Christiansburg Planning Commission
Minutes of August 13, 2012

Present: Barry Akers
Ann H. Carter
M. H. Dorsett, AICP
Steve Huppert
Ashley Parsons
Joe Powers, Vice-Chairperson
Jennifer D. Sowers
Nichole Hair, Secretary Non-Voting

Absent: Harry Collins
Craig Moore, Chairperson

Staff/Visitors: Kali Casper, staff
Roger Galloway, 905 George Edward Via
Joe Walker, 415 Miller Street
Mr. and Mrs. Gary Cope, Miller Street
Jim Wesel

Vice-Chairperson Powers called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. in the Christiansburg Town Hall at 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia to discuss the following items:

<u>Public Comment.</u>

Vice-Chairperson Powers opened the floor for public comment. Mr. Joe Walker of 415 Miller Street requested adding ownership of horses to the residential zoning districts in Town. Commissioner Huppert mentioned Mr. Walker resides at the very end of Miller Street. Mr. Walker suggested conditions for a zoning permit (rather than a Conditional Use Permit) with size constraints for locating horses in residential districts. Vice-Chairperson Powers asked Ms. Hair for Mr. Walker's location on the zoning map. Ms. Hair indicated the location of 415 Miller Street on the zoning map. Vice-Chairperson Powers asked if property is zoned R-2. Ms. Hair responded the zoning is R-2 Two-Family Residential. Commissioner Carter noted it is near David Harmon's old place and he had horses. Commissioner Parsons asked if and where horses are allowed in Town. Ms. Hair responded horses are allowed in the A Agriculture and R-1A Rural Residential Districts. Commissioner Akers added another property owner nearby once owned horses. Vice-Chairperson Powers suggested the Planning Commission return to this topic later in the meeting.

Mr. Gary Cope, resident of Miller Street, raised concern and opposition to horses in a residential area. He stated the horses are visible from their front yard. He added the property is zoned R-2 and is not a farm but it smells like farmland. Mr. Cope indicated they moved to a neighborhood and do not wish to be next to a farm. He added it is not an appropriate use of land and it would set a dangerous precedent if it is granted special use.

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Public Comment – (continued).

Mr. Cope stated there is adequate land that is zoned appropriately for horses. He noted additional neighbors will attend future meetings on this issue. Vice-Chairperson Powers asked for confirmation there are horses at the location now. Ms. Hair stated there are horses currently on the property and Town Council will allow Mr. Walker to keep the horses there while the Zoning Ordinance is worked on. Ms. Hair indicated Mr. Walker will have to make other arrangements if the Planning Commission does not consider this issue with the current Zoning Ordinance revision. Commissioner Huppert asked Mr. Walker about time limit given by Town Council. Mr. Walker responded 60 days from July 31st. Commissioner Dorsett asked if this would be enough time to go through the process for the zoning revision. Ms. Hair stated Town Council allowed for leeway with progress being made by Mr. Walker. Vice-Chairperson Powers indicated further discussion would be had when looking at the Zoning Ordinance revision later on the agenda.

Mr. Roger Galloway respectfully urged Planning Commission to not accept the draft proposal for amateur radio towers since it is excessive. He noted it will add $500-$1,000 to an amateur radio project for professionally engineered and stamped drawings of the lot. Mr. Galloway stated this does not meet the intent of the state statute. Mr. Galloway added he feels the draft has been written specifically for him and it is written to keep amateur radio out of Christiansburg. He repeated the requirements do not meet the intent of the state statute because engineered and stamped drawings are excessive in terms of cost and are unnecessary. He stated it is not needed to determine the distance of structure from lot line and it could be easily measured. He added during the building permit process, exact location of supports must be shown. Mr. Galloway requested the draft ordinance be amended and the requirement for the professionally engineered and stamped drawing be dropped. Vice-Chairperson Powers closed the public comment session.

Approval of meeting minutes for July 9, 2012.

Vice-Chairperson Powers introduced the discussion. Commissioner Dorsett made a motion to approve the July 9, 2012 meeting minutes. Commissioner Parsons seconded the motion which passed 6-0.

Discussion of proposed changes to Chapter 28 “Subdivisions” and Chapter 30 “Zoning” of the Christiansburg Town Code in regards to amateur radio antennas and communication structures, planned housing developments, and traffic impact analysis requirements.

Vice-Chairperson Powers introduced the discussion. He indicated this is the second packet of Zoning Ordinance changes the Development Subcommittee has worked on. He stated three main items are addressed: amateur radio antennas, which currently require a Conditional Use Permit, traffic impact analyses for developments of a certain size, and site plan requirements for planned housing developments. Vice-Chairperson Powers noted a fourth issue was brought up tonight for allowing horses in residential districts in Town.

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Discussion of proposed changes to Chapter 28 “Subdivisions” and Chapter 30 “Zoning” of the Christiansburg Town Code in regards to amateur radio antennas and communication structures, planned housing developments, and traffic impact analysis requirements – (continued).

