

TOWN OF ABINGDON  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
MARCH 31, 2014 – 5:30 P.M.  
RESCHEDULED FROM MARCH 24, 2014

The Regular meeting of the Abingdon Planning Commission was held Monday, March 31, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held in the Municipal Building, downstairs meeting room.

Mr. Matthew T. Bundy, Chairman, called the meeting to order. Mr. Jackson called the roll.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mr. Matthew T. Bundy, Chairman  
Mr. Wayne Austin, Vice-Chairman  
Mr. Wayne Craig  
Ms. Maggie Costello  
Mr. Langley Shazor  
Mr. Robert M. Howard  
Mr. Gregory W. Kelly

Comprising a quorum of the Commission

Members Absent: None

Administrative Staff: Mr. W. Garrett Jackson, Assistant Town Manager  
Director of Planning/Zoning  
Mr. John Dew, Director of Public Services  
and Construction  
Mrs. Deborah Icenhour, Town Attorney  
Mr. Jim C. Smith, Director of Wastewater Operations  
Town Engineer  
Mr. Sean Taylor, Assistant Town Planner  
Mr. C. J. McGlothlin, Code Enforcement Officer (Absent)  
Ms. Rebecca Moody, Environmental Planner/  
Sustainability Coordinator (Absent)  
Mrs. Jenny Carlisle, Administrative Assistant; Planning,  
Public Works, and Public Services

Visitors: Mr. Qasim Bajwa  
Mr. Jason Berry  
Mr. Charles Blevins

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(2) Approval of Minutes: Regular meeting, February 24, 2014

A motion was made by Mr. Howard to approve the minutes of the Regular meeting, February 24, 2014, as presented. Mr. Austin seconded. All in favor with exceptions of Ms. Costello and Mr. Shazor who abstained due to the meeting taking place prior to the beginning of their terms.

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- (3) Public Hearing: Proposed Amendment  
**Application to Repeal, Amend and Reenact the Town of Abingdon Zoning Ordinance, B-2 General Business Zoning District, to add Single Family and Multi-Family as a Permitted use By Right in such zone as section number 11-1-1. Tax Map No. 106 (A) 11A.**

Mr. Jackson provided an overview of the proposed amendment which would allow single family and multi-family dwellings as a Permitted use By Right throughout the entire B-2 zone. Currently, property deed restrictions within the zone do allow this however, the Zoning Ordinance does not. Mr. Jackson pointed out that this would be a benefit to the Town in regards to the recent Infill Development study in terms of loft housing and commercial development, and is also in compliance with the Town Comprehensive Plan. Conversation ensued with several members showing concern for the allowance of large apartment complexes if this zoning amendment is approved however, it was discussed that there aren't too many locations within the zone where the land lends itself to building large apartment buildings.

At this point, Chairman Bundy opened the Public Hearing portion of the meeting and invited members of the public to address the Commission.

Mr. Qasim Bajwa, 108 Stoney Brook Drive, Abingdon, Virginia 24210, approached the podium. He is the applicant for this amendment. He stated that when he purchased the property across from the Church of the Nazarene on Old Eleven Court, he was unaware of the zoning restrictions, and the previous owner had told him he could build an apartment complex there. He explained that the land does not lend itself naturally to apartment buildings, but that he would like to build five or six single family homes on the 1.57 acre property. He said that he has spoken with neighbors and while a few opposed the idea of apartment buildings, none had problems with the idea of single family homes.

Mr. Kelly mentioned the recent infill study which is primarily aimed at loft units, and stated that it might be advisable to limit the zoning amendment to single family dwellings and loft apartments only, but not to allow for apartments complexes.

Mr. Kelly then made a motion to recommend to Council that zoning be changed to allow loft apartments and single family dwellings as a Permitted use By Right within the B-2 General Business Zoning District. Mr. Craig seconded the motion. Mr. Bundy closed the Public Hearing portion of the meeting. Roll was taken on the motion which carried unanimously. This will be a recommendation to Town Council and voted on at the next council meeting.

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- (4) Consideration of Preliminary Plat for Proposed Subdivision:  
 Proposed subdivision of property containing 6.56± acres owned by County School Board of Washington County, Virginia. **Located in the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Baugh Lane and Thompson Drive. Tax Map No. 105 (A) 2.**

Mr. Jackson provided a summary for the application to subdivide a portion of the property of the Washington County Technical School and asked Mr. Berry, County Administrator for Washington County, Virginia, to provide further information.

