

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN OF VINTON PLANNING  
COMMISSION HELD ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2014, AT 6:30 P.M., AT THE VINTON  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 311 SOUTH POLLARD STREET.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**     **Dave Jones, Chairman**  
                                  **Bill Booth**  
                                  **Paul Mason**  
                                  **Dawn Michelsen**  
                                  **Bob Patterson**

**STAFF PRESENT:**       **Anita McMillan, Planning and Zoning Director**  
                                  **Karla Turman, Associate Planner/Code Enforcement Officer**  
                                  **Julie Tucei, Planning and Zoning Coordinator**

**AGENDA**

- I.     Call to Order**
- II.    Approval of Minutes: March 25, 2014 Meeting**
- III.   Work Session:**
  - 1.   Proposed Amendment to the Town of Vinton Zoning Ordinance, Article IV. District Regulations, Division 13. Neighborhood Planned Development District (NPD)**
  - 2.   James Wright's Request to Vacate Undeveloped Portion of South Pollard Street and Undeveloped Alley Located to the South of Giles Avenue**
  - 3.   Robert Chocklett's Request to purchase Town of Vinton Undeveloped Well Lot Located off Briarwood Drive**
- IV.   Comments of Planning Commissioners and Planning Staff**
- VI    Adjournment**

The meeting of the Vinton Planning Commission was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Chairman Jones. Roll was called and all members were present.

The first item on the agenda was the approval of minutes from the March 25, 2014, meeting. Mr. Patterson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Booth seconded the motion. Roll was called and all members voted in favor of the motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Next on the agenda, was to hear a proposed amendment to the Town of Vinton Zoning Ordinance, Article IV. District Regulations, Division 13. Neighborhood Planned Development District (NPD). Ms. McMillan gave them some background information on why the amendment has been requested. It is regarding the former Roland E. Cook and former William Byrd High School buildings. There is some interest in re-developing them into apartments. The property where the former Roland E. Cook School sits is currently zoned R-2. Future land use for the area is low density, and the comprehensive plan would need to be amended as far as changing the low density designation of the area. Ms. McMillan stated that there is a proposal to re-develop the former William Byrd High property into senior apartment housing. The proposal is to change the designation into a neighborhood planned development district. Mr. Booth said he believes that the County could do better by using it as a government building instead of housing. Ms. McMillan said the County would like to have some tax money generation, and with a government use, they would not have that. The commissioners agreed that the Town should be a part of this growth with the County. Ms. McMillan said mixed uses may be good for the Town and mentioned what has been done recently in the City of Roanoke. Mr. Booth asked what the next step is for the commission. She asked them to look over the information they were given tonight and to let her know if there are any suggestions for additions or changes. She would like to have them read over the information prior to the December meeting. Chairman Jones asked if any communities around this area have this type of zoning. Ms. McMillan said City of Roanoke has it, but theirs is very convoluted and

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hard to interpret. She said that the City of Hopewell turned an old school into apartments, as did Giles County. She said she will to contact both localities to see if they can provide any useful information. She reminded the commissioners that, because this concerns real property, it should be kept confidential. She mentioned the apartment units at the former Cook school would be workforce targeted. She also said that the school bus fuel station at the former William Byrd High School site is probably going to be relocated to 3rd Street.

The next item on the agenda was to hear a summary of James Wright's request to vacate undeveloped portion of South Pollard Street and an undeveloped alley located to the south of Giles Avenue. Ms. McMillan gave them some photos of the property and asked them to also refer to the aerial map they were given. She said a portion of South Pollard Street cannot be closed all the way to the end because it would create a non-conforming lot. Ms. McMillan explained that Mr. Wright owns two parcels along the area in question, and that half of the closure would go to Mr. Wright and half to Mr. Witt's family. If this request is to be granted, Mr. Wright would combine his two lots into one so that one of his lots would not become nonconforming. Ms. McMillan mentioned that Mr. Casey uses a portion of the paper street to access his property, and that would be another reason that the entire portion would not be able to be closed. Ms. McMillan asked for their input on this request. Chairman Jones pondered if this would this be anything that the Town would not do for other citizens. He asked if 1009, 1013, and 1015 are owned by the same people. Ms. McMillan stated that they are owned by the same people. Chairman Jones asked who cuts the grass in the area of question. Ms. McMillan said Mr. Wright was cutting it, but stopped, so Vinton Public Works has been maintaining it. Chairman Jones mentioned that tax money would be paid on the property once it was closed. Ms. McMillan said Mr. Wright had also been maintaining the alley. Mr. Booth mentioned that the reason for that is that the alley seems to be Mr. Wright's driveway. Chairman Jones said he saw no reason not to do this as long it is not anything different than other citizens would get. Ms. McMillan mentioned that the only cost to the Town is for the staff time that has been put into researching and following through with the request.

