which it is located.

(c) With the prior approval of the county planning commission, a municipality may, by ordinance, designate the county planning commission as the planning commission for the municipality to review and approve subdivision or land development plans and plats.

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§8A-4-2. Contents of subdivision and land development ordinance.

(a) A subdivision and land development ordinance shall include the following provisions:

(1) A minor subdivision or land development process, including criteria, requirements and a definition of minor subdivision;

(2) The authority of the planning commission and its staff to approve a minor subdivision or land development;

(3) A major subdivision or land development process, including criteria and requirements;

(4) The authority of the planning commission to approve a major subdivision or land development;

(5) The standards for setback requirements, lot sizes, streets, sidewalks, walkways, parking, easements, rights-of-way, drainage, utilities, infrastructure, curbs, gutters, street lights, fire hydrants, storm water management and water and wastewater facilities;

(6) Standards for flood-prone or subsidence areas;

(7) A review process for subdivision or land development plans and plats by the planning commission;

(8) An approval process for subdivision or land development plans and plats by the planning commission, including the authority to approve subdivision or land development plans and plats with conditions;

(9) A process to amend final approved subdivision or land development plans and plats;

(10) A requirement that before development of the land is commenced, subdivision and land development plans and plats must be approved by the applicable planning commission, in accordance with the comprehensive plan, if a comprehensive plan has been adopted;

(11) A requirement that after approval of the subdivision or land development plat by the planning commission or by the planning commission staff if approval has been appropriately delegated to staff, and before any construction on the land is commenced, the subdivision and land development plat shall be recorded in the office of the clerk of the county commission where a majority of the land to be developed lies;

(12) A schedule of fees to be charged which are proportioned to the cost of checking and verifying proposed plats;

(13) The process for granting waivers from the minimum standards of the subdivision and land development ordinance;

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(14) Improvement location permit process, including a requirement that a structure or development of land is prohibited without an improvement location permit;

(15) The acceptable methods of payment to cover the cost of the water and sewer service infrastructure, which can include, but are not limited to, bonds, impact fees, escrow fees and proffers;

(16) The process for cooperating and coordinating with other governmental agencies affected by the subdivision and land development and use; and

(17) Penalties for violating the subdivision and land development ordinance.

(b) A subdivision and land development ordinance may include the following provisions:

(1) Establishing a board of subdivision and land development appeals with the same powers, duties and appeals process as set out for the board of zoning appeals under the provisions of article eight of this chapter;

(2) Requirements for green space, common areas, public grounds, walking and cycling paths, recreational trails, parks, playgrounds and recreational areas;

(3) Guidelines for the use of renewable energy systems and energy-conserving building design;

(4) Vested property right, including requirements;

(5) Exemptions of certain types of land development from the subdivision and land development ordinance requirements, including, but not limited to, single-family residential structures and farm structures; and

(6) Any other provisions consistent with the comprehensive plan the governing body considers necessary.

(c) All requirements, for the vesting of property rights contained in an ordinance enacted pursuant to this section that require the performance of any action within a certain time period for any subdivision or land development plan or plat valid under West Virginia law and outstanding as of January 1, 2010, shall be extended until July 1, 2012, or longer as agreed to by the municipality, county commission or planning commission. The provisions of this subsection also apply to any requirement that a use authorized pursuant to a special exception, special use permit, conditional use permit or other agreement or zoning action be terminated or ended by a certain date or within a certain number of years.

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§8A-4-3. Enactment of subdivision and land development ordinance.

(a) Before a governing body enacts a subdivision and land development ordinance, the governing body shall hold at least one public hearing and give public notice.

(b) The public notice of the date, time and place of the public hearing must be published in a local newspaper of general circulation in the area as a Class I legal advertisement, in accordance with the provisions of article three, chapter fifty-nine of this code, at least thirty days prior to the public hearing. The public notice must contain a brief summary of the principal provisions of the proposed subdivision and land development ordinance and a reference to the place or places where copies of the proposed subdivision and land development ordinance may be examined.

(c) After the public hearing, if the governing body makes other than technical amendments to the proposed subdivision and land development ordinance prior to voting on it, the governing body shall hold another public hearing and give public notice. The public notice shall be as provided in subsection (b) of this section, and must contain a brief summary of the amendments.

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§8A-4-4. Filing the subdivision and land development ordinance.

After the enactment of the subdivision and land development ordinance by a governing body, the governing body must file the enacted subdivision and land development ordinance in the office of the clerk of the county commission where the subdivision and land development ordinance applies.

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§8A-4-5. Amendments to the subdivision and land development ordinance.

After the enactment of the subdivision and land development ordinance by the governing body, all amendments to the subdivision and land development ordinance shall be made by the governing body after holding a public hearing with public notice.

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§8A-4-6. Effect of adopted subdivision and land development ordinance.

After enactment of a subdivision and land development ordinance by the governing body, all subsequent subdivisions and land development must be done in accordance with the provisions of the subdivision and land development ordinance.

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§8A-4-7. Validation of prior subdivision and land development ordinance.

All subdivision and land development ordinances, all amendments, supplements and changes to the ordinance, legally adopted under prior acts, and all action taken under the authority of the ordinance, are hereby validated and the ordinance shall continue in effect until amended or repealed by action of the governing body taken under authority of this article. These ordinances shall have the same effect as though previously adopted as a comprehensive plan of land use or parts thereof.

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