

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN OF VINTON PLANNING COMMISSION
HELD ON THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2009, AT 5:45 P.M., IN THE ADMINISTRATION
CONFERENCE ROOM AT THE VINTON MUNICIPAL BUILDING,
LOCATED AT 311 SOUTH POLLARD STREET.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vice Chair Joan Drewery
C.W. Pace, Jr.
Bob Patterson
Dave Jones

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dawn Michelsen

STAFF PRESENT: Anita McMillan, Planning and Zoning Director
Julie S. Tucei, Planning and Zoning Coordinator
Chris Lawrence, Town Manager
Barry Thompson, Treasurer

OTHERS PRESENT: Lindsay Blankenship, Roanoke County Planner II

WORK SESSION AGENDA

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Election of Officers: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Recording Secretary**
- III. Capital Improvement Programs (CIP) FY 2009-2013**
- IV. Vinton Area Corridors Plan Update**
- V. Sign Ordinance Amendment Update**
- VI. Upcoming Meetings**
 - **Saturday, March 28, 2009: Joint Tour of the Vinton Corridors with Roanoke County Planning Commission**
 - **April 2, May 7, June 4, July 9, August 6, September 3, October 1, November 5, and December 4, 2009 (AS NEEDED)**
- VII. 2009 Citizens Planning Education Association of VA (CPEAV) Training Calendar**
 - **Planning and Zoning Legal Seminar: Friday, May 29, 2009**
 - **Commonwealth Planning and Zoning Conference: Sunday – Tuesday, October 11 – 13, 2009**
 - **VA Certified PC and BZA Programs Graduate Seminar: Monday, November 30, 2009**
- VIII. Other Business**
- IX. Adjournment**

The meeting of the Vinton Planning Commission was called to order at 5:45 p.m. Vice Chair Drewery, Mr. Jones, Mr. Pace, and Mr. Patterson were present. Ms. Michelsen was absent.

At the request of Mr. Lawrence, the Commission moved to the CIP portion of the agenda, and Mr. Lawrence began the meeting with the CIP presentation. He gave a brief overview of the current budget status and next year's projected budget. He briefly went through the chart of CIP requests that was provided in the Commissioners' packets (a copy of which will be made a part of the permanent record). Mr. Lawrence also reviewed each item on the Town Manager's Recommendations List (a copy of which

**PLANNING COMMISSION
WORK SESSION
MARCH 12, 2009
PAGE 2**

will be made a part of the permanent record), beginning with the General Fund. The Town Manager's General Fund recommendations included the police vehicles lease program payment for seven vehicles; upgrading electrical wiring and breakers at the Fire Department building; the building assessment; the accounting system upgrade lease that had been deferred from FY 08-09; and a sign for the Vinton Business Center which was also deferred from FY 08-09. Mr. Jones said he had no problems with the first four items on the list. However, he asked if the Vinton Business Center sign could be deferred again so that the money allotted for it could be used to improve the pool, senior center, or the downtown. Mr. Jones felt it would be better to use the money within the Town. Mr. Lawrence stated that it was a good question, but the downtown and senior center will need a lot more money than what has been allotted for the sign. He said the sign would be something that the public could see as being "finished". Mr. Jones said that the Vinton Business Center isn't even in the Town and that the small improvements should be made within the Town. He said he doesn't disagree that money should be spent at the Business Center, but maybe not next year. Ms. McMillan mentioned that the Façade grant is still available to downtown business owners for improvements. She also mentioned a planning grant to help the downtown businesses. Mr. Lawrence said that a lot of planning work has to take place to even be considered for grant money, and that the Town is embarking on that process. He said the Town has been told that it is at least a two year process to get the grants. The Town has been approved for \$3000 planning grant and \$35000 may be available thereafter, pending the outcome of the planning grant. Mr. Lawrence agreed that Mr. Jones has a valid point about the Business Center sign. He said maybe they could redo a Town of Vinton entrance sign or two. Mr. Lawrence did remind the Commission that the business center is a joint project with the County. Mr. Jones stated that with the budget as it is, the County might take their portion for the sign out of their budget, and Mr. Lawrence agreed that they might do so. Next, Mr. Lawrence mentioned the Town Manager's recommendations for the Utility Fund. These recommendations included deployable leak detectors and replacing several pressure reducing valves (PRV) in the water system. A motion was requested on the CIP recommendations. Mr. Jones made a motion to pass onto Council the first four items on the General Fund and all four items on the Utility Fund. He stated in the motion that the fifth item, the Vinton Business Center sign, should be left to the Council's discretion and recommended that they look at other options for a project in town instead. Mr. Patterson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and all members present voted in favor of the motion. Mr. Jones mentioned to Mr. Lawrence that storm sewer corrections are needed at Lee Avenue and Pollard Street and Lee Avenue and Poplar Street and should be considered for a future CIP.

After the CIP portion of the meeting, Ms. McMillan stated that the Commissioners could decide whether or not to proceed with the election of officers or wait until they have a full board. The Commission agreed to wait for a full board before holding the election.

