Christiansburg Planning Commission
Minutes of January 9, 2012

Present: Barry Akers (arrived at 7:16 p.m.)
Ann H. Carter
M. H. Dorsett, AICP
Steve Huppert
Craig Moore, Chairperson
Joe Powers, Vice-Chairperson
Jennifer D. Sowers (arrived at 7:26 p.m.)
Randy S. Wingfield, Secretary Non-Voting

Absent: Mark M. Caldwell, III

Staff/Visitors: Nichole Hair, staff
Kali Casper, staff
Carol Lindstrom
Steve Semones, Balzer and Associates, Inc.
Harry Collins
Bob Poff
Connie Turner, 101 Alleghany Street
Samuel Bauer, 100 Alleghany Street
Karen Bauer, 100 Alleghany Street
Tacy Newell-Foutz
Mark Poff, 345 Bracken Street
Karen Hill, 230 Clearview Drive
Gloria Poff, 105 Baldwin Lane
James Brunner, 395 Williams Street

Chairperson Moore called the meeting to order at 7:02 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. Samuel Bauer resides at 100 Alleghany Street and expressed concern regarding property on Alleghany Street for possible development of duplexes. Mr. Bauer stated Alleghany Street is a heavily used road and traffic is a problem. Mr. Bauer expressed concern over the effect on the neighborhood if duplexes are built, even though the property is zoned R-2, the predominant use is single family residences. Mr. Bauer stated drainage is an issue. Mr. Bauer stated stormwater drains into this area. Mr. Bauer stated adding more impervious surfaces there is nowhere for the water to go and it will flood homes. Mr. Bauer added there is no drainage for stormwater in the area.

DRAFT

Public Comment – (continued).

Connie Turner resides at 101 Alleghany Street and wanted to echo Mr. Bauer's concerns about the development of the Allene Graham property. Ms. Turner stated 20 years ago developers wished to put in duplexes or townhomes on Epperly Drive. Ms. Turner added the residents petitioned and the developer built single family homes.

Bob Poff addressed Planning Commission regarding downtown parking that is on the agenda. Mr. Poff stated parking requirements can hamper development above stores in the downtown area. Mr. Poff stated the current regulations require 1 parking space for 200 sq. ft. of floor space for retail. Mr. Poff stated this would require 129 spaces for the total building and 65 parking spaces for the antique mall at 4 W. Main Street. Mr. Poff stated there may be 5 cars parked there on a Saturday. Mr. Poff stated there should be different parking requirements for the downtown area compared to the suburban shopping centers. Mr. Poff added allowing parking to be counted within 600 feet of a building is too short of a distance.

Commissioner Akers entered the meeting.

Commissioner Dorsett inquired if there has there a proposal brought in for the development on Alleghany Street. Mr. Wingfield stated he has not seen a plan for that. Commissioner Dorsett inquired what safe guards are in place. Mr. Wingfield stated single-family residences are allowed by right on existing lots if setbacks are met and duplexes would require 100 feet of street frontage and 12,500 square feet on the lot. Mr. Wingfield added staff review would require stormwater and erosion control per the State Code. Commissioner Dorsett inquired if a work session can be held to strengthen the regulations. Mr. Wingfield indicated a work session can be held and he would like to invite someone from the Town's Engineering Department to attend. Chairperson Moore indicated he does not have a problem with setting a meeting for stormwater regulations.

Ms. Carol Lindstrom addressed Planning Commission stating she has found the Town Codes were only updated or modified if the State Code mandated. Ms. Lindstrom stated now is the time to look at the Codes to protect the citizens.

Approval of meeting minutes for December 12, 2011.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Mr. Wingfield indicated he had questions regarding motions. Mr. Wingfield stated on Page 4 of the meeting minutes there was a motion to nominate him as the secretary of the Planning Commission. Commissioner Dorsett stated Commissioner Carter seconded that motion. Mr. Wingfield inquired who made the motion to close the nominations. Chairperson Moore indicated Commission Caldwell made that motion.

