

TOWN OF ABINGDON
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 28, 2011 - 5:30 P.M.

The regular meeting of the Abingdon Planning Commission was held Monday, February 28, 2011, at 5:30 P.M. The meeting was held in the Municipal Building, downstairs meeting room.

Mr. Gary Kimbrell, Chairman, called the meeting to order. Mr. Garrett Jackson called the roll.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mr. Gary Kimbrell, Chairman
Mr. Kenneth Shuman, Vice-Chairman
Mr. Robert M. Howard
Ms. Francine Ivery

Comprising a quorum of the Commission

Members Absent: Mr. Gregory W. Kelly
Mr. Mathew T. Bundy
Dr. H. Ramsey White, Jr.

Administrative Staff: Mr. W. Garrett Jackson, Director of Planning/Zoning
Mr. Sean Taylor, Assistant Director of Planning/Zoning
Mrs. Deborah Icenhour, Town Attorney
Mr. John B. Dew, Director of Public Services/Construction
Mr. Jimmy C. Smith, Director of Wastewater Operations/Town
Engineer

Visitors: Ms. Rita Stevens, 358 Sunset Drive, Abingdon, VA 24210
Mr. Carl Clarke, 460 Arnold Street, Abingdon, VA 24210

(2) Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting, January 24, 2011

Mr. Howard made a motion that the minutes of the regular meeting, January 24, 2011, be approved as presented. Mr. Shuman seconded the motion.

VOTE:

Mr. Howard Aye
Mr. Shuman Aye
Mrs. Ivery Aye
Mr. Kimbrell Aye

The motion passed.

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(3) PUBLIC HEARING
PROPOSED AMENDMENT - Application to Repeal, Amend and Reenact the Town of Abingdon Zoning Ordinance.
Amend and reenact Article 3, Section 3-1-16, Permitted Uses By Right to add Churches within the AFOS Agricultural, Forestal, and Open Space District. Application request submitted by the Shady Grove Pentecostal Holiness Church located on Shady Street. **Tax Map No. 84C2 (1) 45.**

Mr. Jackson explained that the applicant is seeking approval to amend the AFOS Agricultural, Forestal, and Open Space District Ordinance, Article 3, to include "Churches/Places of Worship" as a Permitted Use By-Right in such zone. The current church building constructed in the 1850's, is zoned AFOS and was part of the 1988 Town Boundary Adjustment, where Washington County had the property zoned as Agricultural.

The applicant is constructing a new church on land adjacent to the existing church, however a new structure requires that "Churches/Places of Worship" be a Permitted Use By-Right.

Mr. Jackson further stated that "Churches/Places of Worship" are uses which are typically found in ALL zones, with the exception of Industrial zones. The use of the term "Place of Worship" instead of "Houses of worship" is being suggested by the Staff to further comply with the issues that arise with First Amendment [Religion, Speech, Press, Assembly] grievances. These are often cited as problems in communities of growing cultural diversity.

Mr. Kimbrell opened the floor and asked if there was any discussion pertaining to this public hearing request.

Ms. Rita Stevens, stated that she has concerns with this request because currently this is a natural habitat area with wildlife, and possibly some caves. She also has a fear the properties in that area would lose their values and privacy.

Mr. Carl Clarke, stated that he was not speaking for or against the church, but wanted to let it be known that this property was once a substantial, deep quarry, that was filled with construction materials. He believes that it would be difficult for someone to build a structure on the property because the ground would be unstable.

There being no further discussion, Mr. Kimbrell closed the public hearing and asked if there was a motion from the Planning Commission. Mr. Shuman made a motion to recommend to the Town Council, the approval to amend and reenact Article 3, Section 3-1-16, Permitted Used By Right to add "Places of worship" within the AFOS Agricultural, Forestal, and Open Space District. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ivery.

VOTE:

- Mr. Shuman Aye
- Mrs. Ivery Aye
- Mr. Howard Aye
- Mr. Kimbrell Aye

The motion passed.

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(4) DISCUSSION - Outdoor Mural at Matt Smith Music

Mr. Matt Smith has approached staff regarding the feasibility of an outdoor mural on the wall(s) of his store on West Main Street. The design and location of such a mural have been discussed by Town Officials and Advance Abingdon, in the past. This mural would include such themes as: The Crooked Road, Abingdon History, The Over-mountain Men/Battle of Kings Mountain and other themes, where appropriate.

After discussion, it was the consensus of the Planning Commission that Mr. Smith be required to submit a sketch of the proposed mural for further review by the Planning Commission.

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(5) DISCUSSION - Proposed Town Districts and Guidelines

There was a continued discussion of the proposed Town Districts and Guidelines that have been previously

reviewed and discussed.

Mr. Jackson explained that there have been suggestions made over the past few months regarding the Town District, as have been reviewed by the Planning Commission. It has been suggested that the former Empire District be named "East End Gateway" and Highlands Gateway to "West End". Also, Depot Square will be taken into the "Market District" and the former "Academy District" into the "Tobacco Row Gateway" and "Market District". The Planning Commission decided upon "Falcon District" for the area encompassing the Washington County School Board Campus, Abingdon High School, E. B. Stanley Middle School and the Coomes Center.

After discussion, Mr. Shuman made a motion to approve the proposed Town Districts as presented at this meeting, with referral to the Town Council for a public hearing. Mr. Howard seconded the motion.

VOTE:

- Mr. Shuman Aye
- Mr. Howard Aye
- Mrs. Ivery Aye
- Mr. Kimbrell Aye

The motion passed.

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(6) DISCUSSION - Way-finding Signs

There was a discussion of way-finding signs which are being considered for placement throughout Town. The signage will be uniform throughout Town and will provide information that will be helpful to visitors, tourists, as well as local citizens.

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(7) Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Session

There was a discussion of some of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that need to be recognized and considered for future planning.

The threat of blighted properties was addressed as a main concern of the Planning Commission. Several property owners have been previously contacted but the blight conditions have not been corrected.

After a lengthy discussion, Mr. Shuman made a motion that the following properties be referred to Town Council for further action:

- 273 Rickard Street (House)
- Valley Street (Hutton House)
- East Main Street (Hutton House)
- Park Street (McConnell House)
- Stone Street and "B" Street (House on corner)
- Cave House, East Main Street (Porterfield House)
- East Main Street (Campbell House) contingent on sale of property to Ms. Martha Combs, with Ms. Combs plans being approved.

Mr. Howard seconded the motion.

VOTE:

Mr. Shuman Aye
Mr. Howard Aye
Mrs. Ivery Aye
Mr. Kimbrell Aye

The motion passed.

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There being no further business, a motion was made and duly seconded that the meeting be adjourned, with unanimous approval.

Gary Kimbrell, Chairman

Gregory W. Kelly, Secretary