

TOWN OF ABINGDON
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 25, 2010 - 5:30 P.M.

The regular meeting of the Abingdon Planning Commission was held Monday, October 25, 2010, 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. Gregory W. Kelly
Mr. Robert M. Howard
Dr. H. Ramsey White, Jr.
Ms. Francine Ivery
Mr. Matthew T. Bundy

Comprising a quorum of the Commission

Members Absent: None

Administrative Staff: Mr. W. Garrett Jackson, Director of Planning/Zoning
Mr. Sean Taylor, Assistant Director of Planning/Zoning
Mrs. Deborah Icenhour, Town Attorney
Mr. Jimmy C. Smith, Town Engineer

Visitors: Mrs. Susan Howard, 122 Valley Street, N.W.
Ms. Rebecca Glover, 305 West Valley Street

* * * * *

(2) Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting, September 27, 2010

Mr. Shuman made a motion that the minutes of the regular meeting, September 27, 2010, be approved as presented. Mr. Bundy seconded the motion.

VOTE:

Mr. Shuman Aye
Mr. Bundy Aye
Mr. Kelly Abstained
Mrs. Ivery Aye
Mr. Howard Aye
Dr. White Aye
Mr. Kimbrell Aye

The motion passed.

* * * * *

(3) PUBLIC HEARING
PROPOSED AMENDMENT - Application to Repeal, Amend and Reenact the Town of Abingdon Zoning Ordinance.
Amend and reenact Article 8, Section 8-2B, Specialty Retail Shops as a Special Use in Sub-district 10 of the Old & Historic District.

Mr. Kimbrell declared the Public Hearing as being open and asked if anyone present would like to address the proposed amendment as presented.

Mrs. Susan Howard explained that the reason for this request is to allow her to sell “beads” from her residence located at 122 Valley Street, N.W. The original intent for the updated space in her residential garage was to sell bead products on the internet and she still plans to do that, however, many of her regular customers have contacted her, wanting to see her inventory in person. She further explained that the plan is to see customers on an appointment only basis on Saturday and in the evenings during the week. In the event there would be a group of customers come at the same time, strict instructions would be given to park along street to avoid any congestion on Plumb Alley. There will be no signage used; only a street number will be used on the structure facing Plumb Alley.

Mr. Kimbrell asked if there was anyone else to speak for or against the proposed amendment.

Ms. Rebecca Glover, a resident of the Old & Historic District, stated that she was unclear as to the meaning of the proposed amendment. She voiced concerns as to how this would eventually affect the appearance of Valley Street if approved. She used Watauga Avenue in Johnson City, Tennessee as an example, explaining that this street has a lot of older homes having retail businesses with signage, which is very unappealing to the area.

After Mr. Jackson explained the definition for Specialty Retail Shops as a Special Use, including the requirements, Ms. Glover had a better understanding of this request for the proposed amendment.

Mr. Kimbrell asked if there was anyone else to speak for or against the proposed amendment.

There being no one else to speak, Mr. Kimbrell declared the Public Hearing closed and asked if there was a motion in terms of the proposed amendment.

After discussion, Dr. White made a motion to recommend approval for the proposed amendment to Town Council, to amend and reenact Article 8, Section 8-2B, Specialty Retail Shops as a Special Use in Sub-District 10 of the Old & Historic District. Ms Ivery seconded the motion.

VOTE:

- Dr. White Aye
- Ms. Ivery Aye
- Mr. Kelly Aye
- Mr. Bundy Aye
- Mr. Shuman Aye
- Mr. Howard Abstained
- Mr. Kimbrell Aye

The motion passed.

* * * * *

(4) DISCUSSION

• Urban Development Areas

Mr. Jackson addressed issues discussed at a recent training workshop regarding the Urban Development Areas legislation and how this will affect the Town’s relationship with Washington County. He presented information to the Planning Commission members regarding the possibilities for the future. A further discussion pertaining to this matter will be discussed at the next meeting before making any recommendations to the Town Council for their approval.

• Certified Planning Commissioners Training

Mr. Jackson explained that a four day Certified Planning Commissioners Training will be offered again in Abingdon and pointed out that Mr. Howard and Ms. Ivery will need to attend this to become certified for the Planning Commission. All other members have completed this training in the past.

• Internet Cafés In Virginia

Mr. Jackson stated that recently the Town Staff had been approached by an interested party in trying to obtain a business license for an internet café. He explained the definition of an internet café. This is where a business provides computer terminals, allowing customers to purchase a card, allowing him the use of the computer for a certain amount of time for use on the internet to check face book, complete work, word processing, etc. an even the option to gamble. A special business license is required. Mr. Jackson further stated that the staff is in the process of obtaining more information and the limits regarding this type of business before any consideration is given to this subject.

• Creation of Town “Districts”

As discussed in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan, to be utilized in proposed way finding signage.

There was a lengthy discussion of the creation of Town “Districts”. Mr. Jackson presented the Planning Commission members a map, explaining names and locations for the proposed districts which had been discussed by the staff since the last meeting. He stated that it was important that residential districts be eliminated, but to concentrate on business, commercial and downtown areas. As a result of the discussion, several suggestions were made for the proposed districts and will be considered as this project continues.

* * * * *

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

A discussion of some of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that need to be recognized and considered for future planning. Some of the items discussed are as follows:

Mr. Taylor explained that Ms. Sonya Ingram of the Preservation of Virginia recently visited the Town and was very impressed with all the projects the Town has completed.

* * * * *

There being no further business, Mr. Shuman made that the meeting be adjourned. Dr. White seconded the motion, with unanimous approval.

Gary Kimbrell, Chairman

Gregory W. Kelly, Secretary