

**PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
JUNE 3, 2009  
6:00 P.M.**

The Planning Commission of the Town of Rocky Mount, Virginia met at the Rocky Mount Municipal Building on Tuesday, June 3, 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 Tiggle. Staff Members present included: Assistant Town Manager & Community Development Director Matthew C. Hankins and Deputy Clerk Stacey B. Sink.

Let the record show that Planning Commission Member Jerry W. Greer, Sr. was not present for the meeting.

Also, let the record show that Planning Commission Member A. Milton Arrington passed away on May 9, 2009.

**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 Planning Commission Member Tiggle. There being no further discussion, let the record show that the motion on the floor passed unanimously by those present.

**MOMENT OF SILENCE HONORING THE LATE MILTON ARRINGTON**

Madame Chair Stockton noted that Milton Arrington had served on the Planning Commission for approximately seven years. He was an asset to the Commission and he was very conscientious. The thing she will remember most about him is that he didn't forget anything. She honored his life and service with a moment of silence.

**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.

- April 7, 2009 – Regular Planning Commission Meeting
- May 5, 2009 – Regular Planning Commission Meeting
  
- Motion was made by Planning Commission Member Tiggie to approve the April 7, 2009 minutes as presented, with the 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.
  
- Motion was made by Planning Commission Member Clements to approve the May 5, 2009 minutes as presented, with motion on the floor being seconded by Planning Commission Member Tiggie. 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. Four Star Rent A Car Special Use Request

After being duly advertised, Four Star Rent A Car requested a special use permit to operate an automobile rental agency at 380 Franklin Street, Suite 1, Rocky Mount, located on Franklin County Tax Map and Parcel Number 2070104000. A special use permit is required by Town Code 15-4, as automobile rental and leasing is not a use by right in the Central Business District (CBD) (defined in Article 26 of the Town Zoning Ordinance).

The Assistant Town Manager addressed the Commission in regards to this request, stating that this business has existed in Roanoke since 1981 and the applicant now wishes to operate a small satellite office in Rocky Mount. Four Star Rent A Car plans to put in a small fleet of approximately seven cars. It will be operated on the property of Dean Hodges who owns Franklin Heating and Air, in the old Chamber of Commerce building next to Jim Bailey. In reviewing the application and in looking at what is and is not permitted in the CBD, car rental and leasing is not listed as a use by right. Therefore it was referred to Planning Commission because in order to operate there, Mr. Barrett will need a special use permit. This is a fairly limited use of the property. It should not generate a lot of traffic, and will probably be less traffic than when the building was used by the Chamber of Commerce. Parking is adequate and Mr. Barrett will be sharing the building with Mr. Hodges who has a showroom and is not high volume. His recommendation is for Planning Commission to recommend approval of the special use permit to Town Council.

Dean Hodges, of 380 Franklin Street, came forward to speak on Ralph Barrett's behalf (the owner of Four Star Rent A Car). He owns the lot behind this lot as well, and he has four buildings. He has parking in the back of the building and he has more parking in the front than anyone else downtown. Mr. Barrett only plans to have six or seven cars and he doesn't think this will be in the way of anybody. Mr. Hodges does not have a lot of walk-in customers for heating and air, and he shares a lot of his parking with the people around him who don't have parking. In addition he thinks Mr. Barrett is a great guy and there will be minimal traffic. He will need to wash his rental cars and this will be taken care of at 396 Franklin Street and he will use his hoses and other equipment in the back. The office will only be for rental.

General discussion ensued between Mr. Hodges, the Assistant Town Manager, and the Planning Commission members:

- Easily, there is parking for six or seven cars in front of the building, and on the side next to Mr. Bailey there is room to parallel park a dozen cars.
- The cars will not be trafficking in and out, mostly just parked until one is needed.
- Mr. Hodges has seen some of Mr. Barrett's cars and they all appeared to be late model, year 2000 or newer.
- The Assistant Town Manager noted that the Enterprise Rent-A-Car facility is located in General Business (GB) and that general business does not specifically permit this type of business so he is not sure why and how it was permitted.
- There will be no signage on the building for the car rental business unless it is on the glass window.
- Mr. Hodges stated that he has put a lot of work into the building and he wants his business to be the spotlight. He does not want banners or flashing lights for signage and he doesn't want clutter on the building.
- The main concern is the number of cars allowed on the lot.
- Mr. Hodges stated that he wouldn't have a problem with setting a limit, and he doesn't think Mr. Barrett would mind either.
- It was the consensus of Planning Commission that a seven car limit would be a good number.
- Mr. Hodges will not be an absentee landlord and he will be able to do a lot of policing himself.

