Christiansburg Planning Commission
Minutes of June 13, 2011

Present: Barry Akers
Mark M. Caldwell, III
M. H. Dorsett, AICP (arrived at 6:55 pm)
Craig Moore, Chairperson
Joe Powers
Jennifer D. Sowers (arrived at 6:33 pm)
Jim Vanhoozier
Randy S. Wingfield, Secretary Non-Voting

Absent: Ann H. Carter
Kevin D. Conner, Vice-Chairperson

Staff/Visitors: Nichole Hair, staff
Kali Casper, staff
Steve Sandy, Montgomery County Planning Director
Frank Radford, M & F Homes, LLC.
David Radford, M & F Homes, LLC
John Neel, Gay and Neel, Inc.
Carol Lindstrom

Chairperson Moore called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. in the Christiansburg Town Hall at 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia to discuss the following items:

Public Comment.

Chairperson Moore opened the floor for public comment. No public comments were given.

Approval of meetings minutes for May 31, 2011.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Commissioner Vanhoozier made a motion to recommend approval of the meeting minutes for May 31, 2011. Commissioner Caldwell seconded the motion which passed 5-0.

Commissioner Sowers arrived at 6:33 p.m.

Presentation by Montgomery County Planning Director Steve Sandy regarding the County Comprehensive Plan and urban development areas.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Mr. Sandy addressed the Planning Commission with a summary of the urban development area legislation in Montgomery County and its relation to the County's Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Sandy presented a slide show with his discussion and stated growth was based on Virginia Employment Commission projections. Mr. Sandy stated that two new Zoning Districts, Planned Unit Development – Traditional Neighborhood Development and Traditional Neighborhood Development – Infill, have been generated as a result of the process.

Commissioner Dorsett arrived at 6:55 p.m.

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Presentation by Montgomery County Planning Director Steve Sandy regarding the County Comprehensive Plan and urban development areas – (continued).

Commissioner Powers inquired if both developed and vacant land can be included as urban development areas and Mr. Sandy stated that if developed land is anticipated for potential redevelopment it can be included. Commissioner Dorsett inquired about areas in Town that would be considered for UDA designation. Mr. Wingfield stated there are areas along Rt. 114 and South Franklin Street that may be suitable. Commissioner Powers inquired if the Comprehensive Plan is finished being updated next summer, would the UDA be adopted after that to meet the state requirements. Mr. Wingfield indicated the UDA could be adopted in the Comprehensive Plan update or an amendment could be done after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

Council's intention to adopt an ordinance in regards to a rezoning request by M & F Homes, LLC for property on the eastern side of Walters Drive (tax parcel 434 – ((A)) – 14E) from B-3 General Business to R-2 Two-Family Residential. The property contains 1.054 acres and is scheduled as Mixed Use – Residential/Limited Business in the Future Land Use Map of the Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. The public hearing was held June 7, 2011.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Chairperson Moore read the drafted proffers: 1) No more than 2 duplexes (4 units) will be constructed on the subject property. 2) The proposed development will be incorporated into the Slate Creek Homeowner's Association and the individual dwellings will be responsible for all associated fees and will be entitled to all rights as noted in the HOA documents for the original Slate Creek development. 3) No additional open space will be provided during the subdivision process.

Commissioner Dorsett made a motion to recommend approval of the rezoning to Town Council with the proffers submitted. Commissioner Vanhoozier seconded the motion which passed 7-0. Commissioner Vanhoozier stated that he sees this as an extension of the existing Slate Creek Commons development. Commissioner Powers asked that when the plans are being prepared, that the developer give consideration to limiting the access points on Walters Drive.

Review of a Conditional Use Permit request by Heath B. Haug for a major home occupation for firearms sales at 1477 Scott Street (tax parcel 529 – ((32)) – 10) in the R-3 Multi-Family Residential District. The public hearing was held and approval given on December 19, 2006.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Mr. Wingfield indicated Mr. Haug submitted a letter to the Town regarding voiding his CUP if the property is sold. Chairperson Moore read the letter. Commissioner Dorsett stated it is her understanding the Conditional Use Permit can be altered by the Planning Commission after approval has been given. Mr. Wingfield stated he is unaware of any provision that would allow for conditions to be altered after approval. Commissioner Dorsett stated she wants to add a sunset clause if allowed. Mr. Wingfield stated he has spoken with the Town Attorney and the attorney feels the letter is binding and meets the intent.

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Review of a Conditional Use Permit request by Heath B. Haug for a major home occupation for firearms sales at 1477 Scott Street (tax parcel 529 – ((32)) – 10) in the R-3 Multi-Family Residential District. The public hearing was held and approval given on December 19, 2006 – (continued).

