

Town of Lovettsville

Minutes of the Planning Commission Regular Meeting May 20, 2015

Call to Order/Welcome

Chairman Joseph Mueller called the Regular Meeting of the Lovettsville Planning Commission to order at 7:33 p.m. on May 20, 2015 at the Lovettsville Town Hall, 6 East Pennsylvania Avenue, Lovettsville, VA.

Present at Meeting

- Chairman Joseph Mueller
- Vice Chair Robert Gentile
- Commissioner Thomas Ciolkosz (arrived at 7:38 p.m.)
- Commissioner Frank McDonough
- Commissioner Anthony Quintana
- Commissioner Buchanan Smith
- Commissioner Nate Fontaine

Absent

None.

Staff Present

- Zoning Administrator Joshua Bateman
- Town Manager Laszlo Palko
- Town Clerk Harriet West

Public Comment

Chairman Mueller called for comments from the public.

Patricia Rostkowski of the International Dark Sky Association spoke about responsible night sky lighting and distributed handouts about dark sky lighting to the Commission and public. Mr. Gentile asked about the International Dark Sky Association's mission. Ms. Rostkowski responded that the association publishes guidelines about outdoor lighting. Buck Smith and Frank McDonough inquired as to whether anyone opposed dark sky initiatives and Ms. Rostkowski said that she has had people oppose the initiatives.

Additions/Deletions/Modifications to the Agenda

Chairman Mueller added an item regarding a proposal to establish rules for membership on the Comprehensive Plan advisory committees. He distributed proposed rules to the Planning Commission and asked that this item be added as agenda item 6.A. and for subsequent agenda items to be renumbering accordingly. Mr. McDonough asked that such proposals be distributed to Commissioners in advance of the meeting in the future and Chairman Mueller agreed to do so. There were no additional modifications to the agenda.

Approval of Planning Commission Minutes

There were none.

Staff Reports

Mr. Bateman delivered a report on several projects in Town, including the site plan for the Town Center commercial area. He informed the Commission that the second submittal was recently received by staff. He stated that the applicant did a thorough job of addressing staff and agency comments on the first

submittal. Upon a question from Chairman Mueller, Mr. Bateman pointed out on the map where the Lovettsville Glen subdivision is located. Mr. Bateman indicated that the project was recently halted by the applicant after staff comments were issued on the second submission. Mr. Bateman also informed the Commission that he has recently been in contact with the landscape architect working on landscaping for the Keena Subdivision.

Action/Discussion Item

A. Rules for Membership on the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committees

Chairman Mueller delivered an overview of the rules for membership and reporting requirements that were distributed to Commissioners earlier in the meeting. He stated that the rules make clear that members must be citizens, property owners, or business owners and that citizens residing outside of the Town limits may serve as topic advisors and speak before the committees if called upon to do so by the committee chairs, but shall have no official standing and may not discuss or vote on matters before the committees. Council Members may serve as non-voting members consistent with the Town charter. Advisory committees must report their progress to the Commission at regular intervals and produce a draft amendment of the chapter or chapters corresponding to their planning topic.

Mr. McDonough inquired as to whether any additional Town Council members had signed up for any of the committees and Chairman Mueller responded that the list was up-to-date as far as he knows. Chairman Mueller explained how Council members participated during the last comprehensive planning review process. Mr. McDonough asked why certain committees had only four members while others had six. Mr. Bateman explained that twelve individuals signed up for the various committees and that two non-Town residents were among those who signed up. He stated that fewer in-Town citizens signed up than he was anticipating and that broad-based participation is desirable since higher levels of participation lend greater legitimacy to the planning process. He recommended that the Commission grow the committees to five to seven members and identify ways to attract people to participate on the committees.

Evan Harlow stated that he is a member of the New Town Meadows Homeowners Association and he volunteered to distribute information via Facebook to members of the association. Mr. Ciolkosz stated that if staff creates a printable document that he and Mr. Quintana can distribute to residents of Town Center they will do since both are members of the Lovettsville Town Center Homeowners Association.

Mr. McDonough stated that he knew of a former Board of Zoning Appeals member who may be willing to join the committees and that if each commissioner can find one or two people the committee slots could be filled quickly. A discussion ensued about the best way to entice fellow residents to participate on the comprehensive planning committees and to explain the purpose of the planning process to the public.

Mr. Fontaine stated that he felt the reporting requirement for drafting changes in the comprehensive plan needs to be better defined. Mr. Bateman stated his understanding of the deliverable is that staff will draft changes to present to the committees and then combine those with any additional changes the committees may come up with. Mr. Mueller agreed that this was the outcome that he felt the Commission should be seeking to obtain from the committees. He asked whether staff had any additional modifications to the rules and Mr. Bateman explained that he was not the original author but rather the Mayor drafted the rules. Mr. Ciolkosz recommended that the rules be modified to explain the general purpose of each of the committees to the public and Mr. Fontaine stated that the purpose was included in a PowerPoint presentation at the last meeting. A discussion followed about whether to further modify the rules. Mr. Mueller suggested postponing action on adoption of the rules until the next meeting.