Ms. Hair noted definitions have been added to the Zoning Ordinance revision. She stated that traffic impact statements have been added to the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Ordinance with thresholds. Vice-Chairperson Powers explained the specific proposed traffic thresholds and these were the thresholds previously used by VDOT. Ms. Hair noted the addition of amateur radio towers to the different zoning districts. Commissioner Dorsett asked about height of towers. Ms. Hair explained the height information is noted with setbacks. Vice-Chairperson Powers noted if requirements are met, towers would be allowed by right, if not, towers would require Conditional Use Permits. Commissioner Dorsett asked about the engineered drawings. Ms. Hair noted a site plan shall be required for planned housing developments. Ms. Hair added that traffic impact analysis has been added to Site Plan Review.

Commissioner Huppert asked if Mr. Galloway has read the draft revisions. Mr. Galloway responded yes. Ms. Hair explained the general requirements for amateur radio towers, in terms of height, location, and aesthetics. Vice-Chairperson Powers noted a licensed surveyor could be used as an appropriately licensed professional. Commissioner Dorsett asked about adding in surveyor to language. Ms. Hair noted the language allows for various professionals to be used. Commissioner Dorsett asked if these requirements apply to all amateur radio towers or only ones that require conditional use permits. Ms. Hair responded all amateur radio towers must meet these requirements. Commissioner Carter noted that regulations were considered from various surrounding localities. Commissioner Dorsett asked if these regulations are fairly standard. Ms. Hair indicated yes. Vice-Chairperson Powers asked about licensed professional specifics and whether the language should be changed. Commissioner Dorsett suggested including engineer and surveyor in parentheses for clarification. Commissioner Carter agreed. Vice-Chairperson Powers asked about building department possibly requiring engineering plans. Ms. Hair indicated they may want drawings for footers. Commissioner Dorsett asked about specific footer depth requirements according to height. Ms. Hair noted that the building department handles footer inspections. Vice-Chairperson Powers stated that it is desirous to have an indication of the distance from property lines. Ms. Hair indicated on-site improvements are helpful to show on drawings. Commissioner Dorsett asked about adding stealth (painted to look like trees) to color requirements instead of just natural metal color. Ms. Hair indicated that could be added to the language. Vice-Chairperson Powers explained setbacks for amateur radio towers. Commissioner Akers and Commissioner Parsons indicated that the wording is confusing for setbacks. Vice-Chairperson Powers indicated that these height requirements are to allow the towers by-right; taller towers may use a Conditional Use Permit process. Commissioner Dorsett asked about collocating on a house, barn, or other structure. Vice-Chairperson Powers stated that it would be the same as other antennas. Commissioner Dorsett asked if collocation was mentioned in this section. Ms. Hair noted that it is discussed in the Antennas Ordinance.

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Discussion of proposed changes to Chapter 28 “Subdivisions” and Chapter 30 “Zoning” of the Christiansburg Town Code in regards to amateur radio antennas and communication structures, planned housing developments, and traffic impact analysis requirements – (continued).

Commissioner Dorsett stated the wording “additional” needs to be removed. Vice-Chairperson Powers stated the revision should be “additionally, amateur radio towers shall have a setback of one foot for every one foot in height from all property lines”.

Vice-Chairperson Powers stated amateur radio towers will be allowed by-right under these conditions. Commissioner Dorsett requested the wording “additionally” be removed. Commissioner Carter and Commissioner Sowers agreed. Commissioner Huppert asked if Mr. Galloway’s concerns have been addressed. Mr. Galloway stated that antenna towers and support structures typically do not fall the length of their height. He added the base is generally very strong so collapse usually occurs near the top. Mr. Galloway stated most locations he knows of would not allow for these structures. Commissioner Akers stated the height of a tower is the setback requirement. Mr. Galloway asked about for a reason for the setback requirement and stated Roanoke requires 40% of the height. Vice-Chairperson Powers stated they looked at multiple ordinances from other localities and the County uses the foot to foot ratio. Vice-Chairperson Powers also noted these are only proposed changes and there will be a formal public hearing after this is drafted. Commissioner Huppert encouraged Mr. Galloway to make suggestions in writing. Commissioner Dorsett asked which zoning districts will allow for amateur radio towers. Ms. Hair responded all districts would allow amateur radio towers by-right if requirements are met.

Vice-Chairperson Powers noted horses were previously discussed during urban agriculture. Vice-Chairperson Powers indicated horses are allowed in A and R-1A Zoning Districts. Commissioner Dorsett asked where the R-1A areas are located in Town. Ms. Hair noted the locations of R-1A districts. Vice-Chairperson Powers asked if Town Council would like the Planning Commission to look at this. Ms. Hair stated Mr. Walker was allowed to request Planning Commission consider the issue for the Zoning Ordinance update. Commissioner Carter noted there were previously horses on the lot. Commissioner Dorsett asked if there is a standard acreage per horse for feeding without overgrazing the land. Ms. Hair stated there may be a state or federal regulations. Mr. Walker stated there are no federal regulations and it depends on state and localities. Mr. Walker added most locations vary on the requirement for space based on use of the horse, such as transportation versus performance horses. Commissioner Dorsett asked if these horses are grazing. Mr. Walker stated they are grazing, they have feed bags. Commissioner Dorsett stated over-grazing can lead to stormwater run-off for neighbors. Vice-Chairperson Powers asked about size requirements for horses in Agriculture and Rural Residential. Ms. Hair indicated she is not aware of size requirements. Vice-Chairperson Powers stated the decision must be made on whether to permit them in residential districts and whether to require a Conditional Use Permit. Commissioner Dorsett asked about using a zoning permit.

