Christiansburg Planning Commission
Minutes of October 8, 2012

Present: Ann H. Carter
Harry Collins
M. H. Dorsett, AICP
Steve Huppert
Craig Moore, Chairperson
Ashley Parsons
Joe Powers, Vice-Chairperson
Nichole Hair, Secretary Non-Voting

Absent: Jennifer D. Sowers

Staff/Visitors: Kali Casper, staff
Missy Martin, staff
Trula Tuck
Bryan Rice

Chairperson Moore called the meeting to order at 7:00 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 made. Chairperson Moore closed the floor for public comment.

Chairperson Moore indicated Commissioner Huppert would like to amend the agenda to address Planning Commission. Planning Commission consensus agreed.

Discussion.

Commissioner Huppert attended the VML annual meeting with Town Council during the last Planning Commission meeting. He added there were several good speakers that he was impressed with. Commissioner Huppert noted he has been the liaison for about 10 months and he has been in awe of how the Planning Commission has handled itself within the commission and with the public. He added the information he is presenting is meant as a review.

Commissioner Huppert indicated the first speaker talked about the commission's relationship with the citizens. He noted a film was shown where a planning commissioner was yelling at a person in the audience, repeating "you're a liar" and chaos developed. Commissioner Huppert explained he wondered why the Chairman did not cut in on this. He noted the speaker explained that the person yelling was the chairman. He added the person next to the chairman eventually slammed the gavel down and asked the person to get out. Commissioner Huppert noted a situation like this has a large impact on the community.

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Discussion – continued.

He added it is not right to have chaos where the commission had lost complete control and the people in the audience thought it was not a professional organization. Commissioner Huppert indicated Chairperson Moore makes citizens aware there is a five minute limit for speaking, the Planning Commission must be addressed directly, and must speak on a relevant issue. Commissioner Huppert added another video showed a citizen rambling on about a subject unrelated to Planning Commission.

Commissioner Huppert indicated the second speaker addressed relationships within the commission and showed a video where two people on the commission were yelling at each other during the meeting. He added the speaker suggested calling a five minute recess if either of these situations occurs. Commissioner Huppert noted the presence of a police officer at Council meetings for this purpose. He added that for Planning Commission, Ms. Hair could call and get a police officer to handle these things. He noted if there are problems between members of the commission, they could wait until the end of the meeting to discuss.

Commissioner Huppert indicated the third speaker talked about trust that the citizens of the community and country have in government. He added it has been since 1958 when Eisenhower was President that more than 50% of the people had trust in and felt good about the government. He stated the Planning Commission needs to work for people to be confident and have trust in the commission. He added citizens will mimic what is being done by the commission. Commissioner Huppert indicated the presenters showed six or seven tapes of terrible meetings that had fallen apart. He added yesterday at church, a citizen asked him who is in charge of checking the fire extinguishers in Town. He responded it was probably the fire marshal. The citizen noted his office fire extinguisher has not been checked since 1987. Commissioner Huppert asked why the man could not handle it himself instead of waiting on the government to do it. He added the man walked away and asked Commissioner Huppert's daughter what is wrong with her father. Afterwards, he apologized to the citizen. He indicated that sometimes you must swallow your ego and the man meant well.

Commissioner Dorsett noted the advantage of being a Planning Commissioner is that they can refer citizens to the elected representatives, Mr. Helms, or Ms. Hair. Commissioner Carter stated the number is actually 30% of people have confidence in the government now. Commissioner Dorsett indicated it is 6.5% for Congress. Commissioner Huppert added that in the last 40 years the opinion of the public was not the lowest when Nixon was leader but actually George Bush.

Chairperson Moore explained that Commissioner Huppert is liaison to Council. Commissioner Powers noted Mr. Bryan Rice is in the audience and has been chairman of the Montgomery County Planning Commission and invited him to comment. Mr. Rice noted he appreciated the presentation and noted that in this area (Montgomery County, Christiansburg, and Blacksburg) we are very respectful.

Commissioner Huppert left the meeting.

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Approval of meeting minutes for September 24, 2012.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Commissioner Dorsett made a motion to approve the September 24, 2012 Planning Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Collins seconded the motion which passed 6-0.

