

Christiansburg Planning Commission
Minutes of April 18, 2016

Present: Matthew J. Beasley
Harry Collins
David Franusich
Hil Johnson
Craig Moore, Chairperson
T.L. Newell
Virginia Peeples
Joe Powers
Sara Morgan, Secretary ^{Non-Voting}

Absent: Ann Carter
Jennifer D. Sowers, Vice-Chairperson

Staff/Visitors: Andrew Warren, Planning Director
Will Drake, staff
Tracy McCoy, M&M Tire Holdings, Inc.
Dean Frantz, Construction Services, LLC
Cindy-Wells Disney, Montgomery County Planning Commission

Chairperson Moore called the meeting to order at 7:01 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 March 28, 2016.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Commissioner Newell stated the minutes included a few typographical errors. Commissioner Newell made a motion to approve the March 28, 2016 Planning Commission meeting minutes with the corrections to the typographical errors. Commissioner Peeples seconded the motion, which passed 5-0. Commissioners Franusich and Johnson abstained as they were not present for the previous meeting. Commissioner Beasley was not present when the vote was taken.

Discussion by Planning Commission regarding a Conditional Use Permit request by M&M Tire Holdings, Inc. for a private recreational facility at 1265 Moose Drive, N.W. (tax parcels 556 – ((A)) – 31, 32) in the B-3 General Business District. The Planning Commission public hearing was held March 28, 2016.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Chairperson Moore read the proposed conditions of the Conditional Use Permit.

1. There shall be no excessive noise between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.
2. This permit shall be subject to inspections and approval of the facilities and equipment by the Fire Marshall and Building Official. The Town of Christiansburg requires that the applicants shall use and maintain the facilities and equipment in accordance with equipment manufacturer's guidelines.
3. This permit shall be subject to review by the Planning Commission in one year.

Commissioner Newell stated previous Conditional Use Permits have typically included a condition prohibiting violations of Chapter 4 "Advertising" of the Christiansburg Town Code. Commissioner Newell asked if similar language should be included for this Conditional Use Permit. Ms. Morgan stated Chapter 4 of the Christiansburg Town Code regulates signs and outdoor advertising. Ms. Morgan stated staff would prefer to reduce placing standard conditions on Conditional Use Permits when the conditions are already covered by Town Code.

Commissioner Newell stated Planning Commission should consider striking similar conditions when approved Conditional Use Permits come forward for review.

Commissioner Collins asked if the conditions were shared with the applicant. Ms. Morgan stated the conditions were shared with the applicant. Ms. Morgan noted the second condition was shared with the Fire Marshall, Chief Hanks, and he approved the language.

Commissioner Collins made a motion to recommend Town Council approve the Conditional Use Permit with the drafted conditions. Commissioner Peeples seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.

Commissioner Powers stated he liked the idea of only including conditions most specific and important to a particular Conditional Use Permit request. Commissioner Powers and Commissioner Franusich stated it would be good to avoid redundant conditions already covered by Town Code. Planning Commission agreed.

Discussion by Planning Commission regarding a Conditional Use Permit request by Construction Services, LLC, agent for Snyder-Hunt Company, LLP, for welding and metal fabrication with no more than fifty (50) persons engaged in actual production work at 1360 and 1380 Mud Pike Road, N.W. (tax parcels 556 – ((A)) – 21A, 22) in the B-3 General Business District. The Planning Commission public hearing was held March 28, 2016.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Chairperson Moore read the proposed conditions of the Conditional Use Permit.

1. The property shall be maintained in a clean, sanitary, and sightly manner.
2. Business operations shall be conducted between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.
3. There shall be no discernible noises to residential properties in the nearby vicinity between 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.
4. The existing vegetative screening shall be maintained. Any tree that is significantly damaged, falls, or needs to be removed for safety concerns shall be replaced in the same approximate location. The replacement tree shall be an evergreen tree with a minimum of six feet in height at the time of planting.