B. Comprehensive Plan Review: Introduction and Vision Statement

Mr. Bateman explained the format of the Excel spreadsheet contained in the meeting packet summarizing the value statements, goals, policies in the 2011 Comprehensive Plan for tracking progress towards implementation. He gave a summary of how the information in the spreadsheet is organized and how he intends the committees to use the background information developed by staff. He asked the Commission to discuss each of the statements, goals and policies in the Introduction chapter and decide whether to make changes. He also summarized the contents of the other attachments distributed in the meeting

packet including the census information and editorial changes drafted by staff to guide the Commission's discussions. He stated that while the Introduction chapter is more generic and therefore different than the topics the committees will be covering, he planned to follow the same general process for committee review of their respective chapters.

Chairman Mueller stated that some additional pruning and explanation is needed for the values, goals and policies. Mr. Bateman suggested going through them sequentially. Mr. Ciolkosz recommended adding columns to the spreadsheet identifying the responsible party as well as the metric to use in measuring progress. Mr. Bateman agreed to do so in future versions.

The Commission discussed the vision statement and agreed to the following:

- Add wording expressing a desire for economic development and growth;
- Add language about the desire to enhance and improve public infrastructure, services and facilities; and
- Delete references to "modest population growth."
- Leave in the words "small-town."

The Commission discussed the shared values and agreed to the following:

- Number 1: Add language about the Town being a cooperative and friendly Town that provides essential services to residents.
- Number 2: Delete the phrase "human-scale."
- Number 3: Delete the phrase "enjoyment of a peaceful atmosphere" and replace with language drafted by staff that is more appropriate.
- Number 4: Add the phrase "historic, rural community" and language about harnessing local agricultural resources.
- Add language about the importance of volunteer and non-profit organizations.
- Number 5: Express the need to encourage new businesses and attract residents to the Town.
- Number 6: Leave it as it is.

The Commission discussed the goals and agreed to the following:

- Number 1: Delete.
- Number 2: Add language about protecting historic viewsheds.
- Number 3: Express the need to preserve historic resources and the Town's unique German heritage.
- Number 4: Add language about continuing to support agricultural-based local economy in addition to other types of economic activity.
- Number 5: Add wording about preserving and enhancing open space as opposed to obtaining additional open space areas.
- Number 6: Delete everything after "natural resources."
- Number 7: Delete the phrase "low-intensity" and state that growth will be consistent with the Town's character.
- Number 8: Replace the phrase "pedestrian orientation" and add wording that states that streets will be sufficiently designed for vehicles and pedestrians.
- Add language that states that growth will not overburden public water and sewer capacity.

Mr. Bateman proposed to add information about the metrics and progress since 2011 and report that information to the Commission at the next meeting. A discussion followed about the various columns in the spreadsheet and how they would be used to track policies for future topics of discussion at the committee level.

C. Comprehensive Plan Review: Public Comment Period

Chairman Mueller asked for comments from the public on the topic discussed this evening. Evan Harlow introduced himself as a resident of New Town Meadows and member of the Transportation Advisory Committee and asked for maps about existing conditions and boundaries between residential and commercial areas. He said that the Town needs new businesses and additional commercial activity

generally. He further stated that trails and sidewalks are also a big issue for him. Chairman Mueller asked whether he could follow the discussion tonight and Mr. Harlow said that he could. Mr. Bateman stated that the Town should continue to expand its pedestrian network. A discussion ensued about the nature of the information and format of the information that will be provided to committee members.

Jack Burden introduced himself and summarized the history of his time on the Planning Commission, Town Council and 2011 Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. He described changes in the format of the previous comprehensive plan and expressed appreciation for the fact that the Commission was not intending to change the overall format this time around. He expressed the importance of events in maintaining Lovettsville's small-town flavor and noted that the zoning administrator during the last comprehensive plan review wanted to add additional rooftops in the Town before the committee finally convinced him not to include that in the plan. Chairman Mueller inquired as to whether Mr. Burden could follow the discussion tonight and Mr. Burden responded that he could. He stated that he had a little difficulty with the concept of establishing goals at this early phase. A discussion followed regarding the process of establishing goals at both the Introduction Phase as well as for each of the topics.

Clinton Chapman stated that he has attended local meetings in various towns in Loudoun County and stated that the Town can maintain its small-town feeling. With respect to Value Number 2 he said that the focus of that statement is the word "residential" since Lovettsville is primarily a residential community and that is why people move out here. He stated that the key word in Value Number 3 is "peaceful" and that Lovettsville is indeed a peaceful, little town. He said that there is no definition for townhouses and that the only type of residential unit allowed is single-family detached residential, and he expressed his hope that the issue would be addressed by the residential land use committee.

Jack Burden summarized how public input was handled during the previous review and how very few members of the public commented or participated in the process at that time. Mr. Smith asked whether it was possible to make it a goal to increase public input and participation. The Commission agreed to maximize public participation this time around.

Information Items

Chairman Mueller stated that he attended the Town Council meeting last week and invited Council members to join the comprehensive planning committees. Mr. Ciolkosz raised the issue of water and sewer service and its importance as a topic of discussion.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for June 3, 2015.

Comments from the Mayor and Commissioners

There were none.

Adjournment

Elaine Walker announced that the Memorial Day ceremony would be held on Monday following the MayFest event on Saturday and that the Navy Commodores Band would be conducting a concert at the Walker Pavilion on June 6th. There being no further business before the Planning Commission the meeting was adjourned at 9:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Harriet West, Town Clerk

Date Approved: August 2, 2017

Attachments:
None