

**Christiansburg Planning Commission
Minutes of June 20, 2016**

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

Absent: David Franusich

Staff/Visitors: Andrew Warren, Planning Director
Will Drake, staff
Mike Larkin, On Main Street, Inc.; Life Pacific College
Jay Dickerson, Kesler Contracting

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 Planning Commission Minutes for May 31, 2016 meeting.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Commissioner Beasley made a motion to approve the May 31, 2016 Planning Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. Commissioner Newell stated a section of the minutes contained an incomplete statement in regards to the expired status of the 2005 Conditional Use Permit for 409 Roanoke Street. Commissioner Beasley withdrew his motion to approve the May 31, 2016 Planning Commission meeting minutes. Chairperson Moore stated the action to approve the minutes will be postponed until the next Planning Commission meeting in order for staff to address the clarification requested by Commissioner Newell.

Public Hearing on a Conditional Use Permit request by Kesler Contracting, agent for Michael Larkin, On Main Street, Inc., for a Private School [Zoning Ordinance Section 42-305(14)] to consist of classrooms and a library at 100 W. Main Street (tax parcel 527 - ((A)) - 66) in the B-2 Central Business District.

Chairperson Moore opened the public hearing. The applicant, Mike Larkin, introduced the request. Mr. Larkin stated he established Life Pacific College-Ignite in California in 2008 with support from the Foursquare Church. Mr. Larkin stated Life Pacific College-Ignite relocated to the CrossPointe property in Christiansburg two and a half years later. Mr. Larkin noted Life Pacific College-Ignite is a separate entity from L.I.F.E. Bible College East, which previously occupied the CrossPointe property.

Mr. Larkin stated the school is growing and enrollment is expanding by a minimum of ten percent annually. Mr. Larkin stated the property at 100 W. Main Street offers the opportunity for the school to expand and also improve the structure without disrupting its historic value.

Mr. Larkin stated students will arrive on August 20, 2016. Mr. Larkin stated the Conditional Use Permit request is for classrooms and a library and requested it be amended to include offices for administration of the school. Mr. Larkin stated they intend to add sprinklers to the sanctuary during a second phase of improvements to increase the rated occupancy. Mr. Larkin noted this will allow the sanctuary to accommodate various community events. Mr. Larkin stated the proposed use fits well with the original design of the building and noted Life Pacific College-Ignite is a Christian college and will hold service in the sanctuary.

Jay Dickerson, Kesler Contracting, stated he has evaluated the building in regards to safety issues. Mr. Dickerson stated he met with Billy Hanks, Christiansburg Fire Chief & Fire Marshall, and has addressed the safety concerns raised by Chief Hanks. Mr. Dickerson stated the proposed use will be an asset to Christiansburg.

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

Planning Commission agreed to discuss the request. Chairperson Moore noted the safety and structural issues will be handled by the Fire Marshall and Building Official and stated Planning Commission should focus discussion on the land use application.

Commissioner Newell noted the staff report should be amended to state the property is within a Historic District. Ms. Morgan noted the error would be corrected.

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Ms. Morgan stated the single condition suggested by staff is a review of the Conditional Use Permit by Planning Commission in one year. Commissioner Newell stated the Conditional Use Permit for her property at 41 W. Main Street contained a single condition requiring conformity with all Building and Fire Codes. Commissioner Newell noted the property will house young people and requested a similar condition for the current request.

Commissioner Powers noted Planning Commission previously agreed to stop including redundant conditions in reference to other, current Code requirements. Commissioner Newell stated the project is phased and will be occupied before fire suppression has been installed. Commissioner Newell stated she would like a condition to help Planning Commission ensure the required building and fire safety provisions are being met.

Mr. Warren stated staff could bring any violations to Planning Commission's attention during the one-year review, at which time Planning Commission could determine if the violations would be cause for revocation of the Conditional Use Permit.

Commissioner Carter asked if the Conditional Use Permit would be immediately revoked if a violation was issued. Mr. Warren stated the property would have an opportunity to come into compliance. Commissioner Johnson asked if a year would be adequate time for the applicant to come into compliance with the Building and Fire Codes. Chairperson Moore stated the applicant would need to meet all applicable Code requirements before a Certification of Occupancy would be issued by the Building Official. Chairperson Moore noted the Building Code requirements may change as the use is expanded.