Chairperson Moore asked the applicant if he reviewed the conditions. Mr. Frantz stated he did review the conditions.

Commissioner Collins inquired if Mr. Frantz or the property owner would be responsible for tree replacement. Chairperson Moore stated it would be the property owner's responsibility to comply with the Conditional Use Permit. Mr. Frantz stated the lease agreement requires his company to maintain the property. Mr. Frantz stated he interpreted the fourth condition to be his company's responsibility.

Commissioner Franusich inquired if the applicant has already occupied the building and is expanding, or if they were not aware a Conditional Use Permit was required. Ms. Morgan stated the applicant does occupy the building and was not aware a Conditional Use Permit was required. Ms. Morgan stated the applicant was informed of the Conditional Use Permit requirement when they submitted their Business Occupancy application.

Commissioner Newell made a motion to recommend Town Council approve the Conditional Use Permit request with the drafted conditions. Commissioner Collins seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.

Chairperson Moore stated Town Council will hold public hearings for both of the Conditional Use Permit requests on Tuesday, April 26, 2016. Chairperson Moore stated Town Council will take Planning Commission's recommendation and any public comment they receive into consideration. Chairperson Moore advised the applicants to attend the Town Council public hearing.

Other business.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Ms. Morgan stated the Conditional Use Permit request for 350 Industrial Drive, N.E. was withdrawn by the applicant. Ms. Morgan stated the applicant is appealing the determination made by Mr. Randy Wingfield, Zoning Administrator, to require a Conditional Use Permit for the proposed use. Ms. Morgan stated the applicant has a Board of Zoning Appeals public hearing on Thursday, April 28, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Room, Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 East Main Street.

Ms. Morgan stated staff will provide an update on the appeal at the following Planning Commission meeting. Ms. Morgan stated Commissioner Newell is a member of the Board of Zoning Appeals and can provide additional information as necessary.

Commissioner Collins stated that there were no Council updates to report at this time.

Ms. Morgan stated Town Council has not received any recent items from Planning Commission. Ms. Morgan noted the Conditional Use Permit request for 980 Roanoke Street was withdrawn before going to Town Council and some of the other recent items discussed by Planning Commission, including the Bikeway Walkway presentation, have been informational only.

Ms. Morgan stated the Regional Commission Planning Commissioner Training is scheduled for Thursday, April 21, 2016 from 6:00p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Ms. Morgan invited commissioners to meet at Town Hall at 5:15 to carpool.

Chairperson Moore discussed Planning Commission's three subcommittees. Chairperson Moore noted the Development Subcommittee and the Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee are the two active subcommittees. Chairperson Moore noted the Historic District Subcommittee has not been active for several years.

Chairperson Moore stated he would like to have a defined and consistent membership list for each subcommittee. Chairperson Moore asked commissioners to consider an assignment to either the Development Subcommittee or the Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee. Chairperson Moore stated he would like each commissioner to provide their subcommittee preference at the next Planning Commission meeting.

Other business - (continued).

Chairperson Moore discussed changing the subcommittee meeting time in order to allow more persons to participate. Chairperson Moore suggested Planning Commission consider holding the subcommittee meetings at 6:00 p.m. before the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meetings.

Chairperson Moore stated the Development Subcommittee would meet once a month. Chairperson Moore stated the Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee would become active once the implementation portion of the UDA project begins. Mr. Warren added that the Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee will also consider other amendments in the future. Commissioner Collins stated there is also a need to work with the Central Business Advisory Committee on the development of a master plan.

Chairperson Moore stated the subcommittees are not intended to remove discussion from Planning Commission. Chairperson Moore stated the subcommittees allow members to work closely with staff and test ideas before bringing them to Planning Commission for further discussion.

Chairperson Moore stated he believes the subcommittees have functioned well in the past. Chairperson Moore stated the subcommittees are not intended to circumvent the planning process. Chairperson Moore noted the subcommittees are designed to gather as much information as possible to enhance the planning process. Chairperson Moore asked commissioners to share any concerns with him if they feel the subcommittees exclude discussion from Planning Commission.