The final item on the agenda was concerning Robert Chocklett's request to purchase a Town of Vinton-owned undeveloped well lot located off Briarwood Drive. Ms. McMillan said this was informational for the commissioners only. The lot is located in East Roanoke County in the Lindenwood subdivision, and is not within the Town of Vinton limits.

Next, Ms. Turman updated the commissioners on the Spot Blight Abatement ordinance. She stated that five properties currently fall under the ordinance including: 123 Gus Nicks Boulevard, 830 S. Pollard Street, 308-B 9th Street, 1323 Hardy Road, and 530 N. Blair Street. She said that a notice was sent out notifying each of the property owners of the blighted condition of the properties. The most blighted house is the one on Gus Nicks. Ms. Turman said there was no response to the letter from the owner of the house. She stated that she has put together a proposal on it for the Town Manager, Mr. Lawrence, to take to Council for further direction. She mentioned that they are waiting on title search information, and once it is received, the matter will proceed to Council. The next most blighted property is 830 S. Pollard Street. She mentioned that the Fire Marshal has deemed it and the other four houses as fire hazards. The property records show that the owner is Mary Banks, who is deceased. Ms. Turman said that Ms. Banks' son lived there until he could no longer afford to maintain it. She said he stated that he stopped paying taxes on it and moved out. A title search has also been requested on this property. After the title search is completed, the next step will be determined. Ms. Turman said it has been three years since taxes have been paid on 830 S. Pollard Street. She stated that tax sale proceedings could potentially begin next year, but the process would be long to sell it for back taxes. If the Town proceeds

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with the Spot Blight procedure, after the structures have been demolished, liens would be placed on the properties. The next most blighted property is 308 9th Street. The house sits on a very small lot. The porch roof is falling in, as well as the flooring. The structure is unsecured. The property owner also owns other properties in the immediate area. Ms. Turman stated that, today, the owner submitted a plan to abate the problems with the home. The plan that was submitted has been sent to the Spot Blight Committee and the Building Commissioner for approval. A structural engineer developed the plan for the property owner. The estimate to bring it up to code is about \$10,000. Ms. Turman said that, if the plan is accepted, the owner will have 90 days to complete it. The next most blighted is 1323 Hardy Road. The structure at this location has no doors and no windows, is overgrown, and has been vacant for at least 12 years. Ms. Turman stated that the owner has agreed to demolish the structure, has obtained a permit for it, but has not completed the work. She mentioned that Jeffco Electric is the owner of record, and they bought the property a few years ago. She said they told her that they had planned to build duplexes on it, but the real estate market dropped so the project was put on hold. Next is 530 N Blair Street. The rear of the home has separated and is falling off. Ms. Turman said it has been empty at least 12 years, but the grass is being maintained. She mentioned that the owners had a buyer for the property recently, but the sale fell-through. She said she was told that there is a new buyer interested in it. Ms. Turman said the Town will work with owners as long as they are actively trying to sell or abate the properties. She said that, with the spot blight abatement team and the ordinance, it has become easier to get the structure declared a fire hazard and have the buildings condemned. Chairman Jones said he was very glad to see the blight abatement beginning.

Lastly, comments from the Planning Commissioners and Planning Staff were heard. Ms. McMillan said she would begin emailing the Planning Department's monthly report to them for their information. Chairman Jones asked what was going on with the Grey's property on Bypass Road. Ms. McMillan said it had been purchased for a location for a new Wendy's. The owners have another project going on in the valley, and they plan to begin on the Vinton location when the other project is done. Mr. Booth asked if there were anything going on with the former Family Dollar on Hardy Road. Ms. McMillan said there has been nothing brought to her attention for that property. She said that the next meeting is a work session in December on the 9th. She asked if they had a preference for dinner at the next meeting. They decided that pizza from Giardino's on Lee Avenue sounded good, and maybe salad. Cookies are also requested. Ms. McMillan asked if there is anything else they need from her or need her to do for them. Chairman Jones mentioned that, at some point, they'll need to look at the comprehensive plan. Ms. McMillan stated that the last major update was in 2004, and that the downtown section of it was updated in 2009. She mentioned that the corridor study had also been done and added to the plan. Ms. McMillan said the zoning ordinance is old, mostly from 1999, and has only had piecemeal updates. Ms. Turman said that Council also wants them to look at the Community Rating System (CRS) for the flood insurance. Ms. McMillan reminded them to let her know if they need anything.

With there being nothing further to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m., on a motion by Mr. Patterson and a second by Mr. Mason.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anita McMillan  
Planning Commission Secretary