

**Christiansburg Planning Commission
Minutes of March 11, 2013**

Present: Ann H. Carter
Harry Collins
M. H. Dorsett, AICP
David Franusich
Jonathan Hedrick
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
Cindy Disney, Montgomery County Planning Commission Liaison
Two Virginia Tech students

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.

Approval of meeting minutes for February 25, 2013.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Commissioner Parsons made a motion to approve the February 25, 2013 Planning Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Carter seconded the motion which passed 7-0, with Commissioner Collins abstaining.

Review of sidewalk requirements in B-3.

Chairperson Moore opened the discussion. Ms. Hair noted she edited the draft to include all business zoned districts. The sidewalk requirement for the area on Cambria Street near the Huckleberry Trail extension was brought to Ms. Hair's attention by administration. Ms. Hair stated the properties were zoned B-1 and B-3. Ms. Hair explained the draft ordinance would allow for trails in lieu of sidewalks for the business zoned districts at the Town Manager's discretion. She added the specific location is the area from the corner of Cambria Street and Providence Blvd, which is zoned B-1, and from Cub Circle to the rear of the Recreation Center, which is zoned B-3. Commissioner Powers asked for location on the map and Ms. Casper verified location.

Review of sidewalk requirements in B-3 – (continued).

Ms. Hair indicated there is an existing trail system at 1690 Forelmont Street which goes to the Recreation Center. She stated the ordinance is under consideration to make it more agreeable to the land owner and for the aesthetics so there is not a trail and sidewalk on the same property. Ms. Hair added the mixed use and residential districts have the option of trails or sidewalks so it would carry over nicely into the business districts. Ms. Hair stated the Development Subcommittee met last month to discuss it and seemed agreeable with it. Ms. Hair has drafted a proposed ordinance that will go to public hearing at the next meeting. She wanted to bring it to the Commissioners for discussion and to consider changes.

Commissioner Franusich asked if the only changes made were to allow for a multi-use trail. Ms. Hair responded yes in lieu of sidewalks, a paved multi-use trail, a minimum of ten (10) feet in width, connecting to the street right-of-way adjoining other properties and to each lot within the development, by a hard surface connection with Town Manager approval. She noted the same wording was used in MU-1 and MU-2 and is being added to B-1, B-2, and B-3. Chairperson Moore asked if there was concern a trail would be put in between sidewalks on both sides because it was cheaper. Ms. Hair responded the wording requires the Town Manager's approval as he already decides on sidewalks based on consistency. She advised if there were sidewalks on both sides, the Town Manager would likely require sidewalks and curb and gutter. Chairperson Moore asked Planning Commission if they are agreeable to the Town Manager making the decision as he currently does for other districts. Ms. Hair explained the Town Manger makes the decisions now relating to the specifics of the sidewalk. Chairperson Moore asked if there were sidewalks on both sides if the Town Manager would generally require sidewalks. Ms. Hair responded yes. Chairperson Moore clarified with the other Commissioners that there is an expectation on connecting sidewalks in that situation.

Commissioner Hedrick stated it seemed too broad for a specific purpose and would like specific locations be presented to the Planning Commission before Town Manager approval. He questioned if trails would be appropriate in locations such as Wal-Mart and downtown businesses. Commissioner Powers questioned whether trails are appropriate in the B-2 Central Business District even if they are appropriate in the B-1 and B-3 Districts. Commissioner Powers suggested advertising the draft ordinance as is and changes can be made with the public hearing. Ms. Hair indicated yes and she will get more clarification from Barry or possibly have the Engineering Department speak about the trail extension.

Commissioner Franusich commented it may not be appropriate for the Central Business District. He added he cannot think of a place where there are not sidewalks in the Central Business District or a place where there is space for a trail. Commissioner Dorsett arrived at 7:07 p.m. Commissioner Dorsett replied a trail could be brought down College Street and have a rear entrance to the trail system. She advised a survey had been completed by Montgomery County when a trail system was being developed and it was recommended College Street be tied in with trails.

Review of sidewalk requirements in B-3 – (continued).

Commissioner Franusich asked if Commissioner Dorsett was referring to the library side of College Street and indicated only one small portion was zoned Central Business. Commissioner Dorsett asked if all of College Street was in the Central Business District. She indicated the sidewalks needed to be widened for accessibility due to the planters. Commissioner Franusich responded sidewalks are a necessity downtown but that a trail does not make sense.

Chairperson Moore stated the ordinance will be left as is and advertised for the public hearing. After the public hearing the Planning Commission will vote on a recommendation to Town Council. He added there will be further discussion and expressed appreciation for the Development Subcommittee and the staff.

Commissioner Dorsett asked if all of B-2 is Central Business. Ms. Hair responded yes. Commissioner Dorsett stated Cambria is Central Business and has few sidewalks. Ms. Hair noted Cambria is zoned B-3.

Ms. Hair reviewed the discussion regarding the Huckleberry Trail extension and consideration of trails for business districts. She added that the main issue is having an existing trail and also requiring the landowner to give property for a sidewalk. Chairperson Moore asked who would be responsible for snow removal and maintenance. Ms. Hair said the Town would be responsible since they maintained the Huckleberry now.

Commissioner Franusich asked for confirmation that the developer pays for sidewalks in any new development. He asked who is responsible for the upkeep of sidewalks. Ms. Hair answered the homeowners would be responsible for snow removal and keeping them unobstructed and the Town usually repairs or replaces sidewalks. Chairperson Moore stated the developer would be responsible for their trail system and it would tie into the Huckleberry. Ms. Hair indicated yes.

