

**Christiansburg Planning Commission
Minutes of December 28, 2015**

Present: Matthew J. Beasley
Harry Collins
David Franusich
Craig Moore, Chairperson
T.L. Newell
Virginia Peeples
Joe Powers
Jennifer D. Sowers, Vice-Chairperson
Sara Morgan, Acting Secretary Non-Voting

Absent: Ann Carter
Steve Huppert
Hil Johnson

Staff/Visitors: Will Drake, staff

Chairperson Moore called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. in the Christiansburg Town Hall at 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia.

Public Comment.

Chairperson Moore opened the floor for public comment. With no comments, Chairperson Moore closed the floor for public comment.

Approval of meeting minutes for December 14, 2015.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Vice-Chairperson Sowers made a motion to approve the December 14, 2015 Planning Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Franusich seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.

Planning Commission public hearing on an ordinance amending Chapter 42 "Zoning" of the Christiansburg Town Code in regards to provisions for urban agriculture including the keeping of chicken hens, chicks, and beehive stands and amending Chapter 8 "Animals" regarding vicious and wild animals.

Chairperson Moore introduced the public hearing and stated he presented Planning Commission's recommendation to move forward with public hearings on the proposed ordinance change during the December 8th, 2015 Town Council Meeting.

Planning Commission public hearing on an ordinance amending Chapter 42 "Zoning" of the Christiansburg Town Code in regards to provisions for urban agriculture including the keeping of chicken hens, chicks, and beehive stands and amending Chapter 8 "Animals" regarding vicious and wild animals - (continued).

Chairperson Moore stated a letter was received from Ms. Patricia Morse, 12 Montague Street N.E., in support of the ordinance change. Ms. Morgan, Acting Secretary, noted both residents who had previously expressed support were notified about tonight's public hearing.

With no public comments, Chairperson Moore moved to close the public hearing. With no objections, Chairperson Moore closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Powers asked staff to summarize the research complied on other localities with urban chickens. Mr. Drake, staff, stated he reviewed the ordinances of localities in the New River Valley along with Roanoke County, Roanoke City, Salem, and Vinton. Mr. Drake stated the key components of the ordinances, including minimum lot size, setbacks, the number of chickens allowed, and sanitation requirements were summarized in a report provided to Planning Commission and Town Council.

Commissioner Collins asked what amount other localities charge for the urban chicken zoning permit. Mr. Drake stated the fee is \$25.

Commissioner Collins asked what type of complaints the other localities have received. Mr. Drake stated the majority of the complaints were related to dogs getting into the chicken coops. Commissioner Powers noted the proposed change to Chapter 8 "Animals" of Town Code would prevent a dog or cat that kills a chicken or chick from being considered a vicious animal.

Chairperson Moore noted the possibility of requiring a Conditional Use Permit for urban agriculture. Chairperson Moore stated the current fee for a Conditional Use Permit is \$750. Chairperson Moore clarified he is not advocating for a Conditional Use Permit but noted this was previously discussed. Chairperson Moore added the Conditional Use Permit would give adjacent neighbors the opportunity to voice their concerns and provide the Town additional oversight. Chairperson Moore stated the proposed ordinance and zoning permit grants staff and the Town considerable oversight.

Commissioner Powers stated the number of chickens is limited to six. Commissioner Franusich stated the impact of keeping six chickens is low and similar to locating a shed on a property or keeping a dog, neither of which require a Conditional Use Permit. Commissioner Collins added that a \$750 fee would not be affordable to residents. Chairperson Moore stated the need to balance the concerns of some residents against the goal of promoting an inclusive community.

Planning Commission public hearing on an ordinance amending Chapter 42 "Zoning" of the Christiansburg Town Code in regards to provisions for urban agriculture including the keeping of chicken hens, chicks, and beehive stands and amending Chapter 8 "Animals" regarding vicious and wild animals - (continued).

Commissioner Collins stated his concern with the health risk chickens may pose to some residents.

Commissioner Powers stated the proposed ordinance is an improvement over the 2011 proposal.

Chairperson Moore stated Planning Commission could take action on the recommendation tonight. Commissioner Franusich stated the item has been thoroughly discussed.

Commissioner Franusich made a motion to recommend Town Council approve the amendments to Chapter 42 "Zoning" of the Christiansburg Town Code in regards to provisions for urban agriculture including the keeping of chicken hens, chicks, and beehive stands and Chapter 8 "Animals" regarding vicious and wild animals, along with the accompanying urban agriculture zoning permit. Vice-Chairperson Sowers seconded the motion, which passed 7-1. Commissioner Collins voted no.

