

**Christiansburg Planning Commission
Minutes of July 5, 2017**

Present: David Franusich
Catherine Garner
Hil Johnson
Jeananne Kries
Craig Moore, Chairperson
Jennifer D. Sowers, Vice-Chairperson
Andrew Warren, Secretary Non-Voting

Absent: Matt Beasley
Harry Collins
Mark Curtis
Ann Sandbrook

Staff/Visitors: Will Drake, staff
Jared Crews, staff
Brian Hamilton, Montgomery County Economic Development Authority
Max Wiegard, Gentry Locke (representing Shentel)
Ashley Jones, New River Barbell and Fitness
Louise Kirkner, 280 Jones Street, S.E.
Mr. Whitlock, 530 High Street, N.E.
Mr. Palmer, 545 High Street, N.E.
Anne Carter, 492 Reading Road, S.E.

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 30, 2017 Meeting

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Vice-Chairperson Sowers made a motion to approve the May 30, 2017 Planning Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Garner seconded the motion, which passed 5-0. Commissioner Franusich abstained, as he was not present for the previous meeting.

Public Hearing for a rezoning request by the Montgomery County Economic Development Authority, agent for Cox Family Farms LLC, for an approximately 77.72 acre property, Tax Map No. 558-A 24, located north of Jones Street, S.E. and west of the intersection of Parkway Drive, S.E. and Technology Drive, S.E. The request is to rezone the property from the A Agricultural District to the I-2 General Industrial District.

Chairperson Moore opened the public hearing. Commissioner Garner recused herself from the public hearing and subsequent discussion. Brian Hamilton, Montgomery County Economic Development Authority (EDA), stated the EDA was the contract purchaser of the property and intended to expand Falling Branch Corporate Park to the subject property, along with adjacent property located in Montgomery County. Mr. Hamilton stated the property will allow the EDA to offer larger lots for development, which will make them more attractive to business and noted the combined area of the county and town property totals 124 acres.

Mr. Hamilton stated the project will develop in phases and noted Parkway Drive, S.E. will be extended in increments, as each development pad is constructed. Mr. Warren stated the Town of Christiansburg has a planned project to extend Parkway Drive, S.E. to South Franklin Street, but noted the project is currently unfunded. Mr. Hamilton stated the first development pad would consist of 36.1 acres and noted the portion of the subject property south of the Parkway Drive, S.E. extension would remain an undeveloped buffer.

Louise Kirkner, 280 Jones Street, S.E., stated she wants to protect her air rights and noted she does not want her beautiful view blocked. Ms. Kirkner asked what would be built on the property.

With no further comment, Chairperson Moore closed the public hearing

Public Hearing for a Conditional Use Permit request by Jeff Holland of Network Building + Consulting, LLC (representing Shentel), agent for Schaeffer Memorial Baptist Church, for a monopole-style communications tower at 570 High Street, N.E. in the R-3 Multi-Family Residential District.

Chairperson Moore opened the public hearing. Max Wiegard, Gentry Locke, stated Shentel is attempting to replace the tower as part of a network-wide 4G LTE technology upgrade to its facilities. Mr. Wiegard stated the tower replacement is necessary in order to upgrade service and noted the 70-foot existing tower was constructed in 1999 when there was no requirement for a conditional use permit. Mr. Wiegard stated the existing pole cannot support the new equipment and Shentel is proposing to replace the existing tower with a steel tower. Mr. Wiegard stated the new tower will be engineered to fall within a 70-foot radius in the case of a structural failure and noted the new tower would be 108 feet tall, with a 2-foot lightning rod on top, totaling 110 feet in total height.

Public Hearing for a Conditional Use Permit request by Jeff Holland of Network Building + Consulting, LLC (representing Shentel), agent for Schaeffer Memorial Baptist Church, for a monopole-style communications tower at 570 High Street, N.E. in the R-3 Multi-Family Residential District – (continued).

Mr. Wiegard stated Shentel is requesting a waiver to the 75-foot height limitation for monopoles in a residential district. Mr. Wiegard stated Shentel is also requesting a waiver for the requirement of setbacks of no less than the height of the tower from all property lines and noted the increased height is needed for coverage improvements. Mr. Wiegard stated the tower is 40 feet 9 inches from the rear property line. Mr. Wiegard stated the usage of the monopole will remain wireless communication and noted the new tower will provide Shentel users with improved call performance, expanded coverage, and improved data speed.

Mr. Wiegard stated Shentel held a community meeting with citizens and noted citizens were sent a letter after the meeting to address concerns raised regarding impacts on property values and potential health effects. Mr. Wiegard presented maps of existing coverage and improved coverage to be provided by the new tower, along with photo simulations of the proposed tower.

Mr. Wiegard stated the new tower will be in close proximity to historic resources and noted the tower was restricted to a maximum height of 110 feet with flush-mounted antennas.

