

Town of Lovettsville

Planning Commission Minutes Regular Meeting October 16, 2013

Call to Order/Welcome

Vice Chair Mueller called the Regular Meeting of the Lovettsville Planning Commission to order at 7:34 p.m. on Wednesday, October 16, 2013 at the Lovettsville Town Hall, 6 East Pennsylvania Avenue, Lovettsville, VA.

Present at Meeting

- Vice Chair Joseph Mueller
- Commissioner Lorraine Bauer
- Commissioner Robert Gentile (arrived at 7:41 p.m.)
- Commissioner Jennifer Jones
- Commissioner Frank McDonough
- Commission Anthony Quintana

Vice Chair Mueller welcomed Mr. McDonough as the newest member of the Planning Commission.

Absent

- Chairwoman Deborah Summitt

Staff Present

- Zoning Administrator Melissa Hynes
- Town Clerk Harriet West

Public Comment

Vice Chair Mueller called for comments from the public. Clinton Chapman, with NN&R Development, said they are looking at property in Town and, as they studied the Comprehensive Plan, they did not see anything about townhomes. He was hoping this might come up as part of the Planning Commissions' discussion on the work plan.

Additions/Deletions/Modifications to the Agenda

Vice Chair Mueller called for changes to the agenda. There were none.

Approval of Planning Commission Minutes

A. Planning Commission Regular Meeting – August 21, 2013

Motion: I move to approve the minutes of the August 21, 2013 Planning Commission Regular Meeting as presented.
By: Vice Chair Mueller
Second: Commissioner Quintana
Aye: Commissioners Bauer, Jones, McDonough, Mueller, and Quintana
Nay: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Gentile and Summitt

Staff Reports

Zoning Administrator Hynes presented her staff report. She gave updates on the proposed residential development project on N. Berlin Pike (known as the Lovettsville Cluster); the subdivision process and frontage improvements for the proposed coffee shop and cooperative market at 5 N. Berlin Pike; and a recent meeting the Mayor and Staff had with the developer of Heritage Highlands to address residents concerns.

Action/Discussion Items

A. Fence Height Requirements

Zoning Administrator Hynes presented this item. The Planning Commission is being asked to review and discuss *4-7 Uses and Structures Permitted in Required Yards (a) Fences and Walls* within the Zoning Ordinance.

Zoning Administrator Hynes reviewed the Town's current residential fence height requirements which limits fence height to three-feet in the front yard and six-feet for side and rear yards. She said that this has been an issue with some owners of corner lots who have two front yards. In addition, some of the local Home Owners Associations allow four-foot fences in front yards and this has caused confusion for some property owners because it conflicts with the Town's fence height requirements.

She reviewed the background for the current fence height requirements and the results of research she conducted with 15 random jurisdictions in Virginia. Most of the other jurisdictions allow a maximum four-foot tall fence in the front yard. Only Lovettsville and one other jurisdiction (Caroline County) limit fence height to three feet in the front yard. Some other jurisdictions allow for a four-foot fence provided it does not block visibility at the corner. The Zoning Administrator referenced the Visibility Triangle or Clear Sight Triangle diagram (Attachment 1). Staff discussed options for modifying the fence height requirements.

The Commissioners discussed considering higher fence heights for corner lots, as well as the use of setbacks and transparent style fencing. Staff will prepare draft language that addresses fence height requirements for corner lots, including defining the front yard and secondary front yard.

B. Review of Planning Commission Work Plan

Zoning Administrator Hynes presented this item. She reviewed the status of the various Work Plan Elements. Staff and the Commissioners discussed reviewing residential zoning districts and commercial design guidelines.

The Zoning Administrator asked Mr. Clinton Chapman to discuss housing choices from his perspective as a developer. Mr. Chapman said he has looked at several different properties in Town as sites for potential projects but nowhere in the Town's Zoning Ordinance does it say if townhouses are permitted. He was hoping to get some guidance from the Town.

The Commissioners expressed their support for townhomes as a housing option in Town. Vice Chair Mueller said that while there is not much area in the land use plan slated for townhomes, he believes more density may lead to better commercial development. He that there may be mixed feelings about large townhome developments, but they may be suitable lots for smaller projects. Commissioner Quintana encouraged Mr. Chapman to bring forward a proposal. Commissioner Jones said townhomes could provide a more affordable housing alternative. Commissioner Gentile said that infill townhouse projects are a natural progression. Commissioner McDonough said the smaller footprint townhomes would lend themselves to infill projects.

The Commissioners discussed the issue of affordability and noted that some townhomes can be very expensive. Mr. Chapman said they could bring townhomes to the area that would cost less than single family homes. He also discussed a single-story option that would be accessible for seniors.

Commissioner McDonough asked what size property would be needed and how many units could be built. Mr. Chapman said they are looking for a 10-acre parcel in Town and that the number of units would

be determined by the Town's Zoning Ordinances. Zoning Administrator Hynes discussed amending the R-3 Zoning requirements to allow for smaller lot sizes, add permitted uses for townhomes and duplexes, and address additional requirements, such as height limitations.

Staff will prepare draft language to address the residential districts.

Information Items

There were none.

Comments from the Mayor and Commissioners

Zoning Administrator Hynes gave updates on Movies on the Green and Trunk-or-Treat.

Commissioner Jones asked about the East Broadway Streetscapes Project. Zoning Administrator Hynes said the meeting with the property owners went well and the Town is working on obtaining easements.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the Planning Commission meeting of October 16, 2013.
By: Commissioner Jones
Second: Commissioner Gentile
Aye: Commissioners Bauer, Gentile, Jones, McDonough, Mueller, and Quintana
Nay: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Chairwoman Summitt

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Harriet West, Town Clerk

Date Approved: December 4, 2014

Attachments:

1. Visibility Triangle or Clear Sight Triangle Diagram

Visibility Triangle or Clear Sight Triangle