Madame Chair Stockton read for the record the comments of Jim Bailey, of 390 Franklin Street, Rocky Mount, who e- mailed the Deputy Clerk on May 27, 2009 with the following comments:

*Betty and I think that this would be a good use for this property and provide a new stable business for our downtown; we support the request.*

Madame Chair Stockton opened the floor to anyone else who would like to speak in regards to this request. Let the record show that no one came forward to speak.

There being no further discussion, Madame Chair Stockton reconvened the meeting back into regular session and entertained a motion:

- Motion was made by Planning Commission Member Tiggle that Planning Commission recommend to Town Council that it grant a special use permit to Ralph Barrett to operate Four Star Rent A Car, Inc. at 380 Franklin Street, Suite 1, Tax Map and Parcel Number 2070104000, on the following condition: the approval of the special use request of Four Star Rent A Car with the condition that no more than seven cars will be permitted on the lot at any one time, with 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.

Following the vote, the Assistant Town Manager advised the Commission that in referring this to Planning Commission Mr. Barrett was charged the full application fee. However, if approved by Town Council, Mr. Barrett's business will be located in the Enterprise Zone, and the fee, minus the postage fee, will be refunded to him.

## **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Old Business**

#### **1. Discussion of Comprehensive Plan Update**

The Assistant Town Manager addressed the Commission stating that he has been wearing a lot of hats lately and right now his biggest hat is getting the Uptown Revitalization out to bid. This has somewhat limited his time to work on the Comprehensive Plan update. However, he has developed the following proposed schedule:

*July – September 2009: Review of Community Facilities & Services*

*August – October 2009: Review of Housing*

*September – November 2009: Review of Transportation*

*October – December 2009: Review of Economic Development*

*July – December 2009: Ongoing Review of Supporting Documentation and Maps*

*January 2010 – Public Hearing #1*

*February 2010 – Public Hearing #2*

*March 2010 – Recommendation for Approval*

This is a first pass for getting a schedule in place for updating the Comprehensive Plan in the manner the Commission discussed last month. The plan will be to update the other parts of the plan over the ensuing two years, after these updates are made. This way there will be a cycle through and every four years there will be a new Comprehensive Plan in place.

Planning Commission Member Hall questioned if this would require workshops, with the Assistant Town Manager stating that it doesn't have to, and offering to write a revision, getting it to them in July, so they will have a month to read, and then proceed with a work session.

Planning Commission Member Tiggle requested that the schedule be attached to the minutes. The Deputy Clerk so noted.

The Assistant Town Manager advised that he has built in a lot of flexibility into the schedule, and his goal is to get the first item to the Planning Commission some time during the month of July for review. He also noted that he will be away the last two weeks of July attending the Weldon Cooper Center Senior Executive Institute at the University of Virginia.

## **B. New Business**

### **1. Nominations to Town Council to Fill Planning Commission Vacancy**

Madame Chair Stockton stated that this will be a non-binding recommendation to Town Council. The Planning Commission is not the decision making board. There are three spaces available, one being the vacancy left by Milton Arrington, and the other two being the seats of herself and Jerry Greer.

The Assistant Town Manager added that both Madame Chair Stockton and Mr. Greer have expressed interest in continuing their service.

Madame Chair Stockton confirmed with the Assistant Town Manager that Mr. Arrington's term was concurrent with hers and Mr. Greer's. She then advised the Planning Commission members that she would like to have a list for Town Council. Discussion ensued:

- The first two names on the list should be Janet Stockton and Jerry Greer.
- The Assistant Town Manager stated that a couple of people have called into the Town office to ask that they be considered, being Charles Santrock and Barbara Chauncey (the former interim director of the Community Partnership for Revitalization).
- Madame Chair Stockton submitted the names of Mark Newbill, Maceo Toney, and Lucas Tuning. Vice Chair Speidel noted that Mr. Toney and Mr. Tuning are both on the Board of Zoning Appeals.

