

Town of Lovettsville

Minutes of the Planning Commission Regular Meeting January 20, 2016

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Frank McDonough called the Regular Meeting of the Lovettsville Planning Commission to order at 7:30 p.m. on January 20, 2016 at the Lovettsville Town Hall, 6 East Pennsylvania Avenue, Lovettsville, VA.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman McDonough led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present at Meeting

- Chairman Frank McDonough
- Vice Chair Robert Gentile
- Commissioner Thomas Ciolkosz
- Commissioner Nate Fontaine
- Commissioner Joseph Mueller
- Commissioner Shiva Schilling

Commissioners Absent

- Commissioner Buchanan Smith
- Vice Chair Rob Gentile

Staff Present

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

Public Comment

Chairman McDonough called for comments from the public. There were none.

Additions/Deletions/Modifications to the Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

Approval of Planning Commission Minutes

There were none.

Committee Reports

Chairman McDonough announced an upcoming committee meeting to discuss the Town's annexation policies. He stated that the committee would meet in April after the next comprehensive planning committee finishes their meetings, and said that next week he would be holding a scoping meeting to determine what the committee will be reviewing, including the annexation policies adopted by the Town Council a couple of weeks ago. He noted that the policies refer to the comprehensive plan throughout the document, but that the plan does not yet contain any policies regarding annexation. He said that the committee would be comprised of three Council members and the Mayor, and that next week's meeting does not need to include the Town Clerk or the Town Planner since the committee would not be doing any work but merely discussing the scope of the topics to be considered by the committee. He stated

there would a tremendous amount of value to having the Town Manager attend. Mr. Palko asked whether he had spoken to the Mayor about this, and Chairman McDonough responded that he had and that the Mayor is on board.

Mr. Palko expressed his concern that the topic of annexation is delicate and that the Town Council recently passed a very conservative annexation policy, yet some members of the public have accused the Council of secretly supporting residential and other annexations to grow the Town. He stated that he had talked to the Mayor and the Mayor's concern is that meetings about which the Chairman is describing would take place outside of the normal Planning Commission and comprehensive planning meeting schedule. Chairman McDonough asked Mr. Palko whether his concern is that the meeting is taking place on a Monday rather than a Wednesday, and Mr. Palko replied that his issue is that the Commission would be discussing the topic of annexation. Chairman McDonough stated that the next week's meeting is not to discuss annexation but rather what the Town Council expects from the Commission in terms of the comprehensive plan's annexation-related policies, and Mr. Bateman said that doing so would be discussing annexation. Chairman McDonough stated that he simply wanted to establish a framework for developing annexation policies or changing policies already drafted by the committees rather than identifying or discussing specific properties to be annexed. He said that the purpose would be to make sure that the comprehensive plan meets the Town Council's expectations as set forth in the Council's adopted annexation policy and consolidate all the annexation policies into one section of the plan. A discussion took place on the purpose of any such meetings regarding annexation and the proper way to hold such meetings in the interest of transparency. The Chairman agreed to discuss the topic again at the next meeting on February 3.

Staff Reports

There was no staff report.

Action/Discussion Items

There were none.

Recess Planning Commission Meeting

Chairman McDonough recessed the regular meeting at 7:43 p.m.

Convene Transportation Committee Work Session

Committee members present were Joe Mueller, Tom Ciolkosz, and Evan Harlow.

Commissioner Mueller convened the Transportation Advisory Committee Work Session at 7:43 p.m. Mr. Bateman delivered a presentation on the history of transportation planning and projects in the Town of Lovettsville. He explained that the 2004 comprehensive plan was the first to propose the Town Square and sidewalks throughout the Town. Mr. Bateman described the recommendations of the Streetscape Master Plan developed in 2007 and plans for public parking lots in the Old Town. He identified further the transportation improvements proposed in the current 2011 comprehensive plan. Mr. Bateman presented the proposed transportation plan and highlighted various intersection and future street alignments contained in the plan.