Discussion of proposed Urban Development Areas.

Ms. Morgan stated the boundaries of the UDAs need to be finalized so the UDA consultants from Michael-Baker can complete their analysis. Commissioner Powers asked how UDAs can facilitate commercial and industrial development. Ms. Morgan stated UDAs can increase VDOT funding. Chairperson Moore stated UDAs increase the eligibility for funding allocations within the Virginia House Bill Two scoring system.

Commissioner Powers asked if the boundaries can be adjusted at a later time. Ms. Morgan stated the consultants would like the boundaries finalized in order to complete their analysis. Ms. Morgan stated there will be outreach to citizens and businesses within these areas to solicit their input on the development guidelines. Chairperson Moore stated staff or a future consultant may need to update the analysis if the boundaries are adjusted after the consultant's contract expires.

Planning Commission discussed the proposed boundary of the Cambria UDA. Commissioner Newell stated the Cambria District sketched by the Central Business Advisory Committee is similar to the Cambria UDA, except for the southern section. Planning Commission agreed to add the parcels along Shaffer Street N.E. up to High Street N.E., including the Old Christiansburg Industrial Institute and to exclude the large vacant parcel south of Station Lane N.E. and the adjacent garage from the Cambria UDA. Planning Commission also agreed to include the three parcels fronting Depot Street N.E., from Shaffer Street N.E., heading west.

Discussion of proposed Urban Development Areas - (continued).

Planning Commission discussed the proposed boundary of the Downtown UDA.

Planning Commission discussed the boundary of the Downtown UDA along West Main Street and the intersection with Depot Street N.W. Commissioner Newell stated this is an important entryway into town. Planning Commission agreed to extend the UDA boundary southwest to the intersection of Depot Street N.W. and West Main Street to include the parcels fronting both sides of West Main Street.

Commissioner Franusich inquired about the benefit of the UDA designation, beyond increasing the Town's ability to compete for transportation funding. Commissioner Powers stated the UDAs indicate the location where higher-density development is most appropriate. Commissioner Powers added the UDAs would be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan and would help steer higher-density development in a proactive manner. Commissioner Newell stated the entry point at West Main Street, from Depot Street N.W and Cherry Lane S.W. may eventually transition into business uses and higher-density residential uses. Commissioner Newell stated the transition may resemble the transition along Roanoke Street, from the County Complex Building heading into downtown.

Commissioner Collins asked if the UDA project would require a rezoning. Ms. Morgan stated the project would not require a rezoning but the Comprehensive Plan would be amended to include the UDAs. Commissioner Newell stated the Comprehensive Plan will identify the UDAs. Commissioner Newell added having the UDAs identified in the Comprehensive Plan is a requirement for various grants and funding opportunities.

Commissioner Franusich stated the character of development around the Kroger shopping center does not match the B-2 Central Business District zoning downtown. Commissioner Franusich stated the entire Downtown UDA is correctly designated as an appropriate location for high-density development, but reminded Planning Commission the zoning and character of development should not be homogeneous across the entire Downtown UDA. Commissioner Power agreed with Commissioner Franusich and noted the zoning within the UDA may be variable.

Planning Commission discussed the Downtown UDA boundary along South Franklin Street. Planning Commission agreed to extend the UDA boundary along South Franklin Street out to Second Street S.E. to include the parcels fronting South Franklin Street.

Commissioner Newell suggested a map of the UDA boundaries, current zoning, historic districts and the Bikeway Walkway projects would be very useful.

Discussion of proposed Urban Development Areas - (continued).

Planning Commission discussed the northern boundary of the Downtown UDA. Commissioner Newell stated the parcels fronting N. Franklin Street along Sara Street N.W. are zoned B-3 General Business. Commissioner Newell suggested these parcels be included in the UDA. Commissioner Peeples asked if the area north of Depot Street N.E would be more appropriate in the Mall Area UDA. Commissioner Powers noted the railroad, Crab Creek, and the Aquatic Center provide a natural divide between the Mall and Downtown UDAs. Commissioner Sowers noted the terrain north of Sara Street N.W. would be prohibitive to development. Planning Commission agreed to extend the Downtown UDA boundary north to include the four commercial parcels on the corner of North Franklin Street and Sara Street N.W.

Planning Commission discussed the boundary of the Downtown UDA along Depot Street N.E. Planning Commission agreed to add the parcels along Depot Street N.E. from Stone Street N.E. south to Pepper Street N.E.

Planning Commission discussed the boundary of the Downtown UDA along Roanoke Street. Planning Commission agreed to extend the UDA boundary east along Roanoke Street to include the NRV Free Clinic and the adjoining parcel to the south, which will feature a bikeway access point.

