

Christiansburg Planning Commission
Minutes of April 17, 2017

Present: Harry Collins
Mark Curtis
David Franusich
Catherine Garner
Jeananne Kries
Craig Moore, Chairperson
Ann Sandbrook
Andrew Warren, Secretary Non-Voting

Absent: Matthew Beasley
Ann Carter
Hil Johnson
Jennifer D. Sowers, Vice-Chairperson

Staff/Visitors: Will Drake, staff
Eddie Roberts, 77 Scattergood Drive NW
Steve Semones, Balzer and Associates
Todd Robertson, Stateson Homes
Allen Palmer, 45 Scattergood Drive NW
Thomas Irish, 90 Revolution Circle NW
Spencer and Ann Taylor, 105 Revolution Circle NW

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.

Spencer Taylor, 105 Revolution Circle NW, stated he was a veteran and a senior citizen. Mr. Taylor stated the decision of many of the residents in The Villas at Peppers Ferry to purchase a home was contingent on the adjacent land remaining R-1 and stated a change in the zoning would feel like a betrayal. Mr. Taylor stated the rezoning would increase the market value for the proposed development and decrease the value of the existing Villas at Peppers Ferry. Mr. Taylor stated this was unfair and asked the Planning Commission to carefully consider their decision.

Thomas Irish, 90 Revolution Circle NW, stated he was a member of the Board of Directors for The Villas at Peppers Ferry HOA but was only speaking for himself. Mr. Irish stated The Villas at Peppers Ferry acquiesced to the luxury apartments with the understanding that the rest of the parcel would be single-family homes.

Public Comment – (continued).

Mr. Irish stated the proposal reduces the amount of single-family homes by 45% and increases the total number of dwelling units by 63%. Mr. Irish stated this is not a minor change and the proposal is inconsistent with the vision offered by the applicant two years ago.

Ann Taylor, 105 Revolution Circle, asked the Planning Commission to review the cross-section provided by the applicant. Mrs. Taylor stated the cross-section did not include the building within The Villas at Peppers Ferry with the retaining wall.

Mrs. Taylor stated, contrary to previous comments, there are no basements in The Villas at Peppers Ferry and there are several two-story homes. Mrs. Taylor stated the building with the retaining wall is a two-story building and is not accurately represented on the cross-section.

Mrs. Taylor stated she was concerned with the proximity of John Adams Drive NW to natural gas lines and noted a curb would not guarantee safety in case of an accident.

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

Approval of Planning Commission Minutes for April 3, 2017 meeting.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Commissioner Collins made a motion to approve the April 3, 2017 Planning Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Knies seconded the motion, which passed 7-0.

Public Hearing for a Conditional Use Permit by ETR Investments for a Game Room at 77 Scattergood Drive NW [Tax No. 496-20 4] in the B-3 General Business District.

Chairperson Moore opened the public hearing. The applicant, Eddie Roberts, stated he is the owner of ETR Investments and intends to operate Galaxy Play for child care, a state-licensed after-school program, and a public game room for school-age children up to 12 years of age during the evenings and on the weekend. Mr. Roberts described the business model as Chuck E. Cheese without a kitchen. Mr. Roberts stated the game room will offer parents the option to drop off their children for supervised care.

Allen Palmer, 45 Scattergood Drive NW, noted his home is across the street and stated he is concerned with noise, the hours of operation, traffic, and people cutting across his yard.

With no further comment, Chairperson Moore closed the public hearing. The Planning Commission agreed to discuss the request at the end of the meeting.

Discussion/Action for a Rezoning request by Snyder-Hunt Company LLP for a 7.93-acre portion of Tax Map No. 435-A 40 located north of Quin W. Stuart Boulevard NW from R-1, Single Family Residential to R-3, Multi-Family Residential.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion and noted the applicant provided a cross-section of the proposed development. Steve Semones, Balzer and Associates, presented the cross-section and noted its relative location in relation to The Villas at Peppers Ferry and the proposed development.

Commissioner Sandbrook asked about a fence or trees on the south side of John Adams Drive NW. Mr. Semones stated they will provide street trees and residential-scale landscaping. Commissioner Kries asked if the provision of a wall on The Villas at Peppers Ferry side of John Adams Drive NW had been discussed. Mr. Semones stated they have discussed the continuation of the white picket fence and the provision of additional landscaping, but not a structural wall.

