

**TOWN OF ROCKY MOUNT
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
DECEMBER 7, 2010
6:00 P.M.**

The Planning Commission of the Town of Rocky Mount, Virginia, met at the Rocky Mount Municipal Building on Tuesday, December 7, 2010 at 6:00 p.m., with Madame Chair Janet Stockton presiding.

The following members of Planning Commission were present: Madame Chair Janet Stockton and Vice Chair John Speidel; Planning Commission Members Bud Blanchard, Ina Clements, Jerry Greer, Derwin Hall, and John Tiggle.

The following staff members were present: Assistant Town Manager Matthew C. Hankins, Town Attorney John Boitinott, 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 Clements to approve the agenda as presented, with motion on the floor being seconded by Planning Commission Member Tiggle. There being no further discussion, let the record show that the motion on the floor passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Prior to the meeting, the Planning Commission received copies of the following minutes for review and consideration of approval:

- October 7, 2010 – Regular Meeting Minutes
- November 3, 2010 – Regular Meeting Minutes

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

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

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER

Madame Chair Stockton asked the Assistant Town Manager to introduce the newest member of the Town of Rocky Mount Planning Commission.

The Assistant Town Manager advised that Mr. Bud Blanchard was appointed by Town Council at its November 18, 2010 annual retreat to fill the unexpired term of Bobby Cundiff, which ends June 30, 2013. He then opened the floor to Planning Commission Member Blanchard for comment.

Planning Commission Member Blanchard advised that he appreciates the opportunity to serve the Town, noting that he moved here in 1982 after leaving the Army. His wife is from Rocky Mount. She was a Laprade, and they live in the house that her dad built in 1950. He has a sincere interest in the Town. By trade he is a professional electrical engineer and he works for ITT. He has been there for ten years. Prior to that, he worked in contracting and with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and prior to that was in the U.S. Marine Corps and Vietnam. He has two children, three grandchildren and one great-grandson. He offered to answer any questions that Planning Commission might have.

Madame Chair Stockton welcomed Mr. Blanchard to the Planning Commission and advised that if any Planning Commission members could be of assistance to please let them know.

PUBLIC HEARING

Madame Chair Stockton recessed the meeting to hold the following public hearing:

- (1) Establishment of an Arts & Culture District in the Town of Rocky Mount as permitted in Virginia Code § 15.2-1129.1.***

Madame Chair Stockton noted that this is the public's opportunity to comment on establishment of an Arts & Culture District as permitted in Virginia Code §

15.2-1129.1. The goal in the creation of such a district is the establishment of a permanent zone in which broadly defined arts and culture businesses may located and receive incentives which help new businesses survive until they build their clientele.

The Assistant Town Manager offered the following staff summary:

- The draft ordinance presented tonight is the height of about one year of conversations that staff and Planning Commission has had. It also includes some feedback from the Town Attorney and from Town Council members. The draft presented was prepared by the Town Attorney, based on a draft the Assistant Town Manager prepared using ordinances of other towns and cities. The draft ordinance presented tonight will create the arts and culture district. Town Council will have the opportunity to create the district after its public hearing next week, and if this is accepted and approved, then staff will take an incentives package to Town Council and ask for approval on that as well. What is set forth here tonight is straight forward. As far as the location of the district, it is all parcels that border on South Main Street starting in front of the Historical Society, going north all the way to the Angle Bridge, coming back down to Diamond Avenue and Maynor Street, and back around to the Post Office, up the hill to Floyd Avenue and to the hospital. All of the parcels contained in this area, primarily within the Central Business District (CBD), are in the Arts & Culture District.

Madame Chair Stockton asked for any comments from Planning Commission Members. For the record, she also asked for comments from the audience, noting that there was no one in the audience to speak.

Discussion ensued:

- Vice Chair Speidel asked about the incentives, with the Assistant Town Manager advising that once the district is approved, staff will ask Town Council to consider a package of incentives. This package will be largely based on discussions staff has had with Planning Commission. The incentives package was not included in this particular ordinance so that there will be more flexibility in changing the incentives if need be.
- Planning Commission Member Clements asked if there had been any feedback from the public, noting that she saw the advertisement in the paper, and there is no one in the audience. The Assistant Town Manager advised that the only feedback he has received is from the businesses who say they want something “up and running and off the ground” so they can take advantage of it. The Grainery recently opened, and the Artisan Center

opened a couple of week before that. John Schopp is going to be reopening soon at Edible Vibe. The Crooked Stitch is up and running. There are a number of businesses that can take advantage of this once it is put in place.