Discussion of Council's intention to adopt an ordinance in regards to a rezoning request by Quorum Holding Corporation for property located on Somerset Street, N.W. (tax parcel 435-((4))-4) from R-1 Single-Family Residential to B-3 General Business. The property contains 0.402 acres and is scheduled as Residential in the Future Land Use Map of the Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission public hearing was held September 24, 2012.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Chairperson Moore reviewed the proffers including a revised list of by-right uses for B-3. Commissioner Dorsett asked about why permitted use (i) auto, truck and home appliance services was struck but permitted use (s) auto and truck rental, sales and service was left. Ms. Hair noted that rentals including U-Haul would be included under permitted use (s) whereas permitted use (i) is for actual repair. Chairperson Moore continued to review the proffers. Commissioner Dorsett asked about permitted use (gg) machinery and equipment sales, service and storage. Ms. Hair noted that it is similar to (i). For example, it might include rental of a power washer but not repair services. Commissioner Dorsett noted that most of those uses still require a conditional use permit. Ms. Hair indicated yes that those items would still come before Planning Commission and Town Council. Commissioner Dorsett asked why the uses are not split by-right versus conditional use. Ms. Hair indicated she is unaware of a particular reason. Commissioner Dorsett asked if that could be done. Ms. Hair stated that could be addressed with the next zoning re-write. Chairperson Moore continued to review the proffers. Commissioner Dorsett asked if these restricted uses apply only to the back lot. Ms. Hair responded yes. Commissioner Collins noted the proffer mentions merging the two lots. Ms. Hair stated that is for engineering purposes during development but not for the use. Commissioner Dorsett stated that they could put any of the uses on the front lot and asked if it was already zoned B-3. Ms. Hair responded yes, it is already B-3. Chairperson Moore noted that the rezoning request is for the back lot and the front lot is already zoned B-3 and already has allowable uses. Chairperson Moore asked about looking at the zoning map. Ms. Hair noted that she has included a contour map to show the slope on the lot.

Commissioner Dorsett asked about what will be done with stormwater since it slopes back. Ms. Hair stated those lots will be treated as one and it will be reviewed with staff. Commissioner Powers asked about the threshold that kicks in town requirements for erosion and sediment control. He added that on the front lot, there is no erosion and sediment control. Ms. Hair responded 10,000 square feet is the threshold used by Christiansburg. Commissioner Powers stated that once 10,000 square feet of parcel 4 is disturbed, then erosion and sediment control will be addressed for both parcels. Ms. Hair noted that movement on either lot would kick in the requirements.

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Discussion of Council's intention to adopt an ordinance in regards to a rezoning request by Quorum Holding Corporation for property located on Somerset Street, N.W. (tax parcel 435-((4))-4) from R-1 Single-Family Residential to B-3 General Business – (continued).

Commissioner Powers restated that 10,000 square feet on either lot. Ms. Hair added or a combination of the two. Commissioner Powers noted that Ms. Tuck has discussed incremental development with a driveway and possibly a drive through with parking later. He asked if the Town's requirements kick in when 10,000 square feet of cumulative disturbance has been made. Ms. Hair stated that is not her expertise. Chairperson Moore noted that if it is a common plan of development and is done incrementally, the Town can address it cumulatively. He added that reflects the E&S law which the Town ordinance follows. Chairperson Moore explained that if a developer does a subdivision, the requirements would be triggered by small improvements because of the total development. Commissioner Powers asked to review the proffer statement about common engineering. Commissioner Powers asked if the driveway would kick in the requirement that both lots be engineered which would then kick in erosion and sediment control. Chairperson Moore noted yes thought it may only require a silt fence, drainage calculations, and a culvert but as they do more, it may require bio-retention or other stormwater because it would reach the impervious threshold that is around 16%. He added that tying the lots together, the impervious surfaces are counted from both sites. Commissioner Powers noted that the developer has mentioned creating a driveway onto Somerset first. Ms. Tuck noted they can do that without the rezoning and they already have the permit for the driveway. She added that they would consult again for any construction. Commissioner Powers noted that driveway is not a problem because it is not adding parking spaces or increasing the use and even adding a drive-through window would not really increase the footprint. Commissioner Powers asked about increasing the footprint or adding parking spaces. Ms. Hair responded that situation would kick in a site plan review most likely and E&S would be reviewed. Commissioner Powers wanted to know about clarifying that information. Ms. Hair indicated that is determined by the Zoning Administrator. Commissioner Powers responded the Commission is talking with the Zoning Administrator. Ms. Hair responded that Randy Wingfield is the Zoning Administrator and she is learning that information. She added Mr. Wingfield would determine whether an addition to the building or parking would kick in site plan review by staff including E&S. Commissioner Dorsett asked about runoff downhill to the neighbors. Ms. Hair responded that it has not been specifically asked but no complaints have been made and staff is typically made aware of those issues. Commissioner Powers noted that the drainage goes into the road ditch on the west side and it is not eroded. He added that it would be nice, since the lot is at the top of the drainage area, to have some detention at some point since it is most effective there. Commissioner Dorsett stated point of contact treatment. Ms. Tuck noted the presence of grass and trees and that the drainage ditch is grass. Chairperson Moore noted that item #4 from the letter would not allow them to sneak in under the threshold if they add on to the development. Ms. Hair responded yes. Chairperson Moore indicated that is the way it reads from the proffer. Commissioner Powers noted that is how it would be addressed by the Town and that is what the developer would expect. Ms. Martin

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stated the Building Department does not allow any permits to be issued before the Zoning and Engineering Departments have signed off on those issues. She added that construction would not begin until there was approval from those departments.