Commissioner Franusich inquired about the relationship between the rezoning request and the planned housing development request. Mr. Warren noted one of the proffers submitted by the applicant ties the development the property to the proposed planned housing development. Mr. Warren noted the planned housing development allows for density above the by-right townhome development density of 10 units per acre and noted some of the proposed development regulations submitted by the applicant differ from the standard townhome development regulations in the Christiansburg Town Code.

Commissioner Garner asked if The Villas at Peppers Ferry was a planned housing development. Mr. Warren stated it was.

Commissioner Kries asked what the expected height difference will be between the townhomes and the single-family homes originally planned along John Adams Drive NW. Todd Robertson, Stateson Homes, stated the single-family homes would have been three stories high on the rear side, with walk-out basements. Mr. Robertson stated some of the townhomes will be three stories out of the ground and there may be 8-10 feet in height difference and some three-story townhomes will face The Villas at Peppers Ferry. Commissioner Franusich asked if the Planning Commission could limit the height through the conditional use permit. Mr. Warren stated the applicant may wish to comment on the height provision and noted restricting the height for certain areas may be a reasonable condition if the Planning Commission believes it contributes to a specific impact on adjacent property. Chairperson Moore noted 35 feet is the maximum height allowed in the standard R-1, R-3 and townhome regulations of the Christiansburg Town Code.

Discussion/Action for a Rezoning request by Snyder-Hunt Company LLP for a 7.93-acre portion of Tax Map No. 435-A 40 located north of Quin W. Stuart Boulevard NW from R-1, Single Family Residential to R-3, Multi-Family Residential – (continued).

Commissioner Franusich stated the proposed development is of similar character to the surrounding properties from a density perspective. Commissioner Sandbrook stated her main concern was the condition of Stafford Drive NW. Mr. Semones stated he believed additional right-of-way on Stafford Drive NW between Quin W. Stuart Boulevard NW and Peppers Ferry Road NW was dedicated for future widening when The Villas at Peppers Ferry was developed.

Commissioner Kries asked if the Town was responsible for ensuring adequate water and sewer availability. Mr. Warren stated the Engineering Department reviewed the revised usage figures provided by the applicant and did not raise any concerns.

Commissioner Collins stated The Villas at Peppers Ferry is zoned R-3 Multi-Family Residential and the property for the apartments is zoned R-3 Multi-Family Residential, with R-1 Single Family Residential to the north. Chairperson Moore noted John Adams Drive NW has been laid out and its location is somewhat unaffected by this decision.

Commissioner Sandbrook and Chairperson Moore noted the issues and concerns brought forth concerning wetlands are outside the review of Planning Commission and are handled by the relevant regulatory agencies, with Town oversight.

Commissioner Franusich inquired about the status of the traffic signal at the intersection of Quin W. Stuart Boulevard NW and Peppers Ferry Road NW. Mr. Warren noted funding for the traffic signal has been requested for the fiscal year 2018 budget, to begin July 1, 2017. Mr. Warren noted the Town has hired a design consultant, and if funded, would hope to begin construction in the fall of 2017. Commissioner Curtis asked if Quin W. Stuart Boulevard NW would be extended. Mr. Warren noted this extension is the planned Connector Road and noted the project is not currently funded and funding is not anticipated in the next 4-6 years, though the Town remains committed to the project.

Commissioner Sandbrook inquired about an expected start date for the proposed development. Mr. Robertson stated they would hope to start in July or August, 2017 and noted the apartments will likely begin construction in June, 2017.

Chairperson Moore noted the subject property is within the Mall Urban Development Area and discussed the addition of Urban Development Areas into the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Discussion/Action for a Rezoning request by Snyder-Hunt Company LLP for a 7.93-acre portion of Tax Map No. 435-A 40 located north of Quin W. Stuart Boulevard NW from R-1, Single Family Residential to R-3, Multi-Family Residential – (continued).

Commissioner Sandbrook asked if the proposed landscaping is an existing condition. Mr. Warren stated requirements for additional landscaping would need to be a stated condition on the conditional use permit, since it is not shown on the master plan. Mr. Semones stated the landscaping they have shown is the landscaping proposed for the previous development plan and noted they are open to adding additional landscaping and extending the fence. Mr. Semones noted the John Adams Drive NW roadway is not centered on the right-of-way, but is shifted towards the townhome side to provide greater space between the pavement and The Villas at Peppers Ferry.

