

Christiansburg Planning Commission
Minutes of February 1, 2016

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

Staff/Visitors: Will Drake, staff
Cindy Wells-Disney, Montgomery County Planning Commission

Chairperson Moore called the meeting to order at 7:00 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 January 19, 2015.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Commissioner Beasley made a motion to approve the January 19, 2015 Planning Commission meeting minutes. Vice-Chairperson Sowers seconded the motion, which passed 9-0. Commissioner Newell abstained, as she was not present at the last meeting.

Bikeway Walkway Annual Report Presentation by Sara Morgan.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Ms. Morgan, Secretary, stated a member of the Bikeway Walkway Committee presented this information to Town Council in December 2015. Ms. Morgan encouraged Planning Commission to ask questions as she moved though the presentation.

Ms. Morgan stated the presentation summarizes the Committee's accomplishments in 2015. Ms. Morgan noted the presentation identifies ongoing projects and includes future projects the Bikeway Walkway Committee is considering.

Bikeway Walkway Annual Report Presentation by Sara Morgan - (continued).

Ms. Morgan presented the thermal detection system installed at the Huckleberry Trail intersection with Cambria Street N.W. Ms. Morgan stated the system is designed to activate the flashing crosswalk lights without requiring a pedestrian to stop moving. Commissioner Johnson stated the lights at the crosswalk appear to start flashing too late and flash long after a person is gone. Ms. Morgan stated she would notify the Engineering Department.

Ms. Morgan presented the Eagle Scout shelter constructed outside the Recreation Center. Ms. Morgan stated the Eagle Scouts constructed the shelter and it was a successful collaboration between the Town and the Eagle Scouts.

Ms. Morgan presented the Bike 76 signage added to improve wayfinding for Bike 76 cyclists. Commissioner Franusich stated Bike 76 is the TransAmerica bike trail originating in Yorktown, Virginia and terminating in Astoria, Oregon. Ms. Morgan stated the Town created an education pamphlet for bikers passing through the Town. Commissioner Powers noted the signage and pamphlets are intended to make cyclists aware of the amenities Christiansburg has to offer.

Ms. Morgan presented the Huckleberry Trail Extension extending along Cambria Street N.W. to the Recreation Center. Ms. Morgan stated this section receives heavy traffic and the Recreation Center hosts Town staff walking events during lunch hours when the weather is nice. This section of the trail has been utilized for these events.

Commissioner Collins asked if the Town of Christiansburg removes snow from the trail. Commissioner Powers stated Christiansburg and Blacksburg scrape their sections of the trail but Montgomery County does not remove snow from their section of the Huckleberry Trail.

Ms. Morgan presented the sidewalk improvements along Park Street funded by the Community Development Block Grant. Chairperson Moore asked if construction was performed by the Town. Ms. Morgan stated she believed the work was contracted to a private company.

Ms. Morgan reviewed several on-going projects. Ms. Morgan presented the Downtown Enhancement project. Ms. Morgan stated the section from Town Hall to Main Street is complete. Ms. Morgan stated the sidewalks and additional enhancements on South Franklin Street will be completed once the Emergency Services building is finished.

Ms. Morgan stated the Bikeway Walkway Committee is conducting a feasibility study. Ms. Morgan noted the Committee used a portion of its budget from the Town to fund this study. Ms. Morgan stated the purpose of the feasibility study is to evaluate the potential of future projects the Committee is considering.

Bikeway Walkway Annual Report Presentation by Sara Morgan - (continued).

Ms. Morgan noted VDOT maintenance funding would be reduced if travel lanes were removed. Ms. Morgan also noted there is a future sewer or water line project along Roanoke Street and any changes to lane configuration would not occur until after this project was complete. Commissioner Powers stated VDOT is trying to encourage bike lanes in urban areas. Commissioner Powers noted the State needs to address the incentives offered to communities. Commissioner Franusich stated there need to be incentives for adding bike lanes.

Commissioner Franusich asked if the Committee was also considering sidewalk improvements along Roanoke Street. Commissioner Powers stated the sidewalks on the north side of Roanoke Street are complete up to the intersection with Depot Street N.E. Commissioner Franusich noted the sidewalks on the south side of Roanoke Street become intermittent after Wades Supermarket and end completely at the Montgomery County Government Center.

