

**TOWN OF ABINGDON
PLANNING COMMISSION
MONDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2018 – 5:30 PM
ARTHUR CAMPBELL MEETING ROOM – MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

A meeting of the Abingdon Planning Commission was held on Monday, October 22, 2018 at 5:30 pm in the Arthur Campbell Meeting Room.

A. Chairman Wayne Austin called the meeting to Order

B. Roll Call – Jason Boswell, Interim Director of Planning

Members Present:

Mr. James Anderson
Mr. Scott Wilson
Mr. Al Bradley
Mr. Kenneth Vittum
Mr. Kenny Shuman
Mr. Wayne Austin

Comprising a quorum of the Commission

Members Absent:

Dr. H. Ramsey White, Jr.

Administrative Staff Present:

Mr. Jason Boswell – Interim Director of Planning
Mrs. Janice Dornon – Administrative Assistant

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting, October 22, 2018

On motion of Mr. Shuman, seconded by Mr. Anderson the minutes of September 24, 2018 were approved as presented.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Mr. Anderson	Aye
Mr. Wilson	Aye

Mr. Bradley	Aye
Mr. Vittum	Abstained (new Interim Town Manager)
Mr. Shuman	Abstained (not present at the meeting)
Mr. Austin	Aye

Minutes for September 24, 2018 were approved as presented.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS - NONE

E. CERTIFICATE(S) OF APPROPRIATENESS

1. Application for Certificate of Appropriateness; The Polished Diamond, LLC, Leap of Faith, LLC, Owner. Melissa McConnell; Representative. COA request to change exterior paint color. Located at 909 West Main Street, Abingdon, VA 24210. Tax Map No. (016-4-1).

Melissa McConnell represented The Polished Diamond, LLC. They are requesting to change the exterior paint color to grey and black. Awning, roof and windows will be painted black. Ms. McConnell’s understanding was that she did not need a COA because she was not doing any structural changes. Since she already had a business license and was just moving, she did not think she needed to come before the Planning Commission for approval. Since she did not go through a realtor, who should have made her aware of the ordinances, she was not aware of having to get a COA.

Due to having to wait two weeks for the Planning Commission meeting the primer that had been put on the building before the stop order will now have to be replaced due to the rain washing it off. Ms. McConnell will have to buy more primer and re-pay the painter to reapply the primer before painting.

Perhaps the Planning Commission needs to create a waiver similar to the one that HPRB has, so that a stop work order would not have to be imposed. She suggested that the Planning Department send out an electronic notification of what a business needs to do to be compliant.

Mr. Bradley noted that the Planning Department should be given the authority to approved standard paint color for citizens. If a standard historic color were being used approval would not have to come before the Planning Commission. Have a standard historic paint scheme for a guideline for the Planning Commission to follow so that changing an exterior paint color can be approved by staff and not have to go before the Planning Commission.

The business will be like a typical spa, she will be adding a salon and café.

On motion of Mr. Shuman, Seconded by Mr. Bradley, Planning Commission members recommended that the COA be approved as presented.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Mr. Anderson	Aye
Mr. Wilson	Aye
Mr. Bradley	Aye
Mr. Vittum	Aye
Mr. Shuman	Aye
Mr. Austin	Aye

The COA for the Polished Diamonds, LLC was approved as presented.

E. DISCUSSION TOPIC:

1. Kroger Mid-Atlantic Division – Cameron Bell

Mr. Cameron Bell represent the Town of Abingdon in the discussion of whether Kroger was adhering to the stipulations set forth in the COA.

Mr. Austin stated that when Kroger’s first came before the Planning Commission that the location was a concern. They were also concerned for the citizen’s safety by (1) gas tanker on Cummings St. and (2) angle of the parking spaces. Kroger then appealed this decision to the Town Council and Council changed the time of the deliveries. Kroger is violating the time constraints set by Town Council. Can the Planning Commission pull the COA for safety violation? Some members of the Planning Commission feel that Kroger had no intention of adhering to the constraints suggested. Some members of the Planning Commission also feel that Kroger went along with the restrictions implied by the commission in order to receive their approved COA. Fuel tanks at Kroger are set to send out an automatic system refill when tank levels reach a certain capacity. The Planning Department has reached out to Kroger about this matter and they have not responded.