Chairperson Moore read the proffers offered by the applicant:

1. The property shall be developed in substantial conformance with the application and masterplan submitted dated March 3, 2017.
2. The property proposed for R-1 Zoning shall only be utilized for single-family detached residential use and open space.
3. The property proposed for R-3 Zoning shall only be utilized for Townhome attached residential use and open space.
4. Construction traffic shall be strictly prohibited from utilizing any private roads in the Villas at Peppers Ferry.

Chairperson Moore stated the first proffer ties the rezoning request to the application document and master plan provided by the applicant and noted any revisions to the master plan would require a change to the dates on the proffer statement.

Commissioner Collins made a motion to recommend Town Council rezone the 7.93-acre portion of Tax Map No. 435-A from R-1, Single Family Residential to R-3, Multi-Family Residential with the proffers offered by the applicant. Commissioner Garner seconded the motion.

Commissioner Franusich discussed the difficulty of voting on the rezoning application before additional changes are made to the master plan. Mr. Warren noted minor changes could be reflected on an updated master plan, referenced in the proffer statement. Mr. Warren continued to state that the dates and conditions would need to be set before action by Town Council, but the Planning Commission, as a recommending body, can make a recommendation with the understanding that dates may be updated to ensure all documents are consistent before Council consideration.

Mr. Warren reviewed the comparison tables provided in the staff report detailing the changes in dwelling-types and density between the approved 2014 master plan and the proposed 2017 master plan.

Discussion/Action for a Rezoning request by Snyder-Hunt Company LLP for a 7.93-acre portion of Tax Map No. 435-A 40 located north of Quin W. Stuart Boulevard NW from R-1, Single Family Residential to R-3, Multi-Family Residential – (continued).

With no further discussion, Chairperson Moore called for a vote on the motion, which passed 6-1. Chairperson Moore stated the Planning Commission has recommended Town Council approve the rezoning request with the submitted proffers.

Discussion/Action for a Conditional Use Permit by Snyder-Hunt Company LLP request-- contingent upon the above rezoning request-- for a 7.93-acre portion of Tax Map No. 435-A 40 located north of Quin W. Stuart Boulevard NW for a Planned Housing Development in the R-3 Multi-Family Residential District.

The Planning Commission reviewed the conditions of the 2014 conditional use permit and agreed to amend the dates of the referenced master plan to reflect the presented master plan dated March 3, 2017 in conditions #1-4 and to revise the referenced lots numbers in condition #4.

The Planning Commission agreed to add condition #9 to work with The Villas at Peppers Ferry on a continuation of a similar fence along the property line, but not in the right-of-way.

Commissioner Knies asked if the fence would be extended across the terminus of Washington Avenue NW or if a gate would be provided. Mr. Semones and Mr. Robertson stated this was a discussion they would have with the residents of The Villas at Peppers Ferry.

Commissioner Knies asked if a condition could be added to require the proposed Washington Avenue NW street name be changed, within the proposed development. Chairperson Moore stated street names are outside the review of Planning Commission. Mr. Semones stated they have spoken with staff and requested a name change. Chairperson Moore noted it is the Planning Commission's desire to have the name changed.

Commissioner Knies asked if the additional landscaping could be targeted in front of the alleys. Commissioner Franusich stated the updated master plan should show the additional screening.

The Planning Commission agreed to add condition #10 to restrict the alleys off John Adams Drive to one-way travel away from John Adams Drive NW, with no on-street parking in the alley right-of-way. Planning Commission discussed reducing the width of the alleys. Mr. Semones stated they would consider a narrower design.

Commissioner Knies if asked parking on John Adams Drive NW could be restricted. Mr. Warren noted John Adams Drive NW will be a public street and Chairperson Moore stated the restriction of on-street parking requires action by Town Council.

Discussion/Action for a Conditional Use Permit by Snyder-Hunt Company LLP request--contingent upon the above rezoning request-- for a 7.93-acre portion of Tax Map No. 435-A 40 located north of Quin W. Stuart Boulevard NW for a Planned Housing Development in the R-3 Multi-Family Residential District – (continued).

The Planning Commission agreed to correct the word “lightening” in condition #5 to “lighting.”