Commissioner Newell stated she would like the condition to reference "conformance with all applicable public safety requirements" and noted "conformance" implies due process will be given for violations. Commissioner Peebles inquired why this additional verbiage falls under the oversight of the Conditional Use Permit. Commissioner Collins stated enforcement of the Fire and Building Codes is the responsibility of the Building Official and Fire Marshall. Commissioner Collins stated Planning Commission should concern itself with the land use. Commissioner Newell stated part of Planning Commission's review is to ensure public safety and general welfare are being maintained.

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Chairperson Moore suggested the condition be worded, "This permit shall be subject to review by the Planning Commission in one year, including review of documented noncompliance with Town Code." Commissioner Newell stated the wording was satisfactory. Planning Commission agreed. Commissioner Newell stated a business license application will often uncover issues with non-compliance and noted a church does not need to apply for a business license. Commissioner Newell stated she would prefer a condition that gives the applicant adequate time to complete the improvements and also provides Planning Commission an opportunity to review any safety issues. Commissioner Newell noted she does not anticipate any issues.

Commissioner Carter stated she is very excited to see the property utilized. Planning Commission agreed.

Commissioner Johnson asked if it is the Fire Marshall's responsibility to halt the use of the property if there is a Fire Code violation. Commissioner Newell stated the property would be given time to come into compliance.

Commissioner Johnson inquired why a sprinkler system is required. Commissioner Moore stated the Building Code changes over time and the building may need to meet current fire suppression requirements. Mr. Dickerson stated the church has an occupancy rating of 500 occupants with the pews installed. Mr. Dickerson stated the occupancy rating will be reduced to 299 occupants when the pews are removed. Mr. Dickerson stated they will improve the egress and safety of the building by removing the pews and reducing the occupancy. Mr. Dickerson stated a sprinkler system will need to be installed in the sanctuary in order to bring the occupancy rating back to 500 occupants. Mr. Dickerson stated they plan to have the sprinkler system installed by mid-2017.

Commissioner Beasley requested details on the project phases. Mr. Dickerson stated phase one includes occupying the classrooms within the 299 occupancy limit and phase two includes adding a sprinkler system to the sanctuary in order to return the occupancy to 500 occupants.

Mr. Larkin stated phase two will also include remodeling the restrooms to make them compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Mr. Larkin stated the purpose of phase two is to improve the safety of the building and increase the occupancy rating of the sanctuary. Mr. Larkin noted the increased occupancy rating will allow the sanctuary to be utilized by the greater community for various events.

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Chairperson Moore asked Planning Commission if the proposed office use needs further clarification. Mr. Warren stated offices are incidental to the proposed use as a private school and an amendment to the request would not be necessary.

Commissioner Powers made a motion to recommend Town Council approve the Conditional Use Permit with the drafted condition. Commissioner Carter seconded the motion, which passed 9-0.

Chairperson Moore stated Town Council will hold the public hearing for the Conditional Use Permit request on Tuesday, June 28, 2016. Chairperson Moore stated Town Council will take Planning Commission's recommendation into consideration. Chairperson Moore advised the applicant to attend the Town Council public hearing.

Other business

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Chairperson Moore stated the membership of the Development Subcommittee and Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee will be restructured and will include a chairperson and co-chairperson. Mr. Warren stated the standard meeting time for the subcommittees will be 6:00 p.m. before regularly scheduled Planning Commission meetings. Chairperson Moore asked the commissioners to submit their committee preference.

Chairperson Moore stated the subcommittees are designed to advance the planning process and allow specific issues to be explored in greater detail before bringing them to Planning Commission. Chairperson Moore noted the subcommittees are not intended to exclude discussion from Planning Commission.

Mr. Warren stated the revised sign ordinance will be the first order of business for the Development Subcommittee. Mr. Warren stated the amendment to incorporate Urban Development Areas into the Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed by the entire Planning Commission.

There being no more business, Chairperson Moore adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.



Craig Moore, Chairperson



Sara Morgan, Secretary Non-Voting