Commissioner Franusich stated the lack of sidewalks on Roanoke Street after Depot Street is a problem. Commissioner Franusich noted residents are often walking in the street on this section of Roanoke Street. Commissioner Newell stated residents run across Roanoke Street to access Gateway Plaza. Planning Commission agreed there is a need for crosswalks on Roanoke Street.

Commissioner Collins noted cars often drive faster than the 35 mph posted speed limit. Commissioner Newell noted this is why traffic calming measures would improve safety along Roanoke Street. Commissioner Powers stated a three-lane configuration would allow pedestrian islands in the middle turn lane. Commissioner Powers noted this would reduce the amount of lanes a pedestrian has to cross from four to one.

Commissioner Franusich asked if the crosswalks on Roanoke Street are included in the feasibility study. Commissioner Powers stated the crosswalks are not part of the study. Commissioner Powers noted the crosswalks would be dependent on reconfiguring Roanoke Street. Commissioner Powers noted the possible reconfiguration of Roanoke Street cannot take place until the Roanoke Street sewer project is completed. Commissioner Franusich asked what the time frame is for the sewer project. Ms. Morgan stated the Town is in the study phase and the project is likely several years away.

Commissioner Franusich asked what the deliverables are for the feasibility study. Ms. Morgan stated the consultants are providing drawings of the potential trails. Ms. Morgan added these drawings include a breakdown of how much land is in right-of-way and how much right-of-way would need to be acquired. Ms. Morgan stated the consultants are providing some cost estimates.

Bikeway Walkway Annual Report Presentation by Sara Morgan - (continued).

Commissioner Franusich asked if the Committee has considered connecting the Montgomery County parks to the Huckleberry Trail. Commissioner Franusich noted the existing pedestrian bridge over Rt. 460. Commissioner Powers agreed the county parks/Arbor Drive/Huckleberry Trail connections would be a great area for a future feasibility study.

Ms. Morgan stated the current feasibility study was \$20,000 (Ms. Morgan sent a correction to Planning Commission and noted the feasibility study was \$52,000).

Commissioner Powers stated the Urban Development Areas will need pedestrian and bikeway access and will need to be connected to the existing infrastructure.

Commissioner Newell stated Asheville, NC and other state localities allow(s) residents to pay for sidewalk improvements along their property on a five-year payment plan. Commissioner Newell suggested the Bikeway Walkway Committee should research if State Code would allow for this approach.

Chairperson Moore asked Ms. Morgan if the Committee was seeking donated right-of-way for the sidewalk projects. Ms. Morgan stated the Committee is in the process of identifying where they may need to ask for right-of-way. Chairperson Moore stated there may be potential for a stormwater fee credit if a property owner were to donate an easement for the sidewalks.

Commissioner Newell asked if there is an adjustment to the assessed property value if a property owner donated an easement. Commissioner Newell stated reducing assessed property value may be another method to incentivize easement donations.

Other business.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Ms. Morgan stated the new Planning Director, Andrew Warren, will start work on Wednesday, February 10th.

Ms. Morgan stated Randy Wingfield, Assistant Town Manager, and Todd Walters, Assistant Director of Engineering, will discuss transportation issues at the next Planning Commission meeting on Tuesday, February 16th.

Ms. Morgan stated there will be a Public Hearing at the next Planning Commission meeting and reminded Planning Commission the meeting will be held on Tuesday, due to the President's Day holiday.

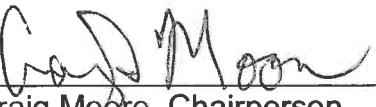
Other business - (continued).

Commissioner Collins stated Planning Commission can discuss the traffic signal issues around the Roanoke Street, 460 Bypass intersection. Commissioner Newell stated the left-turn lane signal to access the 460 Bypass from Roanoke Street east-bound is too short and blocks traffic exiting the Bypass. Commissioner Collins stated he brought this issue to the Town's attention.

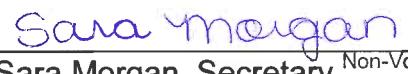
Ms. Morgan stated the UDA project updates will be on the agenda for the next Planning Commission meeting.

Ms. Morgan stated Vice-Chairperson Sowers was reappointed by Town Council.

There being no more business, Chairperson Moore adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.



Craig Moore, Chairperson



Sara Morgan, Secretary Non-Voting