

**Christiansburg Planning Commission
Minutes of November 16, 2020**

Present: Thomas Bernard
Ashley Briggs
Felix Clarke Jr.
Mark Curtis
Jessica Davis
Johana Hicks
Hil Johnson, Chairperson
Jennifer D. Sowers
Andrew Warren, Secretary Non-Voting

Absent: Jeananne Knies, Vice – Chairperson
Ann Sandbrook

Staff/Visitors: Jude Cochran, staff
Jared Crews, staff
Steve Semones, Balzer & Associates
Brian Rice, 2440 Hitching Post Dr.
Kenneth White, 50 Weddle Way
I Ping Fu, 50 Weddle Way
Don Conner, 250 Slate Creek Dr.
Bob Jones, 200 Almetta Ave.
David Osterbauer, 100 Stafford Dr.
Lisa Dalton, 30 Weddle Way

Chairperson Johnson 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 Johnson opened the floor for public comment.

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

Approval of Planning Commission Minutes for the October 19, 2020 Meeting

Commissioner Bernard made a request to amend the October 19, 2020 Planning Commission meeting minutes to clarify his request that both first responders and public works staff provide recommendations regarding the adequacy of access to the proposed development on Simmons Road. Commissioner Sowers made a motion to approve the October 19, 2020 Planning Commission meeting minutes with the change as noted. Commissioner Hicks seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.

Public hearing for a rezoning request by Balzer and Associates, Inc., on behalf of RWW36, LLC (applicant), for an approximately 4.306 acre property owned by Mary Maxie Jewell Trust, Mary Stewart, Janet Epperly, Bill Jewell, Trustees, located west of Weddle Way, N.W. (tax map no. 435-A-13). The request is to rezone the property from R-1A, Rural Residential to R-2, Two-Family Residential with proffers in order to create 7 two-family dwelling lots for a total of 14 units as well as a lot designated for stormwater management. The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

Chairperson Johnson opened the public hearing.

Steve Semones, Balzer and Associates, Inc., stated the applicant was requesting a rezoning of the subject property from R1-A rural residential to R-2 two-family residential and gave a brief overview of the subject property and the proposed development. Mr. Semones stated the developer intends, if approved, to construct 7 duplexes, totaling 14 units, while conforming with R-2 zoning standards. Mr. Semones noted a 50-foot right of way had been deeded connecting the property to Weddle Way.

Mr. Semones stated roughly one half-acre of open space was proposed for stormwater management and described the existing and proposed utilities in the area. Mr. Semones stated the average proposed lot size would exceed the minimum town requirements and noted the proposed duplexes would be of similar architecture to homes adjacent to the subject property. Additionally, Mr. Semones stated the price range of the dwellings will be roughly \$250,000 and up, noting the property will be maintained by a management company.

Don Conner, 250 Slate Creek Drive, stated he did not object to the property being developed, but requested the planning commission consider the large amount of development recently approved in the area. Mr. Conner stated he had concerns with stormwater water management and the possibility of traffic congestion with the proposed developments in the area.

Bob Jones, 200 Almetta Avenue, stated his concerns with privacy between his property and the subject property and requested that the developer install a tree buffer between the two properties. He stated his neighbor on Almetta Avenue was in favor of this also.

Ken White, 50 Weddle Way, stated his concern with the development regarding the additional traffic and stormwater management issues that would come with the development. Mr. White also stated his concern that too much development has been approved in the area recently and requested the Planning Commission carefully consider their decision. Additionally, Mr. White noted the large amount of families in the area with kids who often recreate in the neighborhood streets.

I Ping Fu, 50 Weddle Way, stated she talked to other residents of the neighborhood and is representing their concerns as well as her own for the proposed development. Ms. Fu requested that the Planning Commission consider the large amount of development recently approved in the area.

David Osterbauer, 100 Stafford Drive, stated his concern with the additional traffic in the area with the proposed development, noting the large amount of families with children in the area.

Lisa Dalton, 30 Weddle Way, requested the rezoning be denied stating there may be a need for duplexes, but there is also a need for single family homes in the area.

