

Town of Colonial Beach Planning Commission Minutes

Date: Thursday, January 15, 2015 – Town Center, 22 Washington Avenue

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Present: Robert Busick
Maureen McCabe, Vice Chairwoman
Steve Cirbee
John Reinhart

Absent: Robin Schick, Chairwoman

Staff: Acting Zoning Administrator, Brendan McHugh

Item 1: Call to Order

Vice Chairwoman McCabe called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Item 2: Approval of the regular meeting minutes of December 2014.

Vice Chairwoman McCabe asked if there was any comment on the minutes. Vice Chairwoman McCabe asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on December 4, 2014. Member Cirbee made the motion to approve the minutes. Member Reinhart seconded.

Vice Chairwoman McCabe called for a voice vote; it was unanimously resolved:

That the minutes of the December 4, 2014 meeting be approved.

Item 3: Public Comment on Planning Commission matters (not on the agenda)

Vice Chairwoman McCabe then asked if there was public comment on Planning Commission matters not on the agenda. Linda Brubaker explained that she would like to apply for one of the empty seats on the Planning Commission. Mike Looney explained that he was present on the last Town Council meeting. He explained that there was a question about the zoning map and there were no members of the Planning Commission present to answer the question and because of that, the action was deferred to the next meeting. He explained that this could have been avoided if from the Planning Commission or staff would have been at the meeting. He explained that someone from the Planning Commission or the Planning Department should be at the meetings to answer questions related to Planning and Zoning. Member Cirbee explained that another problem was that the map was not available at the meeting. The Planning Commission and Mr. McHugh discussed how someone from the Planning Commission or the Planning Department should be present at the Town Council meetings when a Planning topic is being discussed. Vice Chairwoman McCabe then asked if there were any other public comments. There were no further comments.

Item 4: Nomination of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

Member Busick commented positively on the leadership of Chairwoman Schick and Vice Chairwoman McCabe. Member Cirbee made a motion to nominate them for their respective positions for the 2015 calendar year, should they be agreeable to the nominations. Member Busick seconded the motion.

Vice Chairwoman McCabe called for a voice vote; it was unanimously resolved:

To reappoint Robin Schick as Chairwoman and Maureen McCabe as Vice Chairwoman of the Colonial Beach Planning Commission for the 2015 calendar year.

Item 5: Further Discussion on Agricultural District

Vice Chairwoman McCabe then asked if there was any further discussion on the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments to Article 10-Agricultural District. She explained that there are no properties zoned Agricultural in Town however if there was an annexation or a rezoning, then the Agricultural District could be an option. Mr. McHugh then explained that the Town Council asked that the Planning Commission review the Zoning Ordinance to bring it up to date and make it easier to read. Mr. McHugh then explained that he reviewed the Agricultural District based on those criteria. Member Busick then asked if the minimum lot area only applies if you put a structure on it. Mr. McHugh then explained that the minimum lot area applies when a lot is created.

Item 6: Discussion on Breweries, Wind Mills/Wind Turbines, and Abandon Work

Vice Chairwoman McCabe then asked Mr. McHugh to give a presentation the work that he has been doing concerning Breweries, Wind Turbines and Abandon Work. Mr. McHugh then explained that a few citizens have come in to the Planning Department inquiring about breweries and windmills. Mr. McHugh then explained that there was nothing in the Zoning Ordinance concerning the two subjects and how he going to do some research to determine what was necessary to add them to the different districts. Member Cirbee then explained that the wind turbines should be restricted to residential units because Colonial Beach doesn't have the environment to have commercial wind turbines in town. Mr. McHugh then explained that there was a lot of controversy over wind turbines concerning birds. Member Busick then explained that there could be a study on solar panels as well. Member Cirbee explained that these topics should be incorporated into the already existing ordinance. Member Cirbee then suggested to Mr. McHugh that he should look into Westmoreland County because they were in the process of adding a brewery in Montross. Vice Chairwoman McCabe then asked Mr. McHugh to explain the topic of abandon work. Mr. McHugh then explained that he noticed that there was a lot of abandoned work around town and that there was nothing in the building, town or zoning code concerning the issue. Mr. McHugh explained that he was going to talk with the Town Attorney about what can be done concerning the abandon work. Vice Chairwoman McCabe then explained that there was a lot of work that is done around town where permits can just be pulled for years and years without actually finishing the work. Member Cirbee then explained that some of the properties that have unfinished work that may have not been added to the tax role that could be added, to give the citizen incentive to finish the work.