Commissioner Akers made the motion to accept the meeting minutes for December 12, 2011 with the changes noted. Commissioner Carter seconded the motion which passed 5-0 with Commissioner Huppert not voting.

DRAFT

Planning Commission public hearing for Council's intention to adopt an ordinance amending Chapter 30 "Zoning" of the Christiansburg Town Code in regards to provisions for private recreational facilities in the I-1 Limited Industrial District with a Conditional Use Permit. The Town Council public hearing is set for February 7, 2012.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Vice-Chairperson Powers requested staff give more detail. Mr. Wingfield stated the next request is for baseball and softball practice in a private facility. Mr. Wingfield stated the Town Code was changed to require Conditional Use Permits for private recreational facilities in most of the zoning districts; however, currently there is no allowance for private recreational facilities in the I-1. Chairperson Moore stated this would be a Code change applicable to all I-1 property, not just for the next request. Mr. Wingfield stated with the Code change a CUP would be required. Commissioner Carter inquired if the request is for an indoor facility. Mr. Wingfield indicated it is. Chairperson Moore stated the Planning Commission is only looking at the Code change and the Conditional Use Permit for a facility is the next item on the agenda.

Commissioner Sowers entered the meeting.

Mark Poff stated he has concerns if the Code is being changed. Mr. Poff indicated he is not opposed to the recreation center for the kids. Mr. Poff stated he is concerned about changing the Code and if that would lead to something else opening up without getting permission. Mr. Poff stated there are a lot of children in the neighborhood and very limited where to play due to traffic on Bracken Street.

Chairperson Moore stated this is a Code change, if the Code change is approved, the applicant would need CUP approval and the Planning Commission can recommend conditions which Town Council could apply. Commissioner Carter inquired what other places would be affected by this Code change are. Mr. Wingfield stated all the brown properties on the Zoning Map. Vice-Chairperson Powers inquired if the adjoining residences are zoned I-1. Mr. Wingfield indicated that is correct.

Contingent on Item 3, Planning Commission public hearing for a Conditional Use Permit request by David Harding (agent for property owner Connie Reed) for a private recreational facility at 195 Sullivan Street (tax parcel 526 – ((3)) – 71) in the I-1 Limited Industrial District. The Town Council public hearing is set for February 7, 2012.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Commissioner Dorsett indicated she has several questions and a staff analysis would be helpful to address parking, impact analysis, how many children will be using the facility and how much parking is on-site. Commissioner Carter indicated she is very disappointed the applicant is not in attendance. Karen Hill resides at 230 Clearview Drive and expressed concerns over the parking situation. Vice-Chairperson Powers stated the request is for only a portion of the Reed property. Vice-Chairperson Powers added the required parking would have to be in the immediate area. Mr. Wingfield added parking could be within 600 feet of the building. Vice-Chairperson Powers stated he wants to limit where the parking would be located.

DRAFT

Contingent on Item 3, Planning Commission public hearing for a Conditional Use Permit request by David Harding (agent for property owner Connie Reed) for a private recreational facility at 195 Sullivan Street (tax parcel 526 – ((3)) – 71) in the I-1 Limited Industrial District – (continued).

Vice-Chairperson Powers inquired about the any age range of participants. Mr. Wingfield stated it is for youth programs. Vice-Chairperson Powers suggested limiting participation to a certain age group. Mr. Wingfield stated the facility has been operating and that he contacted the property owner about the use. Ms. Hill stated she wants to echo the concerns regarding the traffic on the adjoining streets. Vice-Chairperson Powers stated Sullivan Street and Williams Street are public streets. Commissioner Carter inquired if those using the private facility would be paying. Mr. Wingfield stated he felt if a child wanted to join, they could be signed up and pay a fee. Mr. Wingfield stated it is a private operation and not run by the Town, schools or County. Ms. Lindstrom inquired about the parking issue and what would be required. Ms. Lindstrom also inquired if there are other businesses located on the property, could they count the same spaces within 600 feet. Mr. Wingfield stated they cannot claim the same spaces within 600 feet of the building if the uses are operated simultaneously. Vice-Chairperson Powers stated this is why it is important to get a sketch regarding the facility. Mr. Wingfield stated the parking required one per four seats or seating spaces and since there would be no fixed seats, he would base the requirement on the maximum number of people involved at any time. Gloria Poff resides at 105 Baldwin Lane and owns adjoining property. Ms. Poff indicated her property is zoned I-1 and inquired if she could do a recreational facility. Mr. Wingfield stated if the Code change is approved, Ms. Poff could apply for a CUP for a private recreational facility. Mr. Wingfield stated the applicant inquired about the use being by right and Mr. Wingfield suggested that a CUP was more suitable. James Brunner resides at 395 Williams Street and inquired about what sports are being allowed at the facility. Chairperson Moore stated the facility is currently used for baseball and softball practice.