Mr. Mueller inquired about improvements to the intersection of Milltown Road, Lovettsville Road, and East Broad Way as part of the Lovettsville Community Park project, and Mr. Bateman noted that intersection improvements are proposed at that location on the transportation plan map.

Mr. Ciolkosz asked whether the transportation plan should address parking, and Mr. Bateman replied he saw no reason why it should not. Mr. Ciolkosz asked whether parking in the Town Center should be covered in the plan, and Mr. Bateman stated that it should. Mr. Ciolkosz remarked that the Town is becoming more of a bicycling destination with the planned installation of a bicycle fix-it station, and asked whether the plan should identify the need for a bicycle parking area or bike park. Mr. Bateman replied that if proposed as a component of a public park, the bike park should be included in the parks and

recreation element of the plan; if located on private property, it should be included in the transportation plan.

Mr. Bateman presented his recommendations with respect to the transportation policies of the comprehensive plan and distributed a spreadsheet containing the existing and proposed goals and policies. The committee discussed the goals and policies and agreed to the following:

1. Policy Number 2: Delete proposed intersection improvements at North Berlin Pike and Tilgham Place. Mr. Harlow asked whether it was possible to put a future street alignment across the Lennar Tract located outside of the Town limits to connect the Engle Tract to Lovettsville Road, and Mr. Bateman replied that it would.

Mr. Ciolkosz raised a concern about how traffic coming into Town from the west on Irish Corner Road/West Broad Way cuts through the Town Center residential area to avoid stopping at the Town Square. He asked whether the Town should institute a sign ordinance to prohibit right turns from West Broad Way and whether a policy to this effect could be included in the plan. Mr. Mueller inquired how residents of the Town Center subdivision would get to their houses if right turns are disallowed. A discussion followed on this transportation issue. Mr. Bateman agreed to develop language to evaluate replacing the stop signs in the Town Square with yield signs so that the square would function more efficiently like a roundabout.

2. Policy Number 5. Mr. Ciolkosz requested that the policy identify the need for an ordinance to prevent parking in the Town Center residential area by patrons of the commercial businesses. Mr. Bateman asked that Mr. Ciolkosz keep such questions to the end to see if there is a policy that addresses that issue.
3. Policy Number 6: Mr. Harlow asked whether the new VDOT subdivision street requirements require sidewalks on both sides of the street, and Mr. Bateman replied that the Town subdivision ordinance addresses that.
4. Policy Number 7: Mr. Harlow asked whether the plan should identify commercial areas so that the map can depict the potential pedestrian linkages between residential and commercial areas. Mr. Bateman explained that the policy as written was broad enough to require connections between adjacent developments of all types.
5. Policy Number 8: Update the reference in this policy with respect to the date of the current Loudoun County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.
6. Policy Number 9: Mr. Mueller inquired whether the connections mentioned in this policy are street connections, and Mr. Bateman explained that the policy is meant to encourage street extensions through properties being developed to existing and proposed streets. Mr. Bateman agreed to reword the policy for clarification.
7. Policy Number 10: Add to the end of the policy the phrase: "based on the results of the traffic impact analysis."
8. Policy Number 13: Mr. Ciolkosz noted that speed limit signs are ineffective since people just ignore them and speed anyway, but that hiring a Town police officer to ticket drivers would help reduce vehicle speeds. Mr. Palko stated that the Town is not in the fiscal position to hire a police officer within the next five years.
9. Policy Number 15: Mr. Ciolkosz suggested revising the policy by combining policies 15 and 20. Mr. Bateman noted there are no zoning requirements for on-street parking, and Mr. Ciolkosz said such requirements and restrictions were needed.