Commissioner Powers asked to discuss the 10 foot buffer in relation to the site plan for the adjoining commercial. Ms. Hair stated the development is Village Square. Commissioner Powers noted that it is a good example of a buffer for adjoining residential lots. Ms. Hair responded that the buffer varied some but was approximately 15 feet. Commissioner Dorsett asked if all the planting are in place for this development because the aerial photo did not look like it. Ms. Hair noted they must meet the requirement of 76 trees on the property but it can be verified. Commissioner Dorsett stated she did not see that many trees on the ortho photo. Commissioner Parsons noted they may have been planted originally and then died without being replaced. Ms. Hair stated sometimes staff does not catch that but it is checked before the C.O. but it can be checked.

Commissioner Powers asked about what the setbacks are on the Village Square site plan. Commissioner Parsons noted a 15 foot parking setback. Commissioner Powers noted the other one was a building setback line. Ms. Casper stated it is a 30 foot building setback. Commissioner Powers asked if that was specific to the development or if that is part of the B-3 regulations. Ms. Hair responded the B-3 building setback is 30 feet from street right-of-way. Commissioner Powers asked about the parking setback. Ms. Hair confirmed there is a 15 foot parking setback. Commissioner Powers asked about paving up to the lot line. Ms. Hair business development adjoining to a residential zone has a 20 foot setback. Commissioner Collins asked about the proffers stating 10 feet. Ms. Hair stated it will be a 10 foot buffer of trees and such along property line. Chairperson Moore indicated the buffer is as close as she could get with parking. Ms. Hair noted the closest would be 20 feet to residential.

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Commissioner Powers noted that the other development shows 15 feet for parking setback. Ms. Hair responded that it is 15 feet on the street side. Commissioner Powers reviewed that it will be 15 feet along the street and 10 feet along the residential sides where the proffer kicks in. Commissioner Powers thanked the developer for working on these proffers to help mirror other developments in the area. Ms. Tuck noted Ms. Hair's help with the proffers. Commissioner Powers noted that limiting the uses helps it fit in to the area. Ms. Hair responded the discussion helped to decide what was best suited to the lot.

Commissioner Dorsett moved to recommend approval with proffers. Commissioner Collins seconded the motion which passed 6-0.

Commissioner Powers asked about the next steps for this item. Ms. Hair stated Town Council will have public hearing at their next meeting and the Planning Commission recommendation will be presented. Ms. Tuck asked when the Town Council meeting is scheduled for. Ms. Hair responded next Tuesday, October the 16th at 7:30pm.

Other Business

Chairperson Moore introduced other business. Ms. Hair asked for a head count for PDC annual dinner. Commissioner Dorsett indicated she will attend. Ms. Hair stated instead of reports, there will be a slideshow and would like photo suggestions. She mentioned Backcountry and the trail system by the Rec Center would be included but is looking for additional ideas. Commissioner Powers suggested the Aquatic Center and one of the Planning Commission yelling at the audience. Ms. Hair noted the dinner is being held at the River Course in Fairlawn at the Bull and Bones Restaurant. Commissioner Parsons indicated she will attend as well. Commissioner Dorsett asked where to send a check. Ms. Hair responded the Town will pay for commissioners to attend but not additional guests. Chairperson Moore asked about writing a check for additional guests. Ms. Hair responded you can pay there. She added there are only 100 seats available. Commissioner Powers asked about meeting at the Rec Center to bus over. Ms. Hair stated that she has class until 5:45pm but she will arrange for a van at the Rec Center. Commissioner Dorsett asked about time details. Ms. Hair responded the event is on Thursday the 25th, dinner at seven, social begins at six thirty. Ms. Hair indicated they will plan to leave the Rec Center at six pm.

Ms. Hair added that staff has been at Plan Virginia today and will be there tomorrow as well. Ms. Hair indicated her training today was on Planning Commission and their role in local government. She added staff will report back after the conference.

Commissioner Powers noted the 4th Wednesday will have a committee meeting for Comprehensive Plan and Development subcommittees jointly. Commissioner Parsons asked if the Historic District subcommittee will be meeting this month. Ms. Hair indicated yes on the third Wednesday. Commissioner Dorsett noted Ms. Sherry Wyatt is writing documentary paragraphs. Ms. Hair noted she will check in with Ms. Wyatt.

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There being no more business Chairperson Moore adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

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Craig Moore, Chairperson Nichole Hair, Secretary Non-Voting

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