Commissioner Huppert inquired if there can be a way to insure the applicant will be in attendance at the next meeting. Mr. Wingfield indicated he would request the applicant be in attendance. Commissioner Dorsett mentioned this is the first time for separate public hearings and the Planning Commission is working out the kinks.

Planning Commission public hearing for Council's intention to adopt an ordinance amending Chapter 30 "Zoning" of the Christiansburg Town Code in regards to multi-family density allowances in the B-3 General Business District. The Town Council public hearing is set for February 7, 2012.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Mr. Wingfield stated the request is to increase the multi-family density only in the B-3 District. Mr. Wingfield added in the B-3 District, the density cannot exceed the density allowance of R-3 which is 10 units per acre. Mr. Wingfield stated this is a Code change to allow up to 20 units per acre. Mr. Wingfield added a CUP would still be required for residential use in the B-3 District. Commissioner Dorsett stated she felt the density is not applicable to all areas zoned B-3.

DRAFT

Planning Commission public hearing for Council's intention to adopt an ordinance amending Chapter 30 "Zoning" of the Christiansburg Town Code in regards to multi-family density allowances in the B-3 General Business District – (continued).

Mr. Wingfield stated residential use in the B-3 district requires a CUP, allowing for the Planning Commission and Town Council to apply conditions they see fit. Commissioner Dorsett stated this could allow multiple students living in a unit. Mr. Wingfield stated no more than two unrelated persons outside of the host family can live together in this zoning. Mr. Wingfield added the Building Code would address occupancy load. Steve Semones indicated his firm is the agent for the applicant but will reserve full presentation for the CUP portion. Commissioner Dorsett inquired as to why the property was not being requested for rezoning instead. Mr. Wingfield stated even with a rezoning, the density would not be allowed unless the Code is changed. If the Code is changed to allow a higher density in B-3 the developer would still be bound by the regulation of density and this could be conditioned as a lower density, but with a code change in the R-3 to allow the higher density, the density could be by right in the R-3. Mr. Wingfield stated the change to the B-3 District gives the Planning Commission and Town Council approval authority as well as the opportunity to place conditions if approved.

Mr. Bauer inquired why anyone would want to allow density to increase. Ms. Turner stated high density is a way for developers packing them in and lining their pockets. Ms. Turner inquired if there is consideration being given to the surrounding areas. Ms. Lindstrom indicated she has concern for increasing the potential for emergency calls and what the development will do to traffic.

Contingent on Item 5, Planning Commission public hearing for a Conditional Use Permit request by Balzer and Associates, Inc. (agent for property owner RWW36, LLC) for a planned housing development at the end of Farmview Road, N.E. (tax parcels 436 – ((A)) – 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41 and a portion of 436 – ((A)) – 35 and 36) in the B-3 General Business District. The Town Council public hearing is set for February 7, 2012.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Mr. Semones indicated he the representing the developer. Mr. Semones stated the property includes a portion of the property that was part of the 2007 boundary line adjustment between Montgomery County and Christiansburg. Mr. Semones indicated Balzer and Associates has provided more information in their staff analysis with the new process. Mr. Semones stated the property is currently zoned B-3 and allows multi-family development with a CUP. Mr. Semones indicated the option to rezone the property or apply for a CUP in the B-3 district was considered. Mr. Semones stated requirement for 10 units per acre is suitable in a residential area but this is in a Business District, and he felt it is appropriate to request a higher density. Mr. Semones indicated where this property is located and what the Future Land Use map shows in the Comprehensive Plan makes this a logical place for a higher density development and possibly an Urban Development Area.