Chairperson Moore discussed site visits and interactions with applicants and commissioners outside of a public meeting. Chairperson Moore asked commissioners to consider procedures for site visits and interaction outside of Planning Commission meetings. Chairperson Moore stated this will be discussed more during a future meeting.

Chairperson Moore stated the commissioners are individuals representing the interests of Christiansburg. Chairperson Moore stated he does not want to place arbitrary rules on interaction. Chairperson Moore stated he would like the commissioners to get the most information they can, in the manner of their choosing. Chairperson Moore stated Planning Commission currently has no rules governing interaction with applicants. Chairperson Moore stated he wants to ensure commissioners are not guiding or misleading the applicant. Chairperson Moore noted commissioners should not tell an applicant how they would vote.

Other business - (continued).

Commissioner Johnson noted his commissioner training course stated commissioners could visit a site individually, but two or more commissioners together would constitute a public meeting. Commissioner Johnson noted a public meeting would need to be duly advertised. Commissioner Powers stated it would be acceptable for Planning Commission to hold group site visits if they were duly advertised.

Chairperson Moore asked staff to present the Urban Development Areas (UDA) maps. Chairperson Moore noted Planning Commission will not discuss the specifics of the maps tonight. Chairperson Moore asked the commissioners to review the maps and prepare for discussion at a future meeting.

Ms. Morgan introduced the maps. Ms. Morgan explained the map packet contains a town-wide map of the four UDA districts. Ms. Morgan stated each UDA district contains separate maps of the district boundaries, opportunity sites, current zoning, and future land use.

Ms. Morgan stated the project was delayed because the consultant's analysis program erred in the inclusion of certain parcels. Ms. Morgan explained she reviewed the UDAs parcel by parcel to remove partial parcels and parcels such as cemeteries and public lands mistakenly labeled as opportunity sites. Ms. Morgan stated staff is comfortable with the current product. Ms. Morgan asked the commissioners to review the maps and send their questions or comments to her by the end of the week.

Ms. Morgan stated staff held a conference call with the consultants last week and finalized the schedule of deliverables. Ms. Morgan stated the consultants will provide additional documents for Planning Commission's review in the next few weeks. Ms. Morgan stated the upcoming items will include a technical memorandum, an open house for the public, and discussion to prepare for a public hearing.

Mr. Warren stated the consultants will provide Planning Commission with a technical summary report. Mr. Warren stated the report will summarize the four UDA districts and will include recommended language for incorporating UDAs into the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Warren noted the report will also provide guidance on the Town's Zoning Ordinance and will evaluate the feasibility of the current Zoning Ordinance in regards to the implementation of the UDAs.

Chairperson Moore stated the UDA grant provides a finite amount of funding for the consultant's work. Chairperson Moore stated staff and Planning Commission may need to work on the project further once the grant is complete. Ms. Morgan stated the grant is approximately 53 percent complete.

Other business - (continued).

Commissioner Franusich inquired if the opportunity site designation carries any official importance. Ms. Morgan stated the opportunity site designation was more important when the UDAs were mandatory.

Commissioner Franusich inquired if the opportunity site designation would allow the property owner to pursue funding opportunities as a UDA-designated opportunity site. Ms. Morgan stated it would not. Mr. Warren stated the opportunity site designation is best viewed as a good planning tool. Mr. Warren stated the UDA designation positions the Town to pursue additional VDOT Transportation funding and to move forward with potential zoning changes, if appropriate.

Ms. Morgan noted public parcels, such as the former Christiansburg Middle School site in the Downtown UDA, cannot be labeled as opportunity sites. Commissioner Franusich stated public parcels may still offer redevelopment opportunities but are not opportunity sites within the definition of the UDA project.

Commissioner Powers stated the Comprehensive Plan would designate the entire UDA. Commissioner Powers noted this would include all parcels within the UDA, not merely the parcels labeled as opportunity sites.