Mr. Berry stated that what they are looking for is some relief for the VFW post from curb, gutter, sidewalk, and new entrance requirements with the development of this property. Mr. Craig questioned Mr. Berry as to the specific hardship these requirements place on the property owner. Mr. Berry

introduced Mr. Charles Blevins of the VFW. Mr. Blevins explained that they currently operate a disabled American veteran service office on the property, but that the two buildings there do not adequately meet their needs, therefore they would like to build one new building on the property and tear down the existing buildings. Because their building funds are limited, they cannot bring this project to fruition if sidewalk and other improvement requirements stand. Mr. Craig voiced concerns regarding runoff and parking, and said he will need to know specifically what he would be exempting them from before agreeing to do so. He stated that more engineering work needs to be done before he can vote affirmatively for the exemption. Mr. Blevins affirmed that they had already planned to have a grading survey performed, and if necessary will work with the EPA to make sure they won't have problems with drainage. Mr. Kelly added that part of Commission member hesitation may be that there are already sidewalks up to that point, and then again at the other end of Baugh Lane. Mr. Austin expressed concern that if this is approved, they will have difficulty in the future exempting one developer from the requirements and not another. He questioned the uniqueness of this project that would warrant such an exemption. Mr. Berry said the difference with this project is that this is public property, owned by the School Board, and that it is run by a non-profit group.

Mr. Howard added that the Town is getting ready to embark on an Urban Pathway project and perhaps, as an exchange, one idea to pursue would be to have a pathway going through the property as a right-of-way in lieu of the sidewalk requirement. Mr. Berry said he would be willing to take that idea through the County channels.

At this point in the meeting, Mr. Smith, Town Engineer, came forward to elucidate that this is just a preliminary plat, and that before the final plat would come before the Commission engineering drawings (including entrances and improvements) need to be approved by the Public Works department. He confirmed that Baugh Lane can use improvements with regards to drainage as the ditchline is inadequate. Also, that under the Erosion Sediment Control plan, the Town is charged with the responsibility of verifying all on-site drainage as well as downstream drainage. He stated that curb and gutter improvements would improve the drainage situation. Mr. John Dew will need to review entrances to the site. Mr. Blevins stated that the private drive in the middle of the property is rarely used and they primarily use the main entrance.

It was clarified that these buildings were built in the 1930's, prior to Town zoning, so their use has been grandfathered in as a vested right, which is why they do not need a Special use permit to operate as they currently do. With no further discussion, Mr. Craig made a motion to table the item to allow Mr. Berry and the VFW to provide additional information. Mr. Shazor seconded. Approved unanimously.

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(5) Discussion: Planning related topics; Mr. Wayne Craig

Mr. Craig opened for discussion a couple items relating to traffic flow in downtown. The first item he presented is a connection between Porterfield Highway and Jonesboro Road en route to exit 14, which would keep interstate traffic off Main Street. Secondly, Mr. Craig made a suggestion that a connection from Cummings Street to East Main Street near exit 19 would do likewise. He suggested that this be included in the Town's Comprehensive plan. Mr. Kelly added that the area in question would have to be rezoned for this to take place. All members appeared in favor of further developing this idea.

The next topic put forward by Mr. Craig is Cummings Street near exit 17. His idea is to change the current shared left turn lane into a dedicated left turn only lane, which would provide a much longer left turn lane onto the interstate onramp. Also proposed is a change in the signal light settings to allow all traffic going northbound to go at once (left turns, through traffic, and right turns), followed by all

southbound traffic at once, which would provide more fluid movements through the interchange which currently backs up heavily during peak hours.

Mr. Dew added that the current configuration penalizes everyone and that at a minimum this solution would improve the southbound traffic, but very well may also improve northbound traffic, and seems feasible enough since all it entails is signal light modification and line painting. He affirmed that this would be a great question to pose to VDOT. VDOT has an upcoming meeting on April 22, but it might be better to hold a private meeting with them prior to that. Mr. Dew agreed to make contact with the appropriate parties at VDOT.

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- (7) Membership: Mr. Jackson welcomed new Commission members Ms. Maggie Costello and Mr. Langley Shazor, and briefly described for them what happens once motions are approved.

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There being no further business, Mr. Howard made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Kelly seconded, with unanimous approval. The meeting adjourned at 6:32 p.m.

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Matthew T. Bundy, Chairman

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Gregory W. Kelly, Secretary