

Town of Colonial Beach Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, November 12, 2015 – Town Center, 22 Washington Avenue

Time: 4:30 p.m.

Present: Robin Schick, Chairwoman
Maureen McCabe, Vice Chairwoman
Diana Clopton
Pam Tolson

Absent: Bob Busick

Staff: Brendan McHugh, Planning and Zoning Administrator
Tori Haynes, Planning Assistant

Item 1: Call to Order

Ms. Schick called the meeting to order at 4:37 p.m.

Item 2: Approval of the Minutes of the October 2015 Regular Meeting

Ms. Schick asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 2015 Regular Meeting. Ms. Clopton made the motion to approve the minutes. Ms. McCabe Seconded.

Ms. Schick called for a voice vote; it was unanimously resolved:

That the minutes of the October 2015 Regular Meeting be approved.

Item 3: Public Comment on Planning Commission Matters Not on the Agenda

Linda Farneth of the Journal Press suggested moving Public Comment on Planning Commission Matters Not on the Agenda to the end of the agenda. She also requested a dedicated agenda item for the Press to ask questions. Ms. Schick noted the suggestions.

Item 4: Committee Reports

Ms. Schick asked for the Public Outreach Committee Report.

Ms. Tolson said that she had recently attended a meeting for the Artisan Trail, and was able to answer questions about the Commission's position on the Home Occupation ordinance amendments.

Ms. Schick suggested the Planning Commission begin a Facebook page to facilitate the Commission's Public Outreach with the community. She noted that the Facebook page should not be used as an outlet for personal statements, but as a tool to communicate the Commission's news and press releases.

Ms. Schick asked for the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Committee Report.

Ms. McCabe explained that the revised CIP calendar had not been formally introduced. She was concerned that the revised calendar would not give the Planning Commission enough time to review and prioritize the departmental applications for the CIP. Having re-read the CIP chapter in the Small Town Planning Handbook, Ms. McCabe proposed formally adopting the original CIP calendar, which she said is more in line with the handbook's suggested schedule. She also requested a Work Session before the December regular meeting.

Original Timeline		Revised Timeline	
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting between all departments to discuss schedules and potential cost-sharing for upcoming CIP projects. 	September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting between all departments to discuss schedules and potential cost-sharing for upcoming CIP projects.
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CIP applications due to Planning Commission for review. 	October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CIP applications due to Town Manager for review.
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Commission will hold Public Hearing regarding CIP. Formal recommendations will be given back to Town Staff. Staff gives applications to Town Council for work session review. 	February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Staff will give applications to Planning Commission for review. Formal recommendations will be given back to Town Staff.
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Council will have Public Hearing, explaining each CIP application to the citizens. Town Council will take note of all public comments. Town Council will have the ability to speak with department heads. Town Council may make suggestions for the applications prior to the December meeting. Department heads may make changes based on Council requests and return applications to Town Staff. 	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Commission will have Public Hearing for the CIP and make formal recommendations to Town Council.
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd public meeting will be held. Public Comments from November meeting will be addressed. Town Council will then make a ruling on proposed Capital Improvements. 	April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Council will review the CIP with the Planning Commission's recommendations at April work session. Formal recommendations shall be made and given back to Staff.
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate current standing of CIP projects, prior to the submission of the new CIP applications. 	May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Council will have a Public Hearing to make a ruling on the proposed CIP.
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process begins again for the following year. 	September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PC will evaluate current standing of CIP projects, prior to submission of the new CIP applications.

Ms. Schick asked Mr. McHugh if the CIP applications had been submitted by each department.

Mr. McHugh confirmed.

Ms. Clopton asked why the Planning Commission had not received them.

Mr. McHugh said the Town Manager had not yet reviewed them.

The Commissioners discussed their concern about the Town Manager reviewing the CIP applications before them, as per the revised timeline. They expressed doubt that the CIP process was being handled legally by the Town.

Ms. Clopton said the original calendar is the version that other jurisdictions use, overwhelmingly.

Ms. Tolson said there are documents missing from the Department applications, including inventory, ongoing expenses, and fiscal policies. She said that these documents, as well as meetings with the departments, are necessary for the Commission to fully understand the priorities of each department.

Ms. Clopton said the Planning Commission should be coordinating the whole CIP process. It doesn't go through the entire staff and the Town Manager first. She also expressed concern that the revised schedule does not include the Town Council.

Mr. McHugh clarified that the revised schedule includes Town Council after review by Planning Commission.

Ms. Schick asked Mr. McHugh how the original timeline got changed.

Mr. McHugh said the timeline was changed to be more in line with the budget schedule.

Ms. Tolson explained that the Planning Commission is the pivot point for the CIP. She expressed concern that there is not enough proof of public input, which could affect the Town's bond rating. She reiterated that it is important that the Planning Commission be the focal point.

Ms. Clopton asked for documentation of all existing obligations and the life of those existing obligations, including grants, bonds, and reserve funds.

Ms. McCabe recommended that Planning Commission, by consensus, adopt the original CIP timeline with adjustments for deadlines that had already passed.

Ms. Schick called for a voice vote; it was unanimously resolved:

That the original CIP timeline be adopted.

Ms. McCabe reported that Downtown Colonial Beach had completed their bylaws and articles of incorporation as a 501(c)3 organization. They are also in the process of selecting board members and committee heads. She further reported on their implementation of the Main Street Program's Four Point Approach of Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring. She suggested that the Planning Commission unite with other local organizations to facilitate revitalization projects in the community.

Item 5: Further Discussion on Vacant Town-Owned Properties – N. Irving Avenue

Ms. Schick asked for the Staff Report.

Ms. Haynes explained that the report now included assessment values for neighboring properties on N. Irving Avenue.

Ms. Schick said she had contacted Coldwell Banker for a commercial appraisal of the properties.

Ms. Clopton asked for saleable value and rental value. She asked why the Town can't lease the properties.

Ms. Schick said the Town is hesitant because it hasn't worked in the past.

Ms. Clopton said it's because the Town hasn't been appropriately managed.

Ms. Schick reiterated that she wants a professional's opinion of the marketability of the properties.

There was a general discussion on the definition of property values.

Ms. Schick explained that unforeseen events have occurred since the 2009 adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. Due to those events, such as the school fire, the Comprehensive Plan needs to be updated to reflect the new land use designations. She recommended getting input from the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Colonial Beach, and Colonial Beach Foundation.

Item 6: Discussion on the Comprehensive Plan

The Commissioners discussed the status of the following CIP items from Chapter 5:

- New Municipal Center – Not Complete
- Water System Improvements – In Progress
- Sewer System Improvements – In Progress

Ms. Clopton asked about the capacity of the sewer system and I&I information.

Mr. McHugh did not have the numbers on hand, but said the information is available in the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Tolson asked about the status of the Safe Routes to School Grant, because she did not see new sidewalks yet.

Ms. Schick and Mr. McHugh explained that the grant had been awarded to the Town, and the next phase is the construction phase.

Item 7: Other Topics

Ms. McCabe asked Mr. McHugh to make a list of amendments made to the Zoning Ordinance.

Ms. Tolson asked when the audit report would be posted on the website.

Mr. McHugh said it would not be handled through the Planning Department.

Item 8: Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.