DRAFT

Contingent on Item 5, Planning Commission public hearing for a Conditional Use Permit request by Balzer and Associates, Inc. (agent for property owner RWW36, LLC) for a planned housing development at the end of Farmview Road, N.E. (tax parcels 436 – ((A)) – 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41 and a portion of 436 – ((A)) – 35 and 36) in the B-3 General Business District – (continued).

Mr. Semones stated the developer has provided conditions of their own:

1. The property shall be developed in substantial conformance to the concept plan prepared by Balzer and Associates, Inc. and dated 12-20-2011.
2. All exterior lighting in the parking areas shall be directed towards the interior of the property.
3. There shall be a maximum of 330 residential units.
4. Facades/exterior walls shall be articulated with recesses, projections, doors, balconies or windows. No uninterrupted length of any façade shall exceed (50) feet.
5. The property will be designed and developed in a unified manner and will incorporate similar and complementary architectural features such as masonry materials and roof materials, planting materials, signage, lighting and paving surfaces.
6. The exterior of the principal buildings shall be primarily brick.
7. All buildings shall be a maximum of three (3) full stories above the front street/parking lot grade.
8. No dumpster shall be located within 75 feet of the southern boundary line of the property.
9. A vegetative buffer shall be installed along the southern property boundary adjacent to Wheatland Retirement Community. This buffer will consist of evergreen trees planted at a 6' minimum height and planted on a minimum 12' center.

Mr. Semones stated the project would be developed in phases with the first phase being 10 building plus the amenities. Mr. Semones stated utilities are available in the area. Mr. Semones indicated the property drains back to the By-pass and 2 stormwater management areas are planned on the property. Mr. Semones stated there are no environmental issues at this point. Mr. Semones stated other multi-family developments are income restricted and these are not. Mr. Semones detailed the traffic analysis. Mr. Semones indicated much traffic has been rerouted to use the 460 Bypass since its construction. Mr. Semones stated N. Franklin Street is almost overdesigned for current traffic and is functioning a Level of Service C. Mr. Semones added that the Farmview Road traffic southbound to N. Franklin Street would have a delay increase from 34.6 seconds to 38.5 seconds and that the southbound N. Franklin Street traffic to Farmview Road would increase from 34.6 seconds to 37.1 seconds during afternoon peak traffic and that morning peak delays are less.

Mr. Semones stated the developer is asking for the 20 units per acre in the Code change; however the proposal is for 15.7 units per acre. Commissioner Huppert inquired if Farmview Road is the primary entrance and exit for the development. Mr. Semones stated that is the only access until others are developed. Mr. Semones stated Farmview Road would have to be improved with this project.

DRAFT

Contingent on Item 5, Planning Commission public hearing for a Conditional Use Permit request by Balzer and Associates, Inc. (agent for property owner RWW36, LLC) for a planned housing development at the end of Farmview Road, N.E. (tax parcels 436 – ((A)) – 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41 and a portion of 436 – ((A)) – 35 and 36) in the B-3 General Business District – (continued).

Commissioner Huppert expressed concern over traffic and how the traffic analysis was based on 300 cars. Commissioner Huppert felt with college students there could be 900 cars. Mr. Semones indicated the traffic count was based on the 660 parking spaces required. Commissioner Dorsett questioned the traffic count math and indicated she came up with different numbers. Mr. Semones stated the numbers used are from ITE (Institute of Transportation Engineers) Manual, which is the VDOT accepted standard, and not from Balzer and Associates. Commissioner Dorsett stated the majority of vehicles would be students and staff going through Peppers Ferry Road to exit 3B towards Blacksburg. Commissioner Dorsett expressed concern over the use of this intersection. Mr. Semones stated the level of service for Farmview Road is based on previous estimates.