Commissioner Vanhoozier made a motion to review the application in 12 months if the Conditional Use Permit is not surrendered due to the sale of the property. Commissioner Akers seconded the motion.

Ms. Lindstrom inquired as to what happens if someone purchases the property and believes they can utilize the CUP and that is not the case. Commissioner Sowers stated it is the seller's responsibility to disclose the CUP is voided. Commissioner Sowers indicated there is some due diligence on the new owner also.

The motion passed 7-0.

Discussion of update to the Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Chairperson Moore stated a look at a Town-wide rezoning may be a good idea. Commissioner Dorsett stated there are areas in Town, like the Park District, where there are multi-family and townhomes in the historic areas. Commissioner Dorsett stated the roads were not designed for the number of vehicles coming from such large developments and added that there should not be the number of units possible under multi-family regulations as an incentive to tear down historic structures. Commissioner Dorsett stated she would like to rezone these areas to R-2 to limit development to single-family homes and duplexes. Commissioner Dorsett stated she would also want to look at areas like Slate Creek Commons where there is a large residential development in a district zoned for business. Chairperson Moore inquired if there is a list available of properties like the Slate Creek Commons that would be rezoned. Mr. Wingfield stated he can come up with a list of developments such as PHD's that are zoned for a higher density.

Commissioner Dorsett suggested a dedicated PUD district be developed. Mr. Neel stated he would be in favor of such a district depending on how it is written. Mr. Neel stated he is in favor of having a developer bring in a plan and work together with Town. Mr. Neel stated that the County has a PUD District with a designated base zoning district, which is more confusing. Mr. Neel stated it is similar to what the Town allows but that it is layered differently. Commissioner Dorsett stated that people often assume mixed uses with planned developments. Mr. Neel stated that Blacksburg has a mixed use district but that they don't appear to want commercial use in these areas. Commissioner Dorsett stated that people think of mixed use as business and residential but that planned unit development is typically more residential use. Mr. Neel stated that there have been some successes in Blacksburg with traditional neighborhood design with four-unit townhouse blocks that look like a single-family residence, but that the commercial lots in mixed use developments are still vacant. Mr. Neel stated that he has theories that this is because people like to stop near their offices for coffee or groceries, not near their residence and also that this area does not have the volume and density of people as some more urban areas. Mr. Neel added that this area also has topographic constraints and is not as connected as an area like Richmond.

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Discussion of update to the Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan – (continued).

Commissioner Powers stated there is potential for redevelopment with a lot of underutilized commercial properties and there could be more intense use if residential infill were allowed in these areas. Mr. Neel stated that an area like Market Place could be innately more valuable with zoning changes. Commissioner Dorsett stated along Radford Street would be an opportunity for a redevelopment area. Commissioner Dorsett suggested rezoning this area as a mixed use area.

Commissioner Powers stated he sees the UDA as an opportunity to look at these issues since UDA's will used across the state and major developers will be aware of them. Commissioner Powers stated through the Comprehensive Plan process there will be neighborhoods that will be identified as not wanting to change. Chairperson Moore stated that many people are unaware that there are business uses in residential areas and residential uses in business areas. Commissioner Dorsett stated it is important to take this Comprehensive Plan process to a neighborhood level. Commissioner Dorsett stated the subcommittee is at the beginning of the Comprehensive Plan process. Commissioner Dorsett stated surveys will go out in the July utility billing. Chairperson Moore inquired in terms of the meetings this summer, if there has been any consideration of bringing in the New River Valley PDC staff to assist. Commissioner Dorsett stated PDC staff would not be brought in to assist.

Mr. Wingfield inquired about the number of meetings to be held. Commissioner Dorsett stated there will be 6 formal meetings. Commissioner Dorsett stated the number of informal meeting is up for debate, but that she would estimate 20 to 60. Commissioner Dorsett stated Montgomery County had 87 meetings with their Comprehensive Plan development. Commissioner Dorsett stated the number of meetings depends on how many organizations want to participate. Chairperson Moore inquired in terms of these meetings, what Commissioner Dorsett is excepting of staff. Commissioner Dorsett indicated Ms. Casper attended last night's meeting with the Civic League. Commissioner Dorsett indicated she and Commissioner Powers have very flexible schedules and will be able to facilitate some meetings.

There being no more business Chairperson Moore adjourned the meeting at 7:51 p.m.

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Craig Moore, Chairperson Randy S. Wingfield, Secretary Non-Voting

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