- Planning Commission Member Hall also indicated that Mr. George Gauch had expressed an interest in serving.
- Vice Chair Speidel noted that this is only a recommendation and that Town Council does not have to select a submitted name. He also suggested that the Commission back Janet Stockton and Jerry Greer, and that the list of names be submitted as suggestions to fill the vacancy.
- Madame Chair Stockton also stated that she has not spoken with everyone on the list so she does not know who is willing to serve.
- Planning Commission Member Hall stated that Mark Newbill and Charles Santrock are both willing to serve. Mr. Santrock has served and been certified in prior years.
- It was the consensus of Planning Commission that their recommendation will be for Janet Stockton and Jerry Greer to be reappointed and that the list of potential names will apply to the vacant position. The Assistant Town Manager advised that he would word the staff memo to Town Council in that manner.

2. Review of General Assembly Action Regarding Extension of Subdivision Agreements

The Assistant Town Manager addressed the Commission stating that this is something that came out of the Virginia Municipal League (VML) Town Section Meeting, held this year in Vinton. In going over the recent legislation passed by the General Assembly, VML pointed out that to address the recent downturn in housing and to recognize the difficulty that developers are having in building and filling their subdivisions, the General Assembly Code offers an extension of five years for any subdivision plan that was in place in January of this year. Staff is working with one developer now to update a subdivision plan to get more solid dates as to when some things will be completed. They do now have a five year extension to complete things they have committed to doing. Currently there are four active subdivisions in the Town and most are current, except for one, and staff is working to shore up a few things.

### **PLANNING COMMISSIONERS' CONCERNS**

Madame Chair Stockton stated that she has one concern and questioned when Planning Commission will be meeting with Town Council again. The Assistant Town Manager asked for Planning Commission members to make a suggestion. Last year the meeting was in August but is difficult to schedule around summer and vacations. Madame Chair Stockton stated that she thinks September would be better.

Planning Commission Member Hall stated that he has more of a compliment than a concern, stating that Planning Commission talked about the traffic situation and staff got some people involved. He travels all of the intersections and two of them are in much

better shape. He likes the new traffic pattern. It took some time to get used to, but it really helps, and the situation has improved. The Hub intersection is better. He commended staff for jumping on the traffic issues. The Assistant Town Manager added that the Town has had lots of partners including the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Richardson-Wayland. He also gave most of the praise to Chief Mollin who has been hands-on and has done a really good job, even though lots of problems were encountered along the way.

Vice Chair Speidel stated that it seems like some of the traffic patterns are lengthy, as in going east down Tanyard from Route 220, where traffic has to wait for the whole sequence and twice he has been back at the Episcopal Church waiting. The Assistant Town Manager added that the process may not be entirely complete as he saw workers pulling wire at the intersection at the end of last week. Vice Chair Speidel also questioned how successful the "no left turn" sign is in front of McDonalds, with Madame Chair Stockton adding that she saw someone turn there the other day. The Assistant Town Manager stated that he would address the question by saying that he saw a State Trooper make the turn the other day.

Planning Commission Member Tiggle questioned how the traffic pattern change at West Court is working. The Assistant Town Manager confirmed that there have been no accidents, but there are a lot of people who are staying in the wrong lane and there is a bend there now that the truckers are not used to. Planning Commission Member Clements added that this is a tight squeeze for motorists who are headed toward Tanyard and meeting tractor-trailers going south. The Assistant Town Manager stated that he thinks the Uptown Project will help the situation, as the area near the courthouse and Suntrust will be revitalized, and when the work begins it will get people out of the routine and hopefully there will be better markings for the new traffic pattern. The Town can't jump on this for police enforcement right away. Also at McDonalds the Town is not writing a lot of tickets for people who make the illegal turn, but they are writing tickets for people who make the turn and are driving suspended, driving under the influence, etc. It has been an interesting policing experience.

Planning Commission Member Hall stated that he was a critic when the intersection work started, but he does think it has helped, and he wants to thank staff for working on it.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other business to discuss, motion was made by Planning Commission Member Tiggle to adjourn at 6:46 p.m., seconded by Planning Commission Member Clements, and carried unanimously by those present.

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Janet Stockton, Chair

ATTEST:

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Stacey B. Sink, Deputy Clerk

/sbs