Commissioner Huppert stated the intersection at Cambria Street by the Recreation Center has many issues and he expressed concern that it would happen at Farmview Road. Commissioner Dorsett inquired what is precluding the extension of access by Grand Home Furnishing (at 220 Laurel Street). Vice-Chairperson Powers stated the assumption is being made that each of the units will make only 1 trip out and 1 trip in during peak hours, but with multiple college students there could be more trips out and in per unit. Mr. Semones stated the developer will not be marketing to just students. Mr. Semones stated the intent is for professionals in Christiansburg, Radford and Blacksburg. Vice-Chairperson Powers inquired if there has been a limit to the bedrooms in the units. Mr. Semones stated the units will be 1, 2 or 3 bedrooms. Vice-Chairperson Powers inquired if the applicant would proffer that Farmview Road would be rebuilt by the developer. Mr. Semones stated the rebuild will be required. Mr. Wingfield agreed the developer would have to upgrade the street.

Commissioner Dorsett inquired about what the developer will be doing to make the project low impact. Mr. Semones stated the development would have 41% lot coverage and not 80%, which is the maximum allowed by the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Semones added the traffic islands are being considered to do some water quality and possibly bio retention. Vice-Chairperson Powers stated most of the drainage goes out into the County. Mr. Semones indicated that is correct. Vice-Chairperson Powers inquired if the County has commented on the request. Commissioner Dorsett inquired if a letter has been received from the MPO. Mr. Wingfield indicated neither the County nor MPO have commented on the request. Commissioner Huppert stated it has been noted the development will be close to restaurants, but there is no way for a resident to walk to restaurants or shopping. Mr. Semones stated there are several reasons for not providing access at this point. Mr. Semones added the developer does not want to limit Mr. Woody or someone else with how to develop the remaining property and added a gas line on the property is an issue and topography is an issue. Mr. Semones stated sidewalk and trail options are being looked at.

DRAFT

Contingent on Item 5, Planning Commission public hearing for a Conditional Use Permit request by Balzer and Associates, Inc. (agent for property owner RWW36, LLC) for a planned housing development at the end of Farmview Road, N.E. (tax parcels 436 – ((A)) – 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41 and a portion of 436 – ((A)) – 35 and 36) in the B-3 General Business District – (continued).

Commissioner Akers stated people are not going to limit themselves to just that side of N. Franklin Street. Commissioner Akers stated he has concerns of pedestrians and bicycles trying to cross N. Franklin Street without proper crossings. Mr. Semones stated he will look into the option of crossing with VDOT. Commissioner Dorsett noted there are no playgrounds for children on the concept drawing. Mr. Semones stated he can check on that as the developer has done tot lots on other projects. Commissioner Dorsett inquired about what is stopping the extension of a walking trail at the end of the property. Mr. Semones stated he wanted to see what recommendations come out of this meeting. Mr. Semones added he is not sure if the best location for "dumping" trail users out is in the loading area behind Grand. Vice-Chairperson Powers stated it is important to consider where a second entrance would be located. Vice-Chairperson Powers expressed concerns over the figures on the water and sewer service with 330 units and 580 residents. Mr. Semones stated the developer gave the unit breakdown of what they hoped to develop and the number of residents to occupy those units. Mr. Semones stated he can use 900+ residents and provide those calculations for water and sewer usage. Vice-Chairperson Powers requested the Town's Engineering Department provide a letter stating that this is not going to be a problem for the infrastructure.

Vice-Chairperson Powers inquired if Wheatland Retirement had been notified since they are an adjoining property. Ms. Hair indicated a certified letter was sent to the property owner who is not local. Vice-Chairperson Powers requested a packet be taken to the local persons. Mr. Semones indicated he would be meeting with the owners of Wheatland. Commissioner Dorsett inquired about buffers between Wheatland and the development. Mr. Semones stated evergreens would be utilized. Commissioner Dorsett noted there is not a buffer shown at some of the units in Wheatland. Mr. Semones stated that will be part of the conversation with Wheatland. Commissioner Huppert inquired about what taxes will be brought into the Town with this development. Mr. Wingfield stated the property itself would only generate property tax.