Commissioner Curtis asked if there is a landscape plan for the south side of John Adams Drive NW. Mr. Semones stated they will have street trees and residential-scale landscaping. Commissioner Franusich requested a condition for street trees on John Adams Drive NW. Planning Commission agreed to add condition #11 requiring street trees along John Adams drive, 6-feet tall at the time of planting and of a consistent spacing and appearance with the street trees along Quin W. Stuart Boulevard NW.

Chairperson Moore asked if sidewalks will be provided. Mr. Semones said they will provide standard 5-foot wide sidewalks along the main streets and will also have pedestrian paths along the courtyard units, although the size or material of those paths has not been finalized.

The Planning Commission noted the street lighting in condition #5 refers to public streets and is not intended to require street lighting along the alleys. Mr. Semones stated the placement of the street lights is ultimately dictated by AEP, but noted the current plan places the lights on the townhome side of John Adams Drive NW. Mr. Semones stated they have spoken with AEP and may be able to provide a street light on The Villas at Peppers Ferry side of John Adams Drive NW if requested by those residents.

Commissioner Franusich made a motion to recommend Town Council approve the conditional use permit request for a planned housing development, with the eleven conditions, as discussed. Commissioner Garner seconded the motion, which passed 7-0. Chairperson Moore stated the Planning Commission has recommended approval of the request to Town Council and noted the Town Council public hearing for the rezoning and conditional use permit requests will be held on Tuesday, April 25, 2017 in the same location at 7:00 p.m. and encouraged the citizens to attend and continue to participate in the process.

Other business.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion for the conditional use permit request at 77 Scattergood Drive NW. Mr. Warren noted the Christiansburg Institute and the residence at 45 Scattergood Drive NW are located across the street from the subject property.

Other business – (continued).

Mr. Roberts stated the business would open at 10:30 a.m. and close at 7:30 p.m. Mr. Roberts stated the building was formerly the site of Grace-A-Child, prior to construction of the new facility at 125 Scattergood Drive NW. Commissioner Collins asked if there was another business located on the subject property. Mr. Warren clarified an off-premise sign for R.E. Michael Company is located on the property.

Commissioner Curtis asked if parents would drop off the children. Mr. Roberts stated parents could stay or drop off their children for supervised care. Mr. Roberts stated the business is not a late night arcade and children cannot leave without a parent picking them up.

Chairperson Moore read the provided conditions:

1. Hours of operation shall be limited to between 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
2. No alcoholic beverages shall be allowed in the gameroom.
3. There are to be no discernible noises to adjacent properties.
4. This permit shall be subject to review by the Planning Commission four months from the start of operation of the gameroom.
5. There shall be "No Loitering" signage in the parking area.

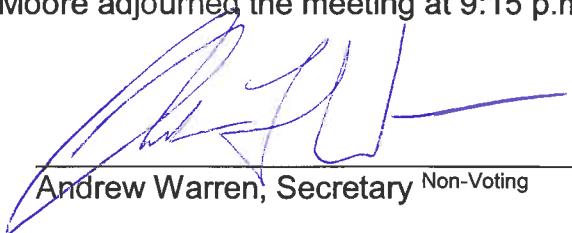
Chairperson Moore noted noise was a stated concern. Commissioner Kries asked if outdoor activities could be limited to certain hours. The Planning Commission agreed to add condition #6: There shall be no outdoor activities before 9:00 a.m. or after 8:00 p.m. The Planning Commission revised condition #2 to read: There shall be no alcoholic beverages allowed on the premises. Commissioner Curtis asked the applicant if he anticipated issues with traffic. Mr. Roberts stated he did not anticipate traffic issues and noted the large parking lot.

Commissioner Garner asked if four months was a standard period of review. Mr. Warren stated one year is typical practice. Mr. Warren noted staff could bring the permit before the Planning Commission at any time if there were violations on the property. The Planning Commission agreed to revise condition #4 to a one-year review. Commissioner Collins made a motion to recommend Town Council approve the conditional use permit with the six conditions, as drafted. Commissioner Sandbrook seconded the motion, which passed 7-0. Chairperson Moore stated the Town Council public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, May 9, 2017.

There being no more business, Chairperson Moore adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.



Craig Moore, Chairperson



Andrew Warren, Secretary Non-Voting