Item 7: Other Topics

Member Busick then explained that the Community Garden Club was planning on being ready to start planting in the Community Garden on frost free day. Member Busick then explained some details of the garden to the Planning Commission members. Vice Chairwoman McCabe then explained that the Planning

Commission was broken up into different committees to focus on different aspects of the commission. She explained that one of the committees was Public Relations. She asked Member Reinhart if he had any updates. Member Reinhart explained that he did not have any updates. Vice Chairwoman McCabe then explained that another committee that was created was the Capital Improvement Plan Committee. Vice Chairwoman McCabe then explained that the members of the committee were herself and Member Cirbee. Member Cirbee then explained some of the research that they had done to create a proper Capital Improvement Plan. He felt that the Capital Improvement Plans in the past seemed to be more short term and had no follow through. He explained that the Planning Commission would need help from the Town Council and Town Staff. Vice Chairwoman McCabe then explained the conversation that she had with the Town Manager concerning the CIP. Both Vice Chairwoman McCabe and Member Cirbee discussed concerns that they had with the Town's Capital Improvement Plan process. Member Busick then explained that the CIP and the Comp Plan should be in line with each other. Member Cirbee then explained that the whole process is listed in the Code of Virginia. Town Council member, Wanda Goforth then had a request that she receive the emails concerning the CIP from the Town Manager be forwarded to her because she is the Planning and Economic Development liaison for the Town Council. Mayor Mike Ham then requested that Town Council member Ed Blunt should be copied on the emails as well because he is the Public Works liaison. Mr. McHugh then announced that Member Rodeheaver formally resigned. Member Reinhart then explained that there was a meeting at the Colonial Beach High School concerning the roads at Riverside Meadows. He explained that the meeting was about giving the town an option to create a sanitary district which would enable the Town to put money into paving the roads which the county and state would match. Member Reinhart explained that he did not agree with the option because he believed that the residents already pay enough taxes which should cover the roads. Vice Chairwoman McCabe then explained that the Capital Improvement Plan should cover those types of issues. Member Cirbee then explained that there have been two improvements done but were done through VDOT and not the Capital Improvement Plan. He also believed that the drainage needed to be fixed before the roads could be fixed. Mayor Ham then explained that the Town was in the process of trying to get VDOT to give them an estimate as to what it would cost to fix the roads. He explained that this would not be a quick process. He explained that there are many people who live in Riverside Meadows who were promised that the roads would be paved. He also explained that many people blame the Town for the roads and many people blame contractors for the roads. He then explained that he still has yet to see anything in writing concerning any promises made for road improvements. He then explained that the Capital Improvement Program requires money to support it but the Town doesn't have the money to support it. Member Cirbee then explained that statuses on Capital Improvement Plan Projects need to be given occasionally to keep the citizens up to date. He then explained that the meeting at the high school was given as an option to expedite the road improvement process. Member Busick then explained that the Planning Commission needed to be mindful that in the end, it is up to the Town Council to make the decisions concerning the Capital Improvement Plan. Vice Chairwoman McCabe clarified that the Capital Improvement Plan should be taken seriously so that funding could be allocated appropriately. She then illuminated that she did not see much improvement concerning the Capital Improvement Plan since 2009 which concerned her. She then explained that she believed that the Town currently does not have the money, but proper planning can help fix that problem. Member Cirbee believed that the Town needed to focus more on long term goals rather than short term problems. Mayor Ham then explained that there have been many improvements done in the Town concerning Capital Improvements. He clarified that there has been six or seven million dollars worth of improvements done in the Town concerning water and sewer. Member Cirbee then explained that he was happy that there has been work being done, however he believed that it needed to follow a proper process. Town Council member Mike Looney explained that in the Comprehensive Plan, the paving of the roads is listed under Special Assessment. He believed that it meant a special tax. He then explained that the Sanitary District was an alternative which was a flat fee rather than a special tax. The fee would be the same regardless of the value of the property. He then explained that other localities that implemented the sanitary district the property

owners' money was matched by the county and that sum was matched again by the state, but the county matched the funds with high way department improvement funds not taxes on residents of the county, it was state highway money that was used. The Town manager pointed out that the money the Town gets has to be used on existing state roads and the roads in Riverside Meadows are not state roads. The difference would be that the money that the county used that to match what the citizens raised was state money; however the money that Colonial Beach would raise would be taxes on the local citizens. Member Cirbee then explained that the Town only gets money for roads from VDOT if they are up to VDOT standards. Vice Chairwoman McCabe then explained that there are grants listed in the Comp Plan for projects like these but many of the grants have limitations. Vice Chairwoman McCabe then asked if there were any other topics.

Item 8: Adjourned

There was no further business. The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.