

**TOWN OF ROCKY MOUNT
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
JANUARY 10, 2012
6:00 P.M.**

The Planning Commission of the Town of Rocky Mount, Virginia, met at the Rocky Mount Municipal Building on Tuesday, January 10, 2012 at 6:00 p.m., with Madame Chair Janet Stockton presiding.

The following members of Planning Commission were present when the meeting was called to order: Madame Chair Janet Stockton and Vice Chair John Speidel; and Planning Commission Members Bud Blanchard, Derwin Hall and John Tiggie. Let the record show that Planning Commission Members Ina Clements and Jerry Greer were not present.

The following staff members were present: Assistant Town Manager Matthew C. Hankins, Town Planner Patrick Rust and Deputy Clerk Stacey B. Sink.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Madame Chair Stockton asked if there were any additions or corrections to the presented agenda, and being none, entertained a motion.

- Motion was made by Planning Commission Member Tiggie to approve the agenda as presented, with motion on the floor being seconded by Vice Chair Speidel. There being no discussion, let the record show that the motion on the floor passed unanimously by those present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Let the record show there were no draft minutes presented for approval at this time.

PUBLIC HEARING

Let the record show there were no public hearings held at this time.

OLD BUSINESS***(1) Update on Zoning Ordinance Revisions and Comprehensive Plan***

The Assistant Town Manager advised that staff is working to get the Zoning Ordinance revisions complete before work begins on the Comprehensive Plan. The Deputy Clerk will be unavailable to the public for the next couple of weeks as she works to finalize the revisions. The intent is to get copies to the Planning Commission for review in February. The hope is that it will be complete and ready for public hearing in March.

In regards to the Comprehensive Plan, staff met this week and discussed how the work will proceed. Staff will begin concentrating on the Comprehensive Plan as soon as the Zoning Ordinance revisions are complete. The Assistant Town Manager confirmed to Planning Commission Member Hall that the deadline for Comprehensive Plan revisions is this year. The Town Planner has already begun updating maps and analysis on some items in the plan. Staff will be proceeding with a significant rewrite of the entire document.

(2) Update on Lynch Hardware Building

The Assistant Town Manager advised that he would like to share some of the details regarding the Lynch Hardware Building, as well as give Planning Commission the opportunity to ask questions.

The Town bought the Lynch Hardware Building at auction in November for \$235,000 plus a five percent buyer's premium for a total purchase price of \$246,750, with the intent of turning the building into a music venue, and something the Town can use as its signature venue on The Crooked Road. The Town is currently advertising a request for proposals for design and engineering services to assess the condition of the building, and from an architectural standpoint, to design a building that has the right acoustics and spacing to handle a good-sized crowd. The hope is this will be an economic driver to support the restaurants, shopping and lodging establishments in town. The architects and engineers will have a preliminary look at the building on Thursday, with a proposal deadline later in the month. There will be approximately 110 calendar days to get a design in to the Council committee overseeing the project. The Assistant Town Manager confirmed to Madame Chair Stockton that the committee consists of the following members: Council Member Ann Love, Vice Mayor Gregg Walker, and Mayor Angle. The

committee will come up with a design, consider materials, cost and financing, and present it to Town Council to make changes if necessary. The key component to this is the building's historic status which allows the Town to use historic tax credits to pay for the renovation. The only difficulty is that because the Town is a municipality, the project must be front-funded and then the tax credits sold on an open market. It is a brokerage type process. The Town would have to borrow the money and then repay once the tax credits are sold. Staff is also looking for other grant monies to help with the project. The Assistant Town Manager thinks this is a real win for the community. It was purchased at a great price and will be an anchor for the arts and culture district. It will also be a unique opportunity for staff, Planning Commission, and Town Council to work on.

Madame Chair Stockton questioned if musicians will have an opportunity to provide input into this building, with the Assistant Town Manager confirming that he required in the request for proposals that the chosen firm hold community and musician input sessions.

The Assistant Town Manager confirmed to Planning Commission Member Tiggle that the building has just over 8,000 square feet per floor, so approximately 16,000 square feet total.

The Assistant Town Manger also provided a brief history of the building. The building was designed by an architect name Raymond Loewy who is known as the "Father of Industrial Design." Mr. Loewy also designed the building that the O. Winston Link Museum is in. There are some important architectural aspects at play, and the Town will have to see how the winning design firm recommends the space be used.

Vice Chair Speidel asked if there is any question regarding the zoning of the property, with the Assistant Town Manager advising that there is no question, as in the Central Business District performance facilities are considered a use by right. The Assistant Town Manager interprets it as falling under the "indoor theaters and assembly halls" use in the Central Business District, which is a use by right, and it would be up to the Planning Commission to overrule this interpretation.

NEW BUSINESS

(1) Set dates of meetings for calendar year 2012

Let the record show that prior to the meeting, staff provided Planning Commission with a list of proposed meeting dates which took into consideration Planning Commission's regular meeting schedule and potential conflicts with holidays and election days.

