

**PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
MAY 5, 2009
6:00 P.M.**

The Planning Commission of the Town of Rocky Mount, Virginia met at the Rocky Mount Municipal Building on Tuesday, May 5, 2009, 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 Ina Clements, Derwin Hall, and John Tiggie. Staff Members present included: Assistant Town Manager and Community Development Director Matthew C. Hankins, Town Attorney John Boitnott, Finance Director Linda Woody, and Deputy Clerk Stacey B. Sink.

Let the record show that Planning Commission Member Milton Arrington was not present for the meeting due to illness. Also, let the record show that Planning Commission Member Jerry W. Greer, Sr. was not present when the meeting was called to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- Motion was made by Planning Commission Member Clements to accept the agenda 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 by those present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Let the record show that prior to the meeting, the Planning Commission received the following minutes for review and consideration of approval.

- March 3, 2009 – Regular Planning Commission Meeting
- Motion was made by Planning Commission Member Tiggie to approve the minutes as presented, with the motion on the floor being seconded by Planning Commission Member Clements. There being no further discussion, let the record show that the motion on the floor passed unanimously by those present.

PUBLIC HEARING

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

A. Town of Rocky Mount Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for Fiscal Years 2010 - 2014

After being duly advertised, staff presented the FY 2010-2014 CIP to Planning Commission for review and consideration of approval.

The Assistant Town Manager advised the Commission that the Finance Director was available tonight to answer any questions regarding the CIP, further advising that with no budgeted capital expenditures for the upcoming year, there is not a lot to talk about.

Discussion ensued between the Commission, the Assistant Town Manager and the Finance Director, concerning the following points:

- The “12 frozen valves” that are mentioned on page 86 near the bottom refer to valves in the plant that haven’t been used for awhile.
- The Town put in for some stimulus money and all of the state money has not been awarded yet. However, there is a slim chance that the Town will receive funding. On the day the Assistant Town Manager entered the Town projects into the database, there would be 250 additional projects in the database by the time, one Town project could be entered. Transportation requests were the highest, totaling \$192 billion, with only \$1.9 billion allocated in the stimulus package for transportation. The Town asked for help replacing the Pigg River Bridge, which has been on the 6-year plan for 20 years now. The state has no intention of doing anything about the bridge until 2018.
- The item labeled “Northeast Park Playground Development” refers to a part of the Franklin Heights area, and was part of the annexation agreement, which required the establishment of a park or a park-like setting. This is not a pressing need for the Town because many people in the area do not want a park.

(Let the record show that Planning Commission Member Greer arrived at the meeting at 6:12 p.m.)

- The item labeled “East Court Street Retaining Walls” refers to replacement of the retaining wall across from the Virgil Goode Building. The former Town Manager, Keith Holland, had previously secured an engineering study which indicated that the slope and weight of the soil may push through the wall.

There being no further discussion by Planning Commission, Madame Chair Stockton opened the floor to anyone from the public wishing to speak in regards to the proposed CIP. Let the record show that no one came forward.

Madame Chair Stockton reconvened the meeting back into regular session and entertained a motion.

- Motion was made by Vice Chair Speidel to recommend to Town Council the approval of the proposed Capital Improvement Plan for FY 2010-2014, with motion on the floor being seconded by Planning Commission Member Hall. There being no further discussion, let the record show that the motion on the floor passed unanimously by those present.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

A. Old Business

The Assistant Town Manager opened the floor to questions regarding any old business items. There were no questions from Planning Commission.

In regards to the traffic situation at the Angle Bridge, the Assistant Town Manager advised that the Town has secured the services of Richardson and Wayland, and they have updated the equipment at this light and upgraded the way the traffic moves. He asked that Planning Commission pay attention to this traffic light in their daily travels and provide feedback to him on traffic flow. The problem with the leading green has been corrected and there should be a left arrow to turn onto Franklin Street from North Main.

B. New Business

1) Parks and Trails Development Update

The Assistant Town Manager addressed the Commission regarding the following park improvements that are in development with the Town.

