

**Christiansburg Planning Commission
Minutes of October 21, 2013**

Present: Matthew J. Beasley
Ann H. Carter
Harry Collins
Ashley Cowen
M.H. Dorsett, AICP
David Franusich
Jonathan Hedrick
Craig Moore, Chairperson
Joe Powers, Vice-Chairperson
Jennifer D. Sowers
Nichole Hair, Secretary ^{Non-Voting}

Absent: Steve Huppert

Staff/Visitors: Missy Martin, staff
Kali Casper, staff
Cindy Disney, Montgomery County Planning Commission

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 October 7, 2013.

Chairperson Moore introduced the discussion. Commissioner Dorsett made a motion to approve the Planning Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Sowers seconded the motion, which passed 9-0. Commissioner Franusich abstained from voting due to his absence from the meeting.

Planning Commission discussion on Council's intention to adopt an ordinance amending Chapter 30 "Zoning" specifically, section 30-9 of the *Christiansburg Town Code* to address parking requirements for mixed use structures with apartments in the B-2 Central Business District; on-site parking requirements and off-site cooperative parking provisions; and grandfathered status in the B-2 Central Business District and sections 30-185, 30-186, 30-190, and 30-193 of the *Christiansburg Town Code* to clarify the requirements for final site plans, when preliminary and final site plans expire, and fees associated with the submittal of same. The Planning Commission Public Hearing was held on October 7, 2013.

Chairperson Moore asked for any comments. Commissioner Franusich stated he originally reluctantly agreed on the B-2 parking changes. Commissioner Franusich commented he had felt it was a step in the right direction but after thinking on it, he feels this is a half measure and will not help the downtown revive. Commissioner Franusich stated he would like to remove requirements for off-street parking in the downtown.

Commissioner Franusich discussed with the Commissioners his research on other localities and their parking requirements. The localities used for examples were Blacksburg, Staunton, Lynchburg, Roanoke, Asheville, N.C., Winchester and Lexington. Commissioner Franusich requested the parking ordinance amendment be voted on separately from the site plan amendment.

Commissioner Dorsett stated she would like to echo Commissioner Franusich's comments because there is no place in Cambria for off-street parking unless historic structures are removed. Commissioner Dorsett stated Cambria has only eight public parking spaces. Commissioner Dorsett would like to look at parking provisions for Historic Districts.

Commissioner Franusich stated he understands the fear of a parking war in the downtown. Commissioner Franusich feels if the lack of parking becomes an issue, he would be happy to deal with that because that means the downtown will be full of life.

Commissioner Powers responded to Commissioner Franusich's study of other localities' parking ordinances. Commissioner Powers stated there is a significant difference in these localities because Downtown Christiansburg parking is free. The other localities Commissioner Franusich mentioned all charge a fee for parking. Commissioner Powers added Downtown Christiansburg has limited public parking and the other localities mentioned have public parking decks or garages.

Commissioner Collins added his current employer has been looking to relocate in downtown Roanoke, but the monthly fees to park in a parking garage are too high. Commissioner Franusich added the localities have vibrant downtown areas that need to provide parking. Commissioner Franusich stated Christiansburg does not have the problem of no parking spaces; Downtown Christiansburg has parking that is not being utilized.

Planning Commission Public Hearing on Council's intention to adopt an ordinance amending Chapter 30 "Zoning" specifically, section 30-9 of the Christiansburg Town Code to address parking requirements for mixed use structures with apartments in the B-2 Central Business District; on-site parking requirements and off-site cooperative parking provisions; and grandfathered status in the B-2 Central Business District and sections 30-185, 30-186, 30-190, and 30-193 of the Christiansburg Town Code to clarify the requirements for final site plans, when preliminary and final site plans expire, and fees associated with the submittal of same - (continued).

Commissioner Franusich added when the food truck rodeo was held downtown, no one parked in the courthouse parking garage. Ms. Hair added the number one complaint from that event was the lack of parking. Commissioner Franusich stated another issue is the lack of signage for parking areas.

Commissioner Hedrick stated he has a different stance on this issue and disagrees that the Town is not vibrant. Commissioner Franusich provided an example of a business coming to Downtown. If that business wanted to make significant structural changes or change the use of a building, under the current parking requirements, the business must find parking spaces for the business. Commissioner Franusich feels businesses would not want to find parking spaces and this will be a road block to business prospects.