Discussion ensued:

- Madame Chair Stockton advised that the only date she had a question about was the July 3rd meeting, which may conflict with the date of the Rotary Independence Festival.
- The Assistant Town Manager advised that Town Council did approve moving its November meeting because it fell on Veterans' Day. He also pointed out that staff has proposed moving Planning Commission's November meeting day from Election Day to the day after Election Day. This should not affect advertising deadlines at all.
- Planning Commission Member Hall questioned if the July 3rd meeting could be moved to July 10th, with the Deputy Clerk advising this could pose a problem if there is a need for public hearing, as the Planning Commission meeting would be after the Town Council meeting.
- The Assistant Town Manager advised that based on an e-mail he received from Kathy Hodges, the Independence Festival is planned for July 3rd.
- Planning Commission Member Hall suggested that the July meeting day be moved to July 2nd, and then it could be rescheduled at a later date if the need for public hearing did not arise.
- Madame Chair Stockton addressed the May 1st meeting, which falls on Election Day, and asked if moving it to the following Wednesday would suit Planning Commission. Planning Commission Member Tiggie asked if the May meeting could be held on May 8th instead of May 2nd, as he and several members of Planning Commission generally work the polls and it is a long day. Madame Chair Stockton clarified that the May 1st meeting should now be moved to May 8th.
- A similar problem exists for the November meeting scheduled for November 6th, which is Election Day. It will need to be moved to November 8th, rather than on November 7th as originally proposed.
- The Deputy Clerk pointed out that the January 2013 meeting will also need to be addressed, as the regularly scheduled meeting of Tuesday, January 1, 2013 will be a holiday. The new proposed meeting date is Tuesday, January 8, 2013.

There being no further discussion, Madame Chair Stockton entertained a motion.

- Motion was made by Vice Chair Speidel to make the changes as presented,

with motion on the floor being seconded by Planning Commission Member Hall. There being no discussion, let the record show that the motion on the floor passed unanimously by those present.

COMMISSIONER CONCERNS

Madame Chair Stockton opened the floor to Planning Commission Member Hall who wished to address the Commission about a transportation issue.

Planning Commission Member Hall advised that it is not a big deal, but he is concerned about stoplights. In the evening traffic goes down, usually around 8:00 p.m., and he inquired if some of the lights could be set to flash, not at the busy intersections like Sheetz, but at the others. Planning Commission Member Tiggle questioned what specific intersections he was suggesting, with Planning Commission Member Hall offering the light at the top of Tanyard at the church, and also the one on Main Street in the new development, as there is plenty of site distance and there is little traffic on East Court Street at 8:00 p.m. The one at the hospital could also be considered.

Planning Commission Member Tiggle questioned why the traffic light at Lowe's always gives a left turn arrow regardless if there is someone waiting to turn or not. The Assistant Town Manager addressed his concern, advising that there is an equipment problem with that light, a camera that has completely disappeared. A new camera was ordered, but the wrong camera was sent after months of being on backorder. The correct camera is now on order. Hopefully it will come in soon and there will be an improvement in the light. With the economy, many of the components are built when they are ordered. They are not kept on the shelf. A similar situation arose with the Lights for Life project when it took 6 months to get needed equipment.

In addressing Planning Commission Member Hall's concerns, the Assistant Town Manager advised that whatever Planning Commission's recommendation is on this issue, he thinks it will need to go to the Streets, Sidewalks, and Sanitation Committee for review and recommendation. Switching the lights to flashing would probably be something that would have to be done manually. There used to be a switch to a line that the E-911 system could flip. However, with the Uptown Revitalization, that line was removed because the Town was told it was not needed anymore. Then, after it was removed the Town discovered it was not the case. Apparently, it was a system designed and installed by Shively Electric. It was not something that was normally used in traffic control, the employees who installed it are no longer with Shively Electric, and no one who works there now is quite sure about how it was originally set up. Therefore,

in the meantime, the Police Department would have to go around and manually switch them all, and then do the reverse in the mornings.

Planning Commission Member Hall questioned if it would impact the new [Lights for Life] system in any way if the Town were to do this, with the Assistant Town Manager advising it would not.

Madame Chair Stockton advised that her only worry would be in the Police Department having to come back the next morning to change it back. However, it is worth exploring.

The Assistant Town Manager noted that engineers are working on figuring out the automated system that was removed in error, but there is no expected fix at this time.

Planning Commission Member Hall asked if traffic counts are available on the intersections, with the Assistant Town Manager advising some but not all are available, and Planning Commission Member Hall noting that this information would be necessary to make an informed recommendation. The Assistant Town Manager advised that this can be studied and provided at a later date. Planning Commission Member Hall and the remainder of the Planning Commission were agreeable to postponing a recommendation until more information was gathered.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:39 p.m., and with no further business to discuss, Madame Chair Stockton entertained a motion to adjourn, with motion being made by Vice Chair Speidel, seconded by Planning Commission Member Tiggle, and carried unanimously by those present.

Janet Stockton, Chair

ATTEST:

Stacey B. Sink, Deputy Clerk

/sbs