Brian Rice, 2440 Hitching Post Drive, voiced his support for the development, noting the need for housing in the area, adding the proposed development would provide additional housing diversity in the area.

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

Discussion on a rezoning request by Balzer and Associates, Inc., on behalf of RWW36, LLC (applicant), for an approximately 4.306 acre property owned by Mary Maxie Jewell Trust, Mary Stewart, Janet Epperly, Bill Jewell, Trustees, located west of Weddle Way, N.W. (tax map no. 435-A-13). The request is to rezone the property from R-1A, Rural Residential to R-2, Two-Family Residential with proffers in order to create 7 two-family dwelling lots for a total of 14 units as well as a lot designated for stormwater management. The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

Chairperson Johnson opened the discussion.

Commissioner Hicks requested staff investigate the age of the existing utility lines in the neighborhood.

Commissioner Hicks requested the density of the neighboring Slate Creek Commons development. Mr. Warren stated staff would provide that information prior to the next meeting.

Commissioner Briggs requested staff attempt to investigate the original developer's intent for the land. Mr. Semones provided Commissioner Briggs with a plat of subdivision for the property.

Chairperson Johnson declared his appreciation and support for the public's response to public hearings.

Commissioner Sowers questioned the age of the most recent traffic study. Mr. Warren noted a traffic study is underway focusing on the potential impacts of the Clifton Town Center which was approved as a Planned Commercial Development in 2019. Commissioner Sowers asked if Stafford Drive is planned to be widened. Mr. Warren noted a portion of Stafford Drive between Peppers Ferry Road and Quin Stuart Boulevard would be required-- per the approval—to be widened during the Clifton Town Center construction by the developer.

Chairperson Johnson asked whether the ongoing traffic study would encompass all the proposed developments on the Peppers Ferry Road corridor. Mr. Semones noted the traffic study encompasses the existing development and some of the proposed developments in the area but stated the proposed development west of Weddle Way would not be included in the study.

Commissioner Bernard stated his concerns with traffic congestion and requested information on whether first responders and public works could adequately travel down the roadway.

Commissioner Hicks stated her concerns with the existing ingress and egress of Weddle Way to Stafford Drive. Mr. Semones stated the current roadways meet VDOT standards, but not current Town of Christiansburg standards.

Commissioner Briggs asked where the nearest sanitary sewer pump station is located and if the current pump station could accommodate the proposed development in addition to the other proposed developments in the area. Mr. Warren stated Town engineering staff found the existing infrastructure to be adequate to handle the proposed developments in the area.

Commissioner Hicks stated she had a conversation with a resident of Slate Creek Commons who voiced their opposition to the proposed development.

Commissioner Briggs asked whether the cul-de-sac on the proposed street would meet Town standards. Mr. Semones noted the street would be built to Town standards, including the cul-de-sac.

Commissioner Briggs asked what density R1-A zoning allows for compared to R-2 zoning. Mr. Crews explained the development standards in the R-1A district, noting twelve dwellings could possibly be built if lot area and setback requirements could be met on the subject property.

Commissioner Briggs asked what the benefits of building duplexes as opposed to single-family homes would be. Mr. Semones stated duplexes are in high demand,

noting duplexes are a housing product to bring onto the market when there are not a lot new units.

Chairperson Johnson questioned possible development of the property with the current zoning. Mr. Warren noted the property could be developed for single-family dwellings currently, noting the development would be subject to the administrative review process. Mr. Warren noted any development of the property would require a street to be provided for lots to be subdivided as a certain width of street frontage is required for each new lot.

Chairperson Johnson requested input from the Street Committee of Weddle Way and Stafford Drive to seek possible improvements. Mr. Warren stated that while the Street Committee(as a subcommittee of Council) does review traffic concerns as they arise, the Planning Commission is better positioned to evaluate the impacts of traffic in regards to a rezoning petition and incorporate this as a factor going into its overall recommendation to Council

Commissioner Briggs questioned if a traffic light would be installed at the Peppers Ferry Road and Stafford Drive intersection. Mr. Semones stated a traffic light is not currently planned unless the ongoing traffic study shows the need for one.