Commissioner Carter indicated some of the drainage would go to the Teel property. Mr. Semones stated there may be a need an additional stormwater management area and that is noted in the report. Commissioner Dorsett stated she would like further staff analysis.

Mr. Semones stated he knows the Planning Commission would like some more information on access and inquired if there is anything else he can address.

DRAFT

Contingent on Item 5, Planning Commission public hearing for a Conditional Use Permit request by Balzer and Associates, Inc. (agent for property owner RWW36, LLC) for a planned housing development at the end of Farmview Road, N.E. (tax parcels 436 – ((A)) – 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41 and a portion of 436 – ((A)) – 35 and 36) in the B-3 General Business District – (continued).

Commissioner Dorsett stated the report includes a nice Comprehensive Plan analysis. Vice-Chairperson Powers stated he feels it would be much more appropriate to have a higher density residential zone in the Zoning Ordinance. Commissioner Sowers stated this is housing that is in demand. Commissioner Sowers added she anticipated there will not be many undergrad students. Mr. Semones stated he wants to be able to address everyone's comments. Mr. Semones stated in order to address density, a Code change is required. Commissioner Dorsett stated a revision of Zoning Ordinance will be done with the Comprehensive Plan update and suggested there can be an expansion of Residential Zoning Districts at that time. Vice-Chairperson Powers stated if the Town Council and Planning Commission wanted to go that direction, he suggests the development of new Residential Districts be done. Mr. Wingfield stated that is could be done in a few months at the soonest.

Ms. Lindstrom inquired what percentage of these units will be handicapped accessible. Mr. Semones stated the development will meet Building Code requirements. Ms. Lindstrom inquired if the Town would to enforce occupancy regulations and Mr. Wingfield stated the Town would. Ms. Lindstrom inquired if water pressure will be affected and stated fire trucks need certain water pressure and if improvements are needed, questioned what the cost to tax payers would be.

Mr. Wingfield stated that he anticipated bus service to the development and Mr. Semones stated there is the potential for a bus stop with the development. Ms. Lindstrom inquired if any other adjoining properties that would utilize Farmview Road will be developed. Mr. Semones stated there are no immediate plans at this time. Mr. Semones added if other property is developed it would kick in the requirement to develop access onto N. Franklin Street.

Review of a Conditional Use Permit request by Dan Steinberg (acting as agent for property owners Loy D. and Mary E. Burch) for manufacture and assembly of smoking pipes and accessories at 3145 N. Franklin Street (tax parcels 406 – ((4)) – 22 and 23) in the B-3 General Business District. The public hearing was held December 7, 2010 and approval given on December 21, 2010.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Mr. Wingfield stated the request had been approved with 3 conditions:

1. The operation is limited to not more than twenty employees total on-premises at any one time.
2. This permit is subject to inspections and approval of the facilities by the Fire Marshall and Building Official.
3. This permit shall be subject to Planning Commission review in one year.

DRAFT

Review of a Conditional Use Permit request by Dan Steinberg (acting as agent for property owners Loy D. and Mary E. Burch) for manufacture and assembly of smoking pipes and accessories at 3145 N. Franklin Street (tax parcels 406 – ((4)) – 22 and 23) in the B-3 General Business District. The public hearing was held December 7, 2010 and approval given on December 21, 2010 – (continued).

Mr. Wingfield stated there have been no violations and no complaints.

Commissioner Dorsett made a motion to extend the CUP for one year. Commissioner Akers seconded the motion which passed 7-0.

Downtown parking analysis.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion.

Commissioner Dorsett made a motion to table the item due to the time of evening. Commissioner Huppert seconded the motion which passed 7-0.

Other business.

Chairperson Moore stated staff will be giving an update on the subcommittees at a meeting when there is not such a full agenda.

Mr. Wingfield stated the Town has two years from the release of Census data for the Urban Development Area requirements to be incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan.

There being no more business Chairperson Moore adjourned the meeting at 9:14 p.m.

_____ _____

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

DRAFT