Planning Commission discussed the boundaries of the Mall Area North and Mall Area South UDAs. Commissioner Peeples asked what benefit was achieved by breaking the Mall UDA into two sections. Ms. Morgan stated the growth patterns for the North and South areas are very different. Ms. Morgan stated the regulations can be written to better fit the respective areas if they are identified as separate UDAs.

Planning Commission agreed to create a Mall Area North UDA and an abutting Mall Area South UDA. Commissioner Franusich proposed switching the section of the Mall Area North UDA south of the Railroad tracks along Cambria Street N.W. into the Mall Area South UDA. Planning Commission agreed to switch the section of the Mall Area North UDA south of the Railroad tracks along Cambria Street N.W. into the Mall Area South UDA.

Chairperson Moore asked if Planning Commission would like to change the name of the Mall Area South UDA. Commissioner Newell suggested Christiansburg Institute Area. Commissioner Newell noted the name would recognize the history of the area. Planning Commission agreed to rename the Mall Area South UDA the Christiansburg Institute Area. Planning Commission agreed to rename the Mall Area North UDA the Mall Area UDA.

Commissioner Newell stated the consultants should consider whether the growth patterns in the Downtown UDA necessitate a break in the boundary around Depot Street N.E.

Discussion of proposed Urban Development Areas - (continued).

Commissioner Newell asked if the Corning property should be included in the Mall Area UDA. Commissioner Powers stated the Corning property should not be considered developable. Commissioner Powers stated the parcels around the Corning plant serve as a necessary buffer to the industrial use.

Commissioner Newell asked if there is potential for a road in the northwest corner of the Mall Area UDA. Commissioner Powers stated there may be an opportunity in the future to connect to Virginian Drive N.W. and create a loop between Peppers Ferry N.W. and North Franklin Street. Commissioner Newell stated a new road in this area would allow flexibility for future development. Commissioner Franusich stated the topography at the norther boundary of the Mall UDA is steep. Chairperson Moore asked Planning Commission and staff to make note in the Comprehensive Plan update that the northern section of the Mall UDA is not suited for higher density development until it has an adequate road network. Planning Commission agreed not to modify the northern boundary of the Mall UDA. Commissioner Powers stated the Corning property will be excluded from the developable acreage tabulations.

Ms. Morgan stated the UDA boundaries could be adjusted up until the public hearings if any adjustments were necessary after receiving public input.

Other Business.

Commissioner Powers stated the Development Subcommittee's main task in the coming year will be work to incorporate the UDAs into the Comprehensive Plan and any necessary ordinance changes. Commissioner Powers proposed scheduling the subcommittee meeting before or after the Planning Commission meeting in order to include more Planning Commission members in the process. Ms. Morgan stated she could incorporate the UDA work into the Planning Commission agenda. Chairperson Moore stated the Subcommittee meetings are scheduled between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. to accommodate the working schedules of staff and Planning Commission members. Chairperson Moore agreed with Commissioner Powers that there is going to be a lot of work required by the subcommittees. Chairperson Moore suggested the schedule does not need to be set tonight.

Commissioner Newell stated the subcommittees are useful and help projects move along. Chairperson Moore acknowledged the work the subcommittees are able to accomplish.

Ms. Morgan stated she will ask Mr. Kalbag for a general timeline of deliverables to allow Planning Commission to plan their workload.

Commissioner Powers asked Ms. Morgan to present the Bikeway Walkway update presentation to Planning Commission at an upcoming meeting.

Other Business - (continued).

Commissioner Franusich asked if concerns with street improvements should be brought to Planning Commission or the Street Committee. Chairperson Moore stated the formal route would be through the Street Committee, although it could certainly be brought before Planning Commission's attention. Commissioner Franusich discussed the congestion issues with the Roanoke Street/460 interchange. Planning Commission discussed the problems with traffic light sequencing along this section of Roanoke Street. Commissioner Franusich suggested a diverted diamond interchange would be more appropriate. Commissioner Collins asked Commissioner Franusich to bring this suggestion to the Street Committee. Commissioner Newell stated the congestion issue needs to be addressed, especially in light of the Town's plan for increased development. Planning Commission also agreed there are sequencing issues with the traffic lights on North Franklin Street along the mall area.

Commissioner Powers suggested they invite Mr. Wingfield, Assistant Town Manager, to speak to Planning Commission about transportation issues.

There being no more business, Chairperson Moore adjourned the meeting at 8:47 p.m.



Craig Moore, Chairperson



Sara Morgan, Acting-Secretary Non-Voting