- Planning Commission Member Greer state that he thinks this is a win-win for downtown, with other Planning Commission members agreeing.
 - Madame Chair Stockton stated that she is excited about what downtown is starting to look like.
- Motion was made by Planning Commission Member Greer that Planning Commission recommends to Town Council the approval of the Arts & Culture District as presented, with motion on the floor being seconded by Vice Chair Speidel. There being no further discussion, a roll call vote was taken, with all members voting in favor of the motion on the floor.

OLD BUSINESS

(1) Planner Search Update

The Assistant Town Manager advised the Planning Commission that staff has advertised for a planner with a deadline of Friday, December 10, 2010. As of last week, there were five applications received; however, he expects to receive twelve to fifteen. If a suitable candidate is not found, then staff will re-advertise, but the hope is that this will not be necessary. The position is open until filled.

NEW BUSINESS

(1) Update on Board of Zoning Appeals Action of December 2, 2010

The Assistant Town Manager noted that the Board of Zoning Appeals met last Thursday, and their public hearing was for Mike and Betty Mills who own 55 Taliaferro Street. This is the property that is directly adjacent to the hospital, and is separated from the hospital parking lot by a brick wall. They want to build a 20-foot by 20-foot carport which will extend out from the house and will encroach on the side yard setback requirement. The Board of Zoning Appeals did grant the variance to allow them to build the carport and to come within about three and a half feet of the wall. There were no comments or questions from Planning Commission members.

(2) Review and Consideration of Approval of 2011 Meeting Calendar

The Assistant Town Manager advised that staff has prepared the meeting and advertisement calendar for 2011, noting that staff does this ahead of time so that meetings and filing deadlines can be advertised at the beginning of the year. Only one meeting date was moved, and this was the November meeting which is traditionally moved because of the election falling on that Tuesday. However, it was noted that the election will actually be on November 8, 2011 and there is no need to move the meeting date of November 1, 2011.

- Motion was made by Planning Commission Member Hall to approved the calendar with the noted correction regarding the November meeting, with motion being seconded by Planning Commission Member Greer. There being no further discussion, let the record show that the motion on the floor passed unanimously.

(3) Planning Commission Comments Regarding Annual Report

The Assistant Town Manager advised that he wanted to give Planning Commission an opportunity to comment regarding the Annual Report, noting that last year everyone seemed pleased with the format which was a four-page document that detailed what the Commission has done throughout the year. He plans to use the same format this year and asked for Planning Commission to offer any comments regarding the report or their accomplishments this year.

COMMISSIONER CONCERNS

Madame Chair Stockton questioned when the Uptown street paving will be complete, with the Assistant Town Manager jokingly advising that if he could find his "magic eight ball" he would tell her. He advised that right now it is too cold for the contractor to do anything. Concrete cannot be poured under 35 degrees, paving cannot be done under 42 degrees. Right now, the estimated completion time is in the spring.

Planning Commission Member Greer questioned how much longer was left on the contract, with the Assistant Town Manager advising that right now staff is trying to determine the number of days that are owed the contractor due to weather and utility stoppages. The contract was supposed to end last Sunday, but they are owed some days, and he expects to have the actual date by the time he updates Town

Council next week.

Planning Commission Member Clements questioned the status of the Depot noting that the sign on the door has been removed. The Assistant Town Manager advised that the sign was removed by someone using the facility and not by Town staff. There are no new developments with the Depot. Planning Commission Member Hall questioned when the contract runs out regarding the grant and having to use the Depot for a specific purpose, with the Assistant Town Manager advising that the current deadline is May. Planning Commission Member Greer questioned if the Town is still under contract with the Chamber of Commerce, with the Assistant Town Manager advising that the Town is trying to give the Chamber the opportunity to reform on the Depot. He is not sure where the Chamber stands on this.

The Assistant Town Manager updated the Commission on the status of the Christmas Parade, noting that it is scheduled for the upcoming Sunday.

Planning Commission Member Blanchard addressed the Uptown street issue again, questioning if it can be cleaned up some. He noted that he goes through the area twice a day and having been in construction he understands the work, but it looks like a disaster through there. The Assistant Town Manager noted that the Town's inspector tells the contractor that there are specific areas that need to be cleaned up, but due to the traffic and the weather, it does not stay clean very long.

Madame Chair Stockton noted that there are some good articles in the Planning Commissioner's Journal, and she particularly liked the article about what planners wish their planning commissioners knew.

The Assistant Town Manager gave a brief synopsis of new business activity in the Town and there was general discussion regarding the success of the Come Home to a Franklin County Christmas event which was held the previous weekend.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:29 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 Clements, and carried unanimously.

Janet Stockton, Chair

ATTEST:

Stacey B. Sink, Deputy Clerk

/sbs

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