Chairperson Johnson noted the desire to wait and gather additional information regarding the project before making a recommendation to Town Council.

Mr. Warren restated that engineering staff stated the existing water and sewer utilities are adequate enough to serve the proposed developments.

Commissioners Bernard and Clarke stated a traffic study is highly desired. Mr. Semones explained a full traffic impact analysis would not be warranted for a development this size but noted additional information on traffic in the area could be provided.

Commissioner Briggs asked for further information on the intersection of the new road and Weddle Way and if stops signs could potentially be installed. Mr. Warren noted engineering staff could look into the request

Commissioner Hicks stated her concerns with stormwater management from the development. Mr. Semones stated the majority of stormwater will make it into the stormwater management area, noting the management area would have to be designed so that post-development runoff does not exceed the pre-development rate.

Commissioner Briggs requested information on whether there were any outstanding issues with other properties in Town developed by the applicant.

With no further comment, Chairperson Johnson closed the discussion.

Public Hearing for a proposed ordinance to amend Chapter 42, "Zoning" of the Christiansburg Town Code for the purpose of clarifying the allowance of structural projections such as awnings, canopies, roof eaves, gutters, architectural features, porches, and decks into minimum required yards.

Chairperson Johnson opened the public hearing.

Mr. Warren gave a brief presentation reviewing the proposed ordinance amendment, including the new proposed definitions as well as the addition of a new code section prescribing the allowance for structural projections into minimum yards.

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

Discussion/Action on a proposed ordinance to amend Chapter 42, "Zoning" of the Christiansburg Town Code for the purpose of clarifying the allowance of structural projections such as awnings, canopies, roof eaves, gutters, architectural features, porches, and decks into minimum required yards.

Chairperson Johnson opened the discussion.

Chairperson Johnson questioned if there were any responses from local developers regarding the changes. Mr. Crews stated one comment was received suggesting a definition be added for "stoops", but he stated no definition had been added currently as stoops would not be treated differently from decks. Mr. Crews also stated that the differentiation between decks and stoops could put the Zoning Ordinance in conflict with the Building Code.

Commissioner Bernard motioned to approve the ordinance amendment as drafted
Commissioner Sowers seconded the motion, which passed 8-0.

With no further comment, Chairperson Johnson closed the discussion.

Distribution of updated Planning Commission Bylaws.

The Commissioners were presented with the updated Planning Commission Bylaws, which reflect the allowance for virtual meeting attendance in accordance with State Code.

Other Business

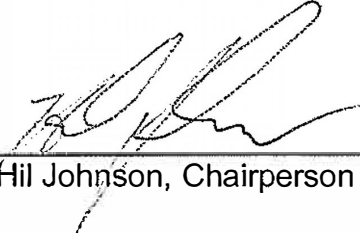
Chairperson Johnson opened the discussion.

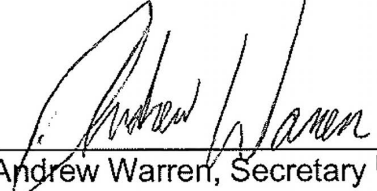
Mr. Warren noted there are no updates regarding the proposed Simmons Road/Teel Street development at this time.

Commissioner Briggs asked if there was any additional information on the update to the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Warren stated Council had agreed to Planning Commission reviewing and potentially updating the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Warren noted a schedule had not been planned yet but added scheduling could coincide with the new year.

Commissioner Briggs noted free COVID-19 testing would be provided at the Uptown Christiansburg (former New River Valley Mall) through the health department on November 19 for individuals who were planning to travel for Thanksgiving.

With no further business, Chairperson Johnson adjourned the meeting at 9:11 p.m.



Hil Johnson, Chairperson

Andrew Warren, Secretary Non-Voting

*Written Comments received on public hearing items are included in the staff report to Planning Commission in the Planning Commission agenda packet.