Mr. Wiegard stated the tower has a designed fall radius of 70 feet and noted the community center on the subject property will be outside the fall radius. Mr. Wiegard stated there is approximately 40 feet 9 inches between the tower and the rear property line and 84 feet 3 inches between the tower and the front property line and noted there are currently no residences within either the 70-foot fall radius or 110-foot tower radius. Mr. Wiegard stated there is the possibility of residences being built within those areas on the adjoining properties to the north, but noted this is unlikely due to the steep slope of those properties.

Mr. Whitlock, 530 High Street, N.E., stated the current tower was put in place without the knowledge of any community members and noted upgrades have taken place over the past several months without inspections. Mr. Whitlock expressed a desire for further inspections to take place with the new tower and noted his concern regarding the tower falling onto adjoining property.

Mr. Palmer, 545 High Street, N.E., expressed concern with the environmental effects of the new tower. Mr. Palmer stated he had conducted research and found inconclusive evidence regarding the negative effects of monopoles. He requested community members be provided a written statement if there should there be any negative health consequences due to the tower. Mr. Palmer also stated there had been a lack of oversight in relation to the tower.

With no further comment, Chairperson Moore closed the public hearing.

Public Hearing for a Conditional Use Permit request by Ashley Jones, New River Barbell and Fitness, agent for Kevin Carter, for a private recreational facility (gym) at 492 Reading Road, S.E., Unit C in the I-2 General Industrial District.

Chairperson Moore opened the public hearing. Ashley Jones, New River Barbell and Fitness, stated the gym is open from 6:00 or 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 or 6:30 p.m. and noted the gym is typically occupied by no more than ten persons at a time. Ms. Jones stated the gym is 1,500 square feet and has parking and restroom facilities.

Anne Carter, 492 Reading Road, S.E., stated Ms. Jones' business is the least impactful of any business to occupy her property since she acquired it in 1982 and noted the gym is clean, orderly, and contained.

With no further comment, Chairperson Moore closed the public hearing.

Discussion on a rezoning request by the Montgomery County Economic Development Authority, agent for Cox Family Farms LLC, for an approximately 77.72 acre property, Tax Map No. 558-A 24, located north of Jones Street, S.E. and west of the intersection of Parkway Drive, S.E. and Technology Drive, S.E. The request is to rezone the property from the A Agricultural District to the I-2 General Industrial District.-

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Commissioner Franusich asked what Cox Family Farms, LLC plans to do with the property. Mr. Hamilton stated the two parcels under contract by Montgomery County would serve as an expansion of the Falling Branch Corporate Park and the two remaining parcels would be retained and sold by Cox Family Farms, LLC.

Ms. Kirkman expressed concern about the extension of Parkway Drive, S.E. and inquired where it would connect. Mr. Warren stated the full road extension project is in a preliminary stage and explained the project is currently not funded by VDOT.

Mr. Hamilton stated the current termination point of Parkway Drive, S.E. would be extended westward and terminate at the first new development pad. Mr. Hamilton stated the second phase of the project would extend Parkway Drive, S.E. to the end of the property. Mr. Hamilton noted the Montgomery County EDA generally uses VDOT economic development access funds for this type of project. Mr. Hamilton stated the development could not occur without the extension of Parkway Drive, S.E. Chairperson Moore stated VDOT will often not fund HB2 or Smart Scale projects without a plan in place. Mr. Warren stated the planned extension of Parkway Drive, S.E. is not currently designed to connect with Jones Street, S.E. and noted additional information from the Smart Scale application would be provided in the next Planning Commission agenda packet.

Discussion on a rezoning request by the Montgomery County Economic Development Authority, agent for Cox Family Farms LLC, for an approximately 77.72 acre property, Tax Map No. 558-A 24, located north of Jones Street, S.E. and west of the intersection of Parkway Drive, S.E. and Technology Drive, S.E. The request is to rezone the property from the A Agricultural District to the I-2 General Industrial District - (continued).

Commissioner Knies asked what the future land use designation was for the property. Mr. Warren stated the property is designated as Mixed Use Industrial with buffer and noted the use of the property as a corporate park would be consistent with the future land use designation. Mr. Hamilton stated there was a 70 foot slope along the southern border of the property and noted the slope, along with the area south of Parkway Drive, S.E., would be preserved as an approximately 400 foot wide buffer.

Chairperson Moore explained approximately 400 feet of greenspace would be left from the southern property line to the development to function as a buffer.

Chairperson Moore stated the next Planning Commission meeting would take place on Monday, July 17, 2017 and noted there would be further discussion and a possible vote on a recommendation to Town Council regarding the rezoning.

Discussion on a Conditional Use Permit request by Jeff Holland of Network Building + Consulting, LLC (representing Shentel), agent for Schaeffer Memorial Baptist Church, for a monopole-style communications tower at 570 High Street, N.E. in the R-3 Multi-Family Residential District.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Chairperson Moore inquired about the collapsing mechanism of the new tower. Mr. Wiegard stated an explanation of the tower's design was included with the informational packet provided to the Planning Commission and noted the top 70 feet of the tower was designed to collapse on itself.