Commissioner Dorsett asked about the trail extension from the Recreation Center to downtown area. Ms. Hair answered there is a proposed connection all the way to the High School. She noted that is as far as it goes at this point but they are looking at other options. Ms. Hair added there is sidewalk on one side of N. Franklin Street which provides a natural tie to walking downtown. Commissioner Franusich added to make sure that sidewalks be continued from adjoining properties.

Work Session – Comprehensive Plan

Chairperson Moore opened the discussion. Commissioner Dorsett made a motion to go into work session regarding the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Parsons seconded the motion which passed 9-0.

Commissioner Carter made a motion to close the work session. Commissioner Hedrick seconded the motion. Chairperson Moore asked for further discussion.

Work Session – Comprehensive Plan – (continued).

Commissioner Dorsett asked if the draft Government chapter of the Comprehensive Plan has been emailed to the Commissioners. Ms. Casper indicated no. Commissioner Dorsett asked Planning Commission to review the draft and send comments to Ms. Casper. Ms. Hair stated if the Commissioners cannot open PDFs to please let the staff know.

With no further discussion, Chairperson Moore called for the vote to close work session. The motion passed 9-0.

Other Business

Chairperson Moore introduced other business. Chairperson Moore asked Ms. Hair for other business and she replied she had no other business for discussion.

Commissioner Huppert explained the Town's purchase of land was the biggest thing he has been involved with as a Councilman during his 10 years. He commented in January, the Town Council considered purchasing some property for a Town Park. Commissioner Powers noted the Town does not have a municipal park. Commissioner Huppert stated the Town purchased approximately 67 acres off of Route 114 behind Merchant's Tire. He added two or three weeks ago the Town purchased this property for \$2.5 million with the money coming from reserves. Commissioner Huppert added the Town is considering a series of different parks, green areas, and multipurpose fields that will be constructed over a period of time. He noted the convenience on how close the land was to the Huckleberry Trail. Commissioner Collins stated 67 acres was a lot of land for a park. Commissioner Huppert responded soccer fields and dog parks have been discussed. He also referred to a soccer complex in Martinsville which is very popular and brings a lot of tournaments. Mr. Huppert added the Town has restaurants and hotels for accommodation of these tournaments. Commissioner Dorsett asked if this was the property that backs up to Cambria Crossing and it is a nice piece of property. She stated comments from Comprehensive Plan surveys said the Town needed parks, playgrounds, picnic areas, dog parks but did not bring up ball fields. Commissioner Dorsett advised Commissioner Huppert to think of this during the planning process. Ms. Hair added the Parks and Recreation has contracted with the PDC to develop the Recreation Master Plan and Brad Epperly really wants to move forward with the plan and she is sure the design and development will come through that process. Commissioner Franusich asked if the Master Plan will come through the Planning Commission. Ms. Hair replied no but is sure it would have to be approved through a public process and if she gets a copy she will share with the Commissioners. Commissioner Dorsett stated the plan would have to come to the Planning Commission because the Town cannot build anything unless it's included in the Capital budget. She also stated the plan should be included in the Recreation chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

Other Business – (continued).

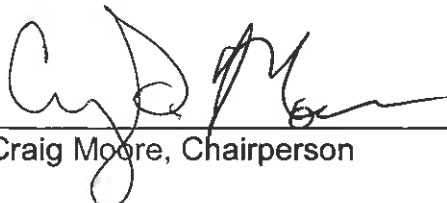
Commissioner Huppert discussed the progress on Depot Park. He stated the Town was hoping to get an arrangement worked out with Rosa Peters tied in but it does not look like that will work at this time. He added the Town has graded off the field and the field will be ready by this fall and the playground equipment is being upgraded. The Town is also working on a trail, which is $\frac{3}{4}$ completed. Commissioner Huppert stated the only problem is Kroger will be expanding so he is not sure how much land they will be using. He added in the spring, the Town crews will clean up the brush around the park to tie in the skate park and the Aquatic Center. Commissioner Collins added he thought the park was a great idea and how he has to take his grandson to Blacksburg now to enjoy a park. Commissioner Hedrick added living across the street from the property the Town has purchased will be a nice atmosphere to be a part of. Commissioner Huppert added the Depot Park has a small parking area that will be redone and will double the parking spaces and the Town will also install a major light.

Commissioner Powers asked if any information can be provided on the Recreation Master Plan. Ms. Hair replied there is no information available at this point. Ms. Hair stated the PDC sends out requests for projects to all localities and she had suggested to the Town Manager about some of the plans for the Master Plan at the Recreation Center and for the Cemetery. She added Mr. Brad Epperly met with Kevin Byrd and will be obtaining a contract. Ms. Hair said once the plan has started she can give the Commissioners more information. Commissioner Powers added that he would be interested to see if the Plan will include bikeways and walkways and will the plan tie into all the different parks. Ms. Hair stated she is not sure what will be included but once the Planning Commission reviews the Parks and Recreation chapter they could invite Mr. Epperly to discuss these items. Commissioner Powers stated the Town seems to be developing things along the Huckleberry Trail and added that other citizens are not convenient to these locations.

Commissioner Dorsett asked if the Town will be purchasing the vacant lot that citizens have been using for a sandlot baseball field in Cambria section off of Murray Street. Commissioner Huppert said not at this time.

Chairperson Moore asked if any other business needed discussing.

There being no more business Chairperson Moore adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.


 Craig Moore, Chairperson


 Nichole Hair, Secretary Non-Voting