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Discussion of proposed changes to Chapter 28 "Subdivisions" and Chapter 30 "Zoning" of the Christiansburg Town Code in regards to amateur radio antennas and communication structures, planned housing developments, and traffic impact analysis requirements – (continued).

Mr. Walker suggested a zoning permit, so requirements will still have to be met but no $500 fee. He added administration would still visit the site and make sure requirements are met.

Commissioner Huppert stated Mr. Walker has moved here recently and his wife has two horses and they are short on funds to board these horses. Mr. Walker elaborated on different boarding costs. Vice-Chairperson Powers noted his bias against horses in residential districts but this process would allow the issue to have a public forum.

Ms. Hair stated Mr. Walker would need to apply for a Code Amendment if it was not considered with the Zoning Ordinance revision. Commissioner Dorsett requested information from neighboring localities on the issue and does not want it allowed by-right in R-2. Vice-Chairperson Powers noted the Town could have a by-right depending on size of lot. He asked about by-right versus Conditional Use Permit or can the public hearing advertise for either possibility. Commissioner Carter noted Town Council has granted sixty days so need to move on with recommendations. Vice-Chairperson Powers asked about adding the provision just for R-2. Commissioner Parsons and Commissioner Dorsett suggested that it should be included in R-1 and R-2. Commissioner Dorsett asked about including provisions on lot cleaning since smell is a big concern. Vice-Chairperson Powers suggested staff consider some sort of management plan if zoning permit is used. Commissioner Dorsett stated the Master Gardeners would be willing to assist with removal of waste. Commissioner Powers noted revisions will be added in order to fulfill Council's wishes on moving forward with discussion. Vice-Chairperson Powers asked about other discussion on these zoning changes. Ms. Hair noted subdivision information is not showing up but is same language.

Commissioner Dorsett made a motion that a public hearing being scheduled. Commissioner Sowers seconded the motion which passed 6-0.

Ms. Hair indicated the public hearing will be September 10th for these items. Vice-Chairperson Powers noted the Planning Commission does not generally act on items on the same night and would likely act on September 24th. Vice-Chairperson Powers thanked citizens for attending.

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Other Business.

Vice-Chairperson Powers asked Ms. Hair about traffic calming that was mentioned in the paper. Ms. Hair noted staff has looked at VDOT's traffic calming guide as well as Charlottesville and Staunton programs. She added staff is looking at residential two lane roads with posted speed limits of 25mph or less, a density requirement equal to 12 dwelling units or more per 1,000 feet of street frontage, petition would need signatures of 50% of property owners, then a ballot would be mailed where 50% of returned ballots would need to be in favor of traffic calming measures.

Ms. Hair stated there are two methods of administering traffic calming: administrative methods where Town Manager and Town Engineer would retain authority to install all way stops, crosswalks, lane striping, and medians; or policy where Town Council will have a committee that advises and final review is by Town Council. Ms. Hair indicated three streets are currently being considered: Alleghany/Miller Streets, Sleepy Hollow Road, and Majestic Drive including Windsor Drive and Gibson Drive. Commissioner Dorsett noted Evans Street should be added to the list. Commissioner Huppert noted many residents from Majestic Drive have raised concern. He added police enforcement is effective when in place but cannot be there all the time. Commissioner Huppert is concerned about pedestrian safety. Commissioner Sowers stated many pedestrians are out in the evenings on these roads. Commissioner Dorsett noted Evans Street also has pedestrians with a blind hill. Commissioner Huppert stated speeds bumps, restricting trucks, and other options have been considered. He stated these options may also affect rescue vehicles and snow trucks. Commissioner Parsons noted it also affects pedestrians with strollers and bikes.

Commissioner Dorsett asked about the inclusion of dips as a traffic calming measure. Ms. Hair stated dips have been added to the revision. Commissioner Dorsett suggested using street design from Overhill Road with vegetative strip. Vice-Chairperson Powers noted this includes creation of a committee. Commissioner Dorsett requested the video that was shown to Town Council. Commissioner Sowers requested the video be e-mailed out instead so as to reduce meeting time. Vice-Chairperson Powers asked about additional comments on traffic calming or other subjects. Vice-Chairperson Powers asked about comments on using projector during the meetings. He added having the information up on the wall is very useful. Commissioner Carter agreed. Ms. Hair noted it reduces printing costs and allows public to view changes easily.

There being no more business Vice-Chairperson Powers adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

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Craig Moore, Chairperson Nichole Hair, Secretary Non-Voting

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