Commissioner Johnson questioned whether the tower would reach the road in the event of a collapse. Mr. Wiegard stated the fall radius would not reach High Street, N.E. or any dwellings, but could reach parcels behind the tower. Mr. Wiegard noted the residences on these parcels are located towards the front of the property, due to the steep slope along the rear.

Commissioner Knies questioned whether it was possible for the tower to be engineered to break within a shorter radius so as not to fall on the parcels behind the tower. Mr. Wiegard stated this may be possible but noted the price of the tower would likely increase. Mr. Wiegard stated the 70-foot fall radius would serve as a worst case scenario.

Discussion on Conditional Use Permit request by Jeff Holland of Network Building + Consulting, LLC (representing Shentel), agent for Schaeffer Memorial Baptist Church, for a monopole-style communications tower at 570 High Street, N.E. in the R-3 Multi-Family Residential District – (continued).

Chairperson Moore stated prevailing winds in the area usually run from the northwest going southeast. Mr. Wiegard stated the tower is designed to withstand 90 mile per hour wind speeds. Chairperson Moore stated the winds would not generally be blowing towards the parcels within the tower's fall zone. Chairperson Moore requested additional information regarding risk analysis of the wind conditions.

Commissioner Franusich asked the applicant about concerns related to radiation from the tower. Mr. Wiegard stated community members were provided information regarding radiation in a letter dated April 21, 2017. Mr. Wiegard stated the materials were provided from the FCC and the American Cancer Society and noted personal communication service devices and facilities put out radiation at a range of 0.002 to 2 percent of what is permitted under international guidelines. Mr. Wiegard stated a person would have to stand directly against the tower for a prolonged amount of time to be exposed to a dangerous level of radiation. Mr. Wiegard stated the radiation is non-ionizing, unlike gamma or x-rays, and noted the Telecommunications Act of 1996 bars decisions on monopoles based solely on environmental effects.

Mr. Wiegard stated the goal of the project is to replace a 17 year-old wooden pole with a tower engineered to be safer and more predictable.

A community member from the audience stated the community had no say in the construction of the original pole and would prefer there be no tower at all.

Chairperson Moore asked whether the existing pole could be replaced in-kind or maintained without approval from Town Council. Mr. Warren stated the pole could be maintained but any significant change would trigger the need for a conditional use permit. Mr. Warren stated the existing tower was issued a building permit in 1999 and noted a conditional use permit was not required at the time it was constructed.

Chairperson Moore stated the next Planning Commission meeting would take place on Monday, July 17, 2017 and there would be further discussion and a possible vote on a recommendation to Town Council regarding the request.

Discussion on a Conditional Use Permit request by Ashley Jones, New River Barbell and Fitness, agent for Kevin Carter, for a private recreational facility (gym) at 492 Reading Road, S.E., Unit C in the I-2 General Industrial District.

Commissioner Franusich asked whether Ms. Jones was currently operating at 492 Reading Road, S.E. Ms. Jones stated the gym was used for exercise but was not currently operating.

Discussion on a Conditional Use Permit request by Ashley Jones, New River Barbell and Fitness, agent for Kevin Carter, for a private recreational facility (gym) at 492 Reading Road, S.E., Unit C in the I-2 General Industrial District – (continued).

Chairperson Moore read the proposed conditions:

- 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 applicant shall use and maintain the facilities and equipment in accordance with the equipment manufacturer's guidelines.
- 3) This permit shall be subject to review by the Planning Commission in one year.

Commissioner Johnson asked whether there was a previous business at this location. Commissioner Franusich stated the property is generally used for industrial purposes.

Commissioner Kries and Chairperson Moore questioned whether all exercising would take place indoors. Ms. Jones stated there are currently no plans for outdoor programming.

Commissioner Johnson questioned whether the floor was designed to withstand the impact of dropped weights. Ms. Jones stated they installed rubber mats on top of the concrete floor. Commissioner Moore noted the property is located in the I-2 General Industrial District and noise likely already exists.

Commissioner Johnson questioned what the maximum occupancy would be. Ms. Jones stated the maximum occupancy would be 15 but noted there will generally be no more than 8 to 10 occupants at once.

Mr. Warren stated the conditional use permit was being sought in order to ensure the compatibility of these facilities in the I-2 district. Commissioner Franusich noted there was a similar facility in the I-2 district nearby. Mr. Warren stated the I-2 district was modified to allow for private recreational facilities with a conditional use permit two years ago.

Commissioner Franusich made a motion to recommend Town Council approve the conditional use permit with the three conditions. Vice-Chairperson Sowers seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

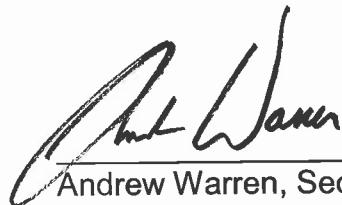
Other business.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Mr. Warren introduced Jared Crews as the new Planner I for the Town of Christiansburg.

There being no more business, Chairperson Moore adjourned the meeting at 8:09 p.m.



Craig Moore, Chairperson



Andrew Warren, Secretary Non-Voting