Ms. Morgan stated the consultants will provide specific design guidelines for each UDA. Commissioner Collins asked if the consultants will provide recommendations for minimum parking requirements. Ms. Morgan stated the consultants will not evaluate the Zoning Ordinance to this level of detail. Commissioner Newell stated it would also be valuable to consider parking maximums, as opposed to parking minimums.

Commissioner Franusich asked if the State of Virginia had transferred ownership of Downtown Park to the Town. Ms. Morgan stated the plat process has taken a very long time and the transfer of ownership has not yet occurred.

Commissioner Newell stated the Armory does not have sufficient parking. Commissioner Powers asked if the Town has any control over the Armory property. Mr. Warren stated the property is developed. Mr. Warren stated if the property were redeveloped the Town could review parking provisions.

Chairperson Moore asked if the consultants will provide the map data in shapefile format. Ms. Morgan stated she has only received PDF files but the Town has requested shapefiles when the consultants are finished.

Other business - (continued).

Commissioner Newell stated UDAs were mentioned at the planning commission certification course she attended. Commissioner Newell stated the instructor briefly mentioned UDAs created issues with infrastructure capacity and the need for increased taxes to support infrastructure enhancements for roads, water and sewer. Commissioner Newell stated she intended to clarify these issues with the course instructor.

Ms. Morgan stated the Planning Department has shared the UDA information with the Engineering Department. Ms. Morgan stated the Engineering Department is studying capacity issues with the Town's sewer system and is aware of the UDA project and the location of the proposed UDA boundaries.

Mr. Warren stated there are other areas of potential growth not located within the UDAs. Mr. Warren noted these areas include some of the underdeveloped single-family neighborhoods along with some agriculture properties that may develop into single-family residential neighborhoods. Mr. Warren stated the Engineering Department is reviewing capacity issues in those areas. Mr. Warren stated the UDA project is one of many useful guides the Engineering Department is utilizing to evaluate the future demand on the infrastructure.

Commissioner Newell discussed the importance of considering infrastructure capacity and demand issues during the approval of subdivisions or large commercial development. Commissioner Newell noted the Town has a waterline extension project in the Cambria area to address water capacity issues. Commissioner Newell noted it is also important to consider infrastructure improvements, such as pump stations, that are privately constructed for new development and turned over to the Town. Commissioner Newell stated those improvements carry ongoing operating costs and the demand on the tax base needs to be taken into consideration.

Commissioner Powers stated the Town's sewer system is expensive because it relies on a number of pump stations. Commissioner Newell stated pump stations are expensive to operate and maintain.

Commissioner Powers stated he is also concerned with stormwater runoff and noted the importance of addressing runoff in a comprehensive manner and not merely on a project basis.

Commissioner Peeples stated she attended the most recent Montgomery County Planning Commission meeting and noted the Conditional Use Permit request for 350 Industrial Drive, N.E. was discussed. Commissioner Peeples stated the Montgomery County Planning Commission was aware residents of Montgomery County attended the Christiansburg Planning Commission public hearing on the request.

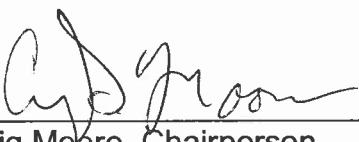
Other business - (continued).

Commissioner Peeples stated she informed the Montgomery County Planning Commissioner the request had been withdrawn and the applicant was appealing the determination to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Chairperson Moore stated no subcommittee meetings are presently scheduled.

Chairperson Moore stated he did not intend to downplay the possibility of Planning Commission taking group site visits. Chairperson Moore stated he wanted to remind Planning Commission a site visit would need to be properly advertised if this was an activity Planning Commission would like to undertake.

There being no more business, Chairperson Moore adjourned the meeting at 7:41 p.m.



Craig Moore, Chairperson



Sara Morgan
Sara Morgan, Secretary Non-Voting