- In regards to the Pigg River Heritage Trail, Synthia Waymack with the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation will be coming to Rocky Mount on May 20 to award a grant, which will allow the first part of the trail to proceed. The grant will provide \$125,000 of state money with a 20% match from the Town. LMW has been retained to do the design work.
- At Celeste Park, the Public Works Department has replaced the old timber bridge with a bridge that is safely crossable for equipment. Over the next month, Public Works will be installing a parking area, which should accommodate about 12 vehicles. Then it is the Town's hope that

some volunteer groups will help to develop some trails so that the community can use the park. There have been recent memorial gifts to the park, with approximately \$3,000 donated with the passing of Keister Greer. Planning Commission Member Greer stated that a campaign to solicit funds from citizens for development of the park would also be a good idea. Volunteer groups can be coordinated through Public Works or Community Development, areas can be marked where trails need to be cleared. A master plan has already been developed.

- In regards to Gilley's Park, last year the Town received a donation from a member of the Glasgow family in the amount of \$5,000 to make improvements to the park. Another family member is willing to donate additional funds as well. The Town and the County of Franklin are working together to develop a picnic shelter or other improvement at the park, and may include restrooms. This work will be done this summer.
- In regards to the proposed amphitheater at Mary Elizabeth Park, today was the first meeting of a series of meetings to discuss the amphitheater. The first meeting was by invitation, but the remainder of the meetings will be open for public input. Attendees suggested that the design of the amphitheater should tie into the economic development efforts of the Uptown and Downtown Revitalization projects and should show off the musical heritage of Franklin County and the surrounding areas, perhaps with a Crooked Road tie-in.

2) Request of Randy Jones

The Assistant Town Manager informed the Commission that two weeks ago he received a call from Randy Jones, who owns the old Kroger shopping center across from the hospital. Mr. Jones wants to improve his sign and is concerned about the square footage and sign height requirements. He has spaces for four in the facility and one space is vacant. He is considering redoing the space allow for more businesses. The Assistant Town Manager would like clarification from Planning Commission regarding his request.

In his interpretation of the ordinance, the maximum total height of the sign can be 8 feet with a maximum square footage of 60 square feet. It was the consensus of Planning Commission that his interpretation was correct.

Planning Commission Member Hall stated that over the years, the signs in the area have become more conforming to the ordinance.

The Assistant Town Manager confirmed with Planning Commission that Mr. Jones options would be a new freestanding monument style sign of 8 feet or less, or refacing his old sign, or requesting a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals.

3) Staff Direction for Updating the Comprehensive Plan

The Assistant Town Manager advised the Planning Commission that the only thing he dreads more than working on the Comprehensive Plan this year is waiting for two years when there will really be a crunch. There are two options available for updating the Plan. The first would be to do minor to moderate edits to the entire document to reflect changes made since 2007. The second option would be to do more extensive editing to certain sections of the document that are more likely to change over shorter periods of time. Staff suggests that if the second method is chosen, the chapters most in need of updating are:

- Economic Development – reflecting changes to industrial development property
- Community Facilities & Services – showing new Town and County Facilities.
- Housing - demonstrating completion of grants and providing direction for next areas of study
- Transportation – directing efforts toward updated council objectives
- Supporting Documents – primarily maps and tables which show up-to-date information

It was the consensus of Planning Commission that second option would be best.

The Assistant Town Manager added that this would be done through regular Planning Commission meetings. This will be a periodic update with a separate segment being edited each time. Once each segment is approved, the five-year clock will start over. He will set an order for the topics and will probably schedule economic development for last as it will be more tricky.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS' CONCERNS

Madame Chair Stockton opened the floor to any Commissioner's concerns.

It was noted that Planning Commission Member Arrington is not doing well, and all were asked to keep him in their thoughts and prayers.

Planning Commission Member Greer questioned if it would be possible to have the Town's GIS Technician prepare a list of empty buildings in the downtown area. The Assistant Town Manager advised that the Community Partnership for Revitalization can help with this as they have done something similar in the past.

Planning Commission Member Greer has had three complaints regarding the paper hanging down in the window of the new Bayou Café location. He would like for this to be corrected. Staff so noted.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to discuss, motion was made by Planning Commission Member Greer to adjourn at 6:47 p.m., seconded by Planning Commission Member Clements, and carried unanimously by those present.

Janet Stockton, Chair

ATTEST:

Stacey B. Sink, Deputy Clerk

/sbs