

Town of Lovettsville

Planning Commission Minutes of Regular Meeting July 11, 2012

Call to Order/Welcome

Chairwoman Bushway called the Regular Meeting of the Lovettsville Planning Commission to order at 7:34 PM on July 11, 2012 at the Lovettsville Town Hall, 6 East Pennsylvania Avenue, Lovettsville, VA 20180.

Present at Meeting

- Chairwoman Mari Bushway
- Vice Chair Deborah Summitt
- Commissioners Lorraine Bauer
- Commissioner Jennifer Jones
- Commissioner Joe Mueller
- Commissioner Tony Quintana

Absent

None

Staff Present

- Zoning Administrator Melissa Hynes
- Town Clerk Harriet West

Audience

Mayor Robert Zoldos II (arrived at 8:15 PM)

Public Comment

Chairwoman Bushway asked for public comment. There was none.

Additions/Deletions/Modifications to the Agenda

Chairwoman Bushway called for changes to the agenda. There were none.

Approval of Planning Commission Minutes

Planning Commission Meeting – April 18, 2012

Motion: To accept the minutes of the April 18, 2012 Planning Commission Meeting as presented.

By: Chairwoman Bushway

Second: Commissioner Summitt

Aye: Commissioner Bauer, Bushway, Jones, Quintana, and Summitt

Nay: None

Abstain: Commissioner Mueller

Absent: None

Staff Reports

No report was presented.

Action/Discussion Item

A. Review of Rules and Procedures

Zoning Administrator Hynes presented this item. She reviewed the Lovettsville Planning Commission Rules and Procedures. There was discussion about what constitutes a quorum and time limits for public comment. The Commissioners agreed that a majority of members constitute a quorum. Chairwoman Bushway stated they had previously agreed to time limits of three minutes per person and five minutes from someone representing an organization or group, and that the Planning Commission would not stay on any one agenda item for more than 30 minutes. Commissioner Mueller stated this is consistent with the Town Council's procedures and allows them to impose a time limit if they need to.

Commissioner Mueller asked about the wording marked for deletion from lines 261-263 regarding written submissions for public hearings. Zoning Administrator Hynes stated she will check on this.

Chairwoman Bushway asked if the Planning Commissioners could reapply for an additional four-year term after their initial four-year term expired. Zoning Administrator Hynes and Commissioner Mueller stated they can reapply by submitting an application to Town Council.

B. Review of Planning Commission Work Plan

Zoning Administrator Hynes presented this item. She referenced the October 2011 Comprehensive Plan Implementation Work Plan prepared by the former Zoning Administrator and discussed the Town Council's priorities, including:

1. Updating the zoning regulations and planning policies to facilitate a mixture of commercial, office, and residential uses in portions of the old downtown.
2. Promoting the implementation of economic policies.
3. Developing a more comprehensive transportation plan.
4. Promoting recycling and environmental awareness.

She discussed options for creating a new zoning district for the old downtown area that would: a) make it easier to establish certain types of businesses; b) provide ways for getting broad citizen involvement; c) provide potential financial incentives for new businesses in the target area of East Broad Way; and d) establish design guidelines to reinforce the small town character. She suggested starting by looking at the existing houses along East Broad Way to determine what commercial uses are not feasible due to parking or lot size.

Chairwoman Bushway suggested reviewing the survey data from Town's Comprehensive Plan and conducting a new survey specifically for East Broad Way. Commissioner Mueller stated the intent for this part of Town was to have businesses that would fit the structures that are already there. He noted that parking is a huge issue for the old part of Town.

Zoning Administrator Hynes discussed the potential uses for a culture and tourism space in the old downtown center that would bring visitors to Town and showed illustrative examples from other small towns. She provided a map of the 33 properties in the target area (East Broad Way between North Church Street and Locust Street) and showed the current uses for each parcel. She discussed two options for the old downtown district – creating a whole new zoning district and asking property owners to rezone to the new district or creating an overlay district which would be placed upon the existing zoning. With the overlay district, property owners would keep their existing zoning and have the option of taking advantage of the overlay. The overlay district can include a variety of incentives such as financial, regulatory flexibility, or a hybrid of both, as well as a "support team."

Mayor Zoldos noted there is typically no vacant commercial property in Town; therefore, Council is encouraging commercial use in the target area of East Broad Way to help expand the Town's economic base. He stressed that the process needs to be clearly explained to residents in the area. He added that the streetscape/sidewalk plan will help address some of the current parking challenges.

The Commissioners discussed ways to increase commercial uses in the downtown area by providing incentives and increasing the availability of parking. They also emphasized the need to reach out to the public and discussed conducting a zoning workshop so residents understood their options and how it would benefit them.

Zoning Administrator Hynes presented information about creating an Arts & Culture District that gives localities the authority to grant tax incentives and regulatory flexibility. The district would include a variety of uses suitable for the Town and a support team to help with marketing and promotions for businesses located in the target area.

Commissioner Mueller asked how this related to the Town's historic overlay. Mayor Zoldos clarified that the honorary Historic District has been approved by the state. There were a few residents who were strongly opposed to this. Commissioner Mueller stated that the historical designation could be used as another marketing feature that the Town can offer.

Staff, the Commissioners, and the Mayor discussed other resources the Town could utilize in its efforts such as local universities, the County, and other towns. They also discussed unique ways to get people to come to Town, such as special events.

C. Review of Possible Modifications to Zoning Ordinance.

This item was included as part of the discussion regarding the Planning Commission Work Plan. Zoning Administrator Hynes noted that the Zoning Ordinance is available on the Town's website.

Information Items

No Information Items were presented.

Comments from Mayor and Commissioners

Chairwoman Bushway called for comments from the Mayor and Commissioners.

Mayor Zoldos thanked the Planning Commissioners for the work they do on behalf of the Town and provided the following updates:

- There was no major damage in Town from the derecho (severe storm).
- The new "Village of Lovettsville" sign on the outskirts of Town was provided by Loudoun County. The sign is incorrect and will be replaced in several weeks with a sign that says "Town of Lovettsville."
- The first meeting of the new Town Council will be on July 26, 2012.
- The sidewalk project on East Broad Way is ongoing and the Town is working on getting this accepted as a VDOT project.
- The Town needs more "Doozers" (volunteers) to help at various events. He asked the Commissioners to consider helping out for a few hours on the day of specific events.
- He would like to have an opening day ceremony for the Olympics.
- He is in the office frequently during the week and he encouraged the Commissioners to contact him if they need anything.

Commissioner Quintana asked the Mayor how long those in Town were without power. The Mayor stated most people had their power back on within 36 hours. He reported on storm damage to the Town and plans for enhanced emergency preparations in the future, including using the Lovettsville Fire and Rescue Company as a cooling station and completing the Town's emergency plan.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the Planning Commission meeting of July 11, 2012.

By: Commissioner Bushway

Second: Commissioner Mueller

Aye: Commissioners Bauer, Bushway, Jones, Quintana, and Summitt

Nay: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Harriet West, Town Clerk

Date Approved: January 2, 2013

Attachments:
None