Ms. McMillan reminded the Commissioners of the Vinton Area Corridors tour with the Roanoke County Planning Commission on March 28th from 9 a.m. to approximately 1 p.m. She said they will meet in the Municipal Building parking lot for the tour. Ms. McMillan turned the meeting over to Lindsay Blankenship to update the Commission on the Corridors Plan. Ms. Blankenship briefly mentioned that the County would be highlighting the plan for the Vinton corridors at the homebuilder's show this year. She stated that Roanoke County staff had already taken a photographic inventory of all the parcels along the corridors. She gave each member a packet that included maps of the corridors and other information and

**PLANNING COMMISSION
WORK SESSION
MARCH 12, 2009
PAGE 3**

flyers they have been using for the study (copies of which will be made a part of the permanent record). She said the total number of parcels in the plan is about 552, with Hardy Road having 193, Washington Avenue having 185, and downtown Vinton having 174 parcels. County staff has interviewed business owners and also conducted a survey about the plan. Ms. Drewery mentioned that she would like to see a different traffic pattern on Walnut Avenue near Southern States. Ms. McMillan said a roundabout had been suggested by some people for that intersection. Ms. Blankenship mentioned that, in addition to the Walnut Avenue intersection issue, they also heard from many citizens about the former Rite Aid building, the lack of Walgreens, and the location of the downtown post office. She said they are considering conducting interviews with Valley Metro drivers and school bus drivers about issues that they have when driving along the corridors. The Commissioners suggested that they also interview the Vinton Public Works refuse truck, recycle truck, and bulk truck drivers as well. Mr. Jones made a suggestion that they visit the Wyndham Drive area on their tour on Saturday the 28th, even though it is off the main corridor routes. Ms. Blankenship stated that the corridor study will be taking place through spring. She mentioned that they are working with the regional commission on developing a plan for way-finding signs for the corridors, and possibly on the Blue Ridge Parkway, to direct people to attractions in the Town. Mr. Jones said the Town's sign ordinance may need revisions in that case. Ms. Blankenship said County staff is looking at the zoning ordinance and sign ordinance to see what revisions may be needed. She mentioned that another project will be a sidewalk inventory along the Corridors. Ms. McMillan stated that sometimes when businesses are doing projects they can include a sidewalk during construction. Mr. Jones said the sidewalk installed when McDonald's was rebuilt is already beginning to deteriorate. Ms. McMillan said she would look into that issue. Ms. Blankenship mentioned that they will also be looking into possibly expanding the downtown façade grant area. She asked Ms. McMillan to explain another component of the plan—the safe routes to school grant. Ms. McMillan explained that the grant was to be used to develop safer ways for children to walk and ride bicycles to school. The Wolf Creek Greenway will play an important role in that project. Mr. Jones said the greenway now runs all the way from Hardy Road to the Parkway. Ms. Blankenship stated that they had many good comments on the Wolf Creek Greenway during this study. She mentioned that, if the Explore Park redevelopment comes to fruition, a lot more traffic could be put on the Vinton Area Corridors. She mentioned that Vinton and Roanoke County staff is taking a tour of the corridors next Friday with VDOT. Ms. Blankenship showed them the notice that had been sent out for the January community meeting. She also showed them the survey that had been sent out to interested citizens. She said they made the survey available online and in paper form. Roanoke County's public relations department helped get the word out about the community meetings and the survey. A total of 652 notices about the study and survey were mailed out. They received 130 surveys back, of which 18 were paper copies and 112 were done online. Therefore, 86 percent were received online. Ms. Blankenship went through the various survey statistics that were collected. Ms. McMillan asked the Commissioners to think about the corridors over the next couple of weeks and to try to come up with some suggestions for the corridors to discuss during the tour on March 28th. Mr. Jones reminded them that he would like to go to Wyndham Drive to see the new elderly housing and also Northampton Apartments. Ms. Blankenship briefly filled them in on the outcome of the community meeting in January. She stated that they had a total of 45 people in attendance. She said in November they also met with the Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce to let their members know about the study. She also said that the County had worked with the Vinton Public Works Department to map Town utilities. She stated that economic development will be tied in to the plan soon, as will the Blue Ridge Parkway. Mr. Jones asked

**PLANNING COMMISSION
WORK SESSION
MARCH 12, 2009
PAGE 4**

how their schedule was going. Ms. Blankenship said they are about a month or so behind from their original timetable.

Next on the agenda was the sign ordinance amendment update. Ms. McMillan provided the Commissioners with a copy of the section that they needed to discuss—the incorrect page had been mistakenly included in their packets. She stated that two Town Council members were concerned about the Town allowing multiple tenant buildings who have maxed out their sign area to exceed allowable sign area if a new business moves into the building. She said the two Council members felt that the building owners should be responsible for regulating signs at their buildings and staying within the allowable sign area. She mentioned that the Council also discussed the temporary sign regulations. Ms. McMillan recommended that, at this time, the Commissioners just remove the multiple tenant sign section and recommend approval of the sign ordinance without that section. Mr. Patterson made a motion to take out Sec 5-49 (b)(1)b relating to multiple tenants in a building. Ms. Drewery seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and all members present voted in favor of the motion.

The Commissioners discussed the future meeting dates as listed on the agenda. Ms. McMillan mentioned these are suggested dates, as needed, except March 28th which is a definite date. She stated that they may have a special use permit application submitted soon, which will need to go to a public hearing. She said that there definitely won't be a meeting held on April 2nd. Both Ms. Drewery and Mr. Pace stated that they won't be available on June 4th, and Mr. Jones said he would not be available on July 9th.

Next was the discussion of upcoming seminars and training, as listed on the agenda. Ms. McMillan stated that the budget has been reduced a bit for training. She asked Mr. Pace to let her know what dates he might like to attend the Planning Commission certification seminars. Ms. Drewery asked to be notified of the date of the upcoming conference that the Commissioners normally attend each year.

In other business, Ms. McMillan reminded them of the Town's 125th birthday event on March 17th at the Vinton War Memorial and the Clean Valley Day on April 4th.

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anita McMillan
Planning Commission Secretary