

**TOWN OF ROCKY MOUNT
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
MARCH 1, 2011
6:00 P.M.**

The Planning Commission of the Town of Rocky Mount, Virginia, met at the Rocky Mount Municipal Building on Tuesday, March 1, 2011 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, Derwin Hall and John Tiggle. Let the record show that Planning Commission Member Jerry Greer was not present.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

- February 1, 2011 – 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 Clements to approve the February 1, 2011 minutes as presented, with motion on the floor being seconded by Planning Commission Member Tiggle. There being no discussion, let the record show that the motion on the floor passed unanimously by those present.

PUBLIC HEARING

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

OLD BUSINESS***(1) Planner Search Update***

The Assistant Town Manager advised the Commission that the deadline for applications to be submitted for the planner position was Friday before last, and he expected to receive another ten applications. However, Human Resources brought over 38 new applications from the second round. He is confident that the Town will find a new planner from this group. He has read through some of the resumes and is impressed by the depth of education and experience of some of the applicants. There are some experienced, mid-career planners interested in the job. He anticipates that he will do interviews around the third week of March, and he will probably interview five or six. The difference with this round of applicants came with the advertising. This time, the position was advertised on the state planning list-serve, and with other organizations such as the Virginia Municipal League, in addition to the newspaper venues. It was also advertised in the Lynchburg News Advance, and this seemed to really widen the depth of the applicant pool.

(2) Annual Report Review

The Assistant Town Manager advised that Planning Commission is required to give an annual report to Town Council, and he has prepared a draft report outlining some of the highlights of 2010, along with some upcoming planning projects for 2011 and the attendance record for the year. The report is straight-forward, but if Planning Commission desires any changes, he will be glad to incorporate any recommendations. If Planning Commission is satisfied with the report, then he will produce final copies and make them available to Town Council and to the public.

Madame Chair Stockton advised that she wishes to take the report home to read it, and will get back with him in a few days.

Planning Commission Member Clements advised that she thinks the report is well done.

The Assistant Town Manager noted that he and the Deputy Clerk have discussed the need for a group Planning Commission picture, and it is a staff recommendation that once reappointments are completed, a group picture be scheduled for July. It was the consensus of Planning Commission that the report was well-written. Madame Chair Stockton advised that she had no problem with Planning Commission voting to approve the report tonight, and she would read it later in the

evening and address any comments she may have to the Assistant Town Manager via e-mail, though she expects there will be no need for changes.

- Motion was made by Planning Commission Member Clements to approve the 2010 Planning Commission Annual Report and deliver it to Town Council, 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 by those present.

(3) “Blue Book” Review

The Assistant Town Manager advised that staff has been working on this project for at least a year now, trying to get the zoning ordinance to where staff is happy with the formatting and is sure that everything is up to date, as well as some editorial changes, like misspelled words, grammar, and punctuation changes. There will be some substantive changes, such as removing the numbers of definitions, and other things that will make the zoning ordinance friendlier and easier to read, and easier to update when the occasion is required. The other major change that will come out of this is that staff will never again send Planning Commission updated pages and ask members to put them in the “blue book”. The books will be numbered, and staff will recall them whenever there is change to make the changes, so that everyone is working from the same book, and there is a consistent reference available. Staff anticipates that it will probably take three to four hours to go over everything, and this will probably be spread out over two months. The hope is that the review will be started in April and approved in May or June. Staff will ask that Planning Commission recommend a re-codification and that Town Council re-codifies the zoning ordinance so that all of the changes and updates are taken into account. This re-codification is on the recommendation of the Town Attorney.

Vice Chair Speidel questioned if the sections of the ordinance will be organized together as well. The Assistant Town Manager advised that he would like to change the sections and will renumber the sections, grouping them together in a more orderly fashion, if it is Planning Commission’s direction to do so. Planning Commission Member Hall, and Vice Chair Speidel advised that this only seems logical. The Assistant Town Manager advised he will check with the Town Attorney to make sure this will pose no problems.

NEW BUSINESS

(1) Discussion regarding gasoline retail as an appropriate use by right in the Central Business District (CBD)

The Assistant Town Manager advised that a Planning Commission member asked that this topic be discussed, and his interpretation of the zoning ordinance is that gasoline service stations are considered gasoline retail and this is a use by right in the CBD. The Planning Commission member asked if this is an appropriate use, as there is only one active gasoline retail operation in the CBD, being Main Street Amoco. Tuttle's Exxon no longer does gasoline retail. This is Planning Commission's opportunity to discuss if it is appropriate to continue that use or if CBD is not appropriate for gasoline service stations. This discussion would not apply to regulating current uses, but in the future if someone wishes to open a gasoline retail store. If Planning Commission feels that this is not appropriate, then it would require a public hearing along with a recommendation to Town Council, that it be removed from the code as a use by right.

Vice Chair Speidel noted that it could also be changed to a use by special exception. He also noted that the Commission must think about the future of the CBD as it expands.

Planning Commission Member Hall questioned how many of these establishments have closed, noting that most of them seem to have closed up over the years. It is hard to be successful just selling gasoline. It must be in combination with something else.

The Assistant Town Manager noted that this is not a question that must be answered tonight.

Planning Commission Member Hall advised that Planning Commission will have to think about what it wants the CBD to look like.

Vice Chair Speidel advised that he likes the idea of making it a use by special exception so that applicants will have to come before Planning Commission and Town Council.

Planning Commission Member Hall advised that this is something that is good and needed in the right place, but if it is married with a convenience store, it is a high traffic business, and there are places where this works and does not work.

Madame Chair Stockton asked that the discussion be brought back, with Planning

Commission Member Hall agreeing that it would be interesting to see what the citizens think about the issue.

COMMISSIONER CONCERNS

Several Planning Commission members expressed concern over the condition of the Uptown roads, and the Assistant Town Manager gave a brief synopsis of how the work is progressing on the Uptown Revitalization Project.

The Assistant Town Manager advised the Commission that the Board of Zoning Appeals will meet on Thursday, March 3 at 6:00 p.m. to consider a variance request in regards to a house that burned down at 100 Pendleton on January 14. The owner is asking for a variance to be allowed to rebuild in roughly the same location.

The Assistant Town Manager confirmed to Planning Commission Member Clements that pending development on the lot next to Sheets has not progressed. He also added that he is expecting building permits to be pulled soon in reference to the first houses at the Oaks at Rakes Tavern development.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:34 p.m., and with no further business to discuss, Madame Chair Stockton entertained a motion to adjourn, with motion being made by Planning Commission Member Clements, seconded by Planning Commission Member Tiggie, and carried unanimously by those present.

Janet Stockton, Chair

ATTEST:

Stacey B. Sink, Deputy Clerk

/sbs

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