Mr. Shuman is concerned about cars parked at Shoney’s backing out into oncoming traffic from the fuel center.

If the Planning Commission puts restriction on a COA, what rights do they have to enforce these constraints? Mr. Bell told the board that they are empowered to advice on architectural issues in nature. Issuant of a COA does not give the Planning Commission the authority to set time constraints. The site plan may be used to enforce the spaces if not in coherence with the CO. VDOT could be contacted and asked to look into how close the fuel center is to Interstate 81 and what the town ordinances are for tractor-trailers. Town roads are not structurally built to handle the weight of the tractor-trailer.

2. Comprehensive Plan – Update – Jason Boswell

Mr. Boswell told the board that they had seven responses to the RFP. He and other management staff scored and narrow the list down to the top three. He asked Mr. Bradley and Mr. Shuman to be on the interview board along with Mr. Wilson who had already shown interest is sitting in on the interview process.

Top three contenders are:

1. EPR – Charlottesville, VA
2. Hill Studio – Roanoke, VA
3. McBride, Dale Clarion – Cincinnati, OH

Planning Commission agreed to these provisions and instructed Mr. Boswell to go ahead and set up the interviews.

G. UPDATES FROM STAFF AND PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mr. Shuman addressed the board with an update from the EDA committee. EDA is discussing what is going on in town, and all the empty business fronts. There are seven members on the EDA board. Tonya Triplett put together a report for the Town Council. Tonya Triplett, Jayne Duehring, Carrie Baxter and Lisa Quigley also attend the EDA meetings. EDA members interview various local business and compiled their responses as to what they are seeing when working with the town. Tonya Triplett put together a report for the Town Council. These are the top five common themes:

1. Difficult to work with the town for a start up a business or modify an existing structure
2. First time anyone has reached out to us to solicit thoughts on economic development
3. Town has been complacent in terms in its efforts for economic development. Town has rested on its reputation for too long
4. Restrictive nature of the historic properties review board (HPRB) has discouraged investments in the historic district while at the same time there are properties that are clearly out of compliance with the requirement of the HPRB
5. Hard to locate information on mental health

Below are the nine recommendations, some of which are now being worked on now.

1. Better Communications, what is expected in terms of local requirements
2. Consider offering incentive to businesses
3. Entry cost of opening a small shop or business is daunting. Adopt an attitude of helping people to invest in Abingdon, practice improved customer/hospitality service
4. Consider maximizing use of Barter Greens to establish a bustling Town Square atmosphere
5. Continue to offer façade improvement opportunities in partnership with business owners and/or building owners to improve aesthetics that will attract additional customers, as well as additional businesses.
6. Work with banks and other financial institutions to identify sources of capital for prospective businesses or business expansion.

- 7. Involve local business, commercial real estate owners, potential businesses, commercial lenders and investors in a cooperative atmosphere to foster new growth.
- 8. Recommend a review of Historic Preservation Review Board guidelines to make sure they are clear, realistic and promote growth in the Historic District.
- 9. Update website

Main Street Abingdon has grant money for façade improvement. Issuant will have to come before the Planning Commission for improvement approval.

There is some confusion as to the way that town ordinances are explained to prospective businesses. HPRB views are important to a new business.

Should bring Planning Department and Economic Development personnel together to talk with interested businesses in order to advise them on what they will need to do.


H. ADJOURN

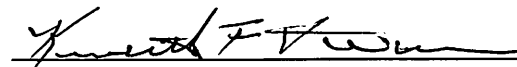
On motion of Mr. Shuman, Seconded by Mr. Anderson, recommended the meeting be adjourned with no further business to address

The roll call vote was as follows:

Mr. Anderson	Aye
Mr. Wilson	Aye
Dr. White	Aye
Mr. Bradley	Aye
Mr. Vittum	Aye
Mr. Shuman	Aye
Mr. Austin	Aye

Adjourn Time: 6:37 P.M.


Wayne Austin, Chairman


Kenneth Vittum, Secretary

Next regularly scheduled meeting will be November 26, 2018 at 5:30 pm in the Arthur Campbell Room, 1st floor of the Town Municipal Building.