Commissioner Collins asked Ms. Hair how many businesses have come to the Town concerning B-2 parking regulations and the current ordinance has stopped the business from development. Ms. Hair replied she is aware of one business looking for office space but did not have ample parking. Commissioner Dorsett added Cambria has lost three potential buyers due to the parking regulations.

Commissioner Powers stated under the new proposed ordinance the Town would have the flexibility to deal with parking issues through a Conditional Use Permit process. Commissioner Dorsett added there is no parking within 900 feet of any business in the Cambria area. Chairperson Moore stated this is why the Planning Commission can address issues that may not be suitable to the proposed ordinance.

Commissioner Hedrick stated downtown businesses should not have to suffer because everyone can park on private property. He feels this will become an issue with the business owners. Commissioner Beasley stated the consequences could add more pedestrian traffic for the downtown businesses.

Commissioner Powers feels the Planning Commission agreed parking is needed to make the downtown function but the question is who will provide the parking. Commissioner Franusich added developers normally require parking to accommodate a development. Commissioner Powers replied in those cases restrictions and fees are probably added with the parking by the property owner.

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Commissioner Carter commented that she sees two separate issues; the Commissioners are only discussing businesses. Commissioner Carter stated the ordinance addresses mixed-use and structures with apartments, which are totally different than a business and need parking.

Chairperson Moore stated the proposed ordinance is a step toward dealing with downtown parking issues and it allows the Planning Commission to review waivers from the parking requirements. Chairperson Moore added a vote of no does not mean a vote against improving the downtown parking. Chairperson Moore stated the Planning Commission has made a reasonable compromise to move forward with this ordinance amendment.

Commissioner Collins asked if the Planning Commission were to vote in favor of Commissioner Franusich's changes, would the Town be responsible for providing the parking, would a garage need to be built and could taxes increase because of the garage. Chairperson Moore replied those are good questions. Chairperson Moore added it would be left up to owners of the individual lots to police parking.

Commissioner Cowen commented Cambria and Downtown are very different areas and she does not agree these areas should have the same regulations.

Chairperson Moore asked the Commissioners if they would like to vote on the parking changes separate and then the amendment to the site plan ordinance. All the Commissioners agreed.

Commissioner Collins asked for a brief summary of the ordinance amendment for site plans. Ms. Hair provided a summary. Chairperson Moore asked for a motion. Commissioner Dorsett made a motion to recommend adopting sections 30-185, 30-186, 30-190, and 30-193 of the *Christiansburg Town Code* to clarify the requirements for final site plans, when preliminary and final site plans expire, and fees associated with the submittal of same. Commissioner Carter seconded the motion, which passed 10-0.

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Chairperson Moore asked to review the proposed amendment in regards to parking. Ms. Hair reviewed the proposed changes. Chairperson Moore asked for a motion. Commissioner Powers made a motion to recommended approval of section 30-9 of the *Christiansburg Town Code* to address parking requirements for mixed use structures with apartments in the B-2 Central Business District; on-site parking requirements and off-site cooperative parking provisions; and grandfathered status in the B-2 Central Business District. Commissioner Hedrick seconded the motion. Chairperson Moore called for a vote by the raising of hands. The motion passed 7-2 with one abstention. Commissioners Franusich and Beasley voted against the motion. Commissioner Dorsett abstained due to a potential conflict.

Ms. Hair suggested if there is an increase in the number of requests to vary from the parking regulations through the Conditional Use Permit process, the Planning Commission may wish to revisit the parking regulations.

Other Business


Chairperson Moore asked for other business. Ms. Hair responded a request was made for the Public Relations Officer to do a presentation. Ms. Hair indicated Town administration will hold a FOIA training in January for the Planning Commission and Town Council.

Commissioner Powers added the Development Subcommittee will meet again in November an hour before the Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioner Dorsett added the Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee will not be meeting until November 20th.

Ms. Hair commented the next Planning Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 12th due to the Veterans' Day Holiday.

There being no more business Chairperson Moore adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m.



Craig Moore, Chairperson



Nichole Hair, Secretary Non-Voting