10. Policy Number 19: Mr. Ciolkosz recommended that the policy say that South Church Street should be one-way going north, and Mr. Bateman agreed to make the change but stated that the direction of traffic should be established based on a traffic evaluation. A discussion followed on the proper direction of traffic flow on East Pennsylvania Avenue and need for a study to determine the best direction of one-way traffic on these streets.
11. Policy Number 20: Mr. Ciolkosz expressed that he does not like the phrase “to the extent practicable,” and Mr. Bateman proposed that the word “feasible” be substituted for “practicable.” A discussion followed on the best way to restrict parking on the street in the Town Center residential areas.
12. Policy Number 21: Mr. Ciolkosz asked staff why the policy seeks to restrict left turns from West Broad Way on to North Berlin Pike, but not right turns from West Broad Way on to Spring Farm Drive or Eisentown Drive. A discussion followed about whether to restrict such right turns and the issue of traffic cutting through the Town Center subdivision, but no consensus emerged regarding a solution.
13. Policy Number 24: Staff advocated for the development of a Town-wide transportation master plan, and the Planning Commission agreed. Mr. Harlow recommended eliminating language regarding the capital improvement program and budget, and Mr. Bateman agreed to make the change.
14. Policy Number 27: Mr. Ciolkosz asked Mr. Palko whether it was possible to create a commuter lot in the Town as way to generate revenue. Chairman McDonough said that Mr. Palko has just been tasked by the Town Council with pursuing something along those lines, and Mr. Palko said the Council would be taking up a resolution soon to recommend to the County that the Loudoun Connector between Purcellville and Brunswick be restarted. Mr. Bateman agreed to add it to the plan once he has more information about what action the Council is considering.

Mr. Bateman asked whether the committee had any additional changes to the proposed transportation policies and plan. Mr. Ciolkosz asked whether the plan should contain language, however vague, about the need for a bypass of the northern side of the Town. Mr. Bateman stated that terminology is important, and Mr. Ciolkosz said that it would be a loop road to take people from the Community Center to the northern end of town. Mr. Palko questioned whether such a loop road was a good idea at this time since the Town is trying to encourage tourism and pass-through traffic to help Town businesses. A discussion followed about the need for a loop or bypass road through the Lennar Tract. Mr. Bateman agreed to add a policy evaluating the need for such a street.

Mr. Harlow stated that he felt there was a land reservation in New Town Meadows to provide a future point of connection to the Engle Tract. Chris Hornbaker explained that the reservation was for the pedestrian trail on Keister Lane, not for a future street connection. Mr. Palko suggested the need for a buffer between the commercial area and the New Town Meadows Subdivision, and Mr. Bateman explained the purpose of the transitional commercial area added to the land use plan to serve as a buffer of less intensive commercial uses between light industrial and residential areas. Mr. Bateman noted a former recommendation in the land use plan to develop the commercially-zoned parcel on South Loudoun Street as a through street, and Chairman McDonough stated that the property owner had no interest in that. Mr. Bateman noted the opportunity to connect the Community Park road with Berlin Pike by realigning South Loudoun Street to connect with the proposed extension of Red Bud Lane. He said that this would eliminate the Y-shaped intersection of South Loudoun Street and South Berlin Pike. The committee discussed this issue and Mr. Bateman stated his intent to make the change to the map.

Mr. Palko noted that the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors will make decisions about future bus routes in Loudoun in June or July, and so the decision would not be made by the time the Planning Commission completes its discussions on the transportation plan. A discussion took place on this topic.

Mr. Ciolkosz asked whether there would be another transportation committee meeting, and Mr. Bateman said there was no need for one if he is authorized to add the timelines and other missing information to the spreadsheet and email it to the group.

Adjourn Transportation Committee Work Session

Mr. Mueller adjourned the committee meeting at 8:56 p.m.

Reconvene Planning Commission Meeting

Chairman McDonough reconvened the Planning Commission meeting at 8:56 p.m.

Information Items

There were no information items.

Next Meeting

Chairman McDonough announced that the next meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for February 3, 2016. He stated that most Commissioners have indicated via email that they will be able to attend the meeting at 7:30 p.m. Mr. Ciolkosz stated he will be attending an event at the Lovettsville Elementary School and will be a half hour late.

Comments from the Mayor and Commissioners

Mayor Zoldos was not present. There were no comments.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Planning Commission the meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Harriet West, Town Clerk

Date Approved: December 20, 2017

Attachments:
None