

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN OF VINTON PLANNING
COMMISSION HELD ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2015, AT 6:30 P.M., AT THE VINTON
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 311 SOUTH POLLARD STREET.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Dave Jones, Chairman**
 Bill Booth
 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

WORK SESSION

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Work Session:**
 - 1. April 2, 2015, Meeting Minutes Approval**
 - 2. Urban Development Areas (UDA) Planning Grant Program for Planning Consultant Assistance.**
 - 3. Planning Commissioner Appointment to Serve on the Town of Vinton Planning Grant Steering Committee to Oversee the Planning Process.**
 - 4. Spot Blight Abatement Plan for 123 Gus Nicks Boulevard, Tax Map Number 60.16-1-3, Zoned CB Central Business District.**
 - 5. Healing Solutions, LLC, for a Special Use Permit (SUP) Request to Operate a Counseling Services Office at 36 West Cleveland Avenue, Tax Map Number 60.15-7-50, Zoned GB General Business District.**
- III. Meeting Schedule for Public Hearing and UDA Planning Grant Process**
- IV. Comments of Planning Commissioners and Planning Staff**
- V. Adjournment**

The work session 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. It was noted that Mr. Mason has resigned due to moving outside of the Town limits. Ms. McMillan said that they are considering appointing one or more of the applicants from the Council position vacancy to fill the opening. She said Mr. Lawrence has also suggested the possibility of having a total of seven members instead of just five on the Commission.

The first item on the agenda was the approval of minutes from the April 2, 2015, meeting. A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Mr. Booth and seconded by Mr. Patterson. All four members voted in favor of the motion to approve the minutes.

Next was the discussion of the Urban Development Areas (UDA) Planning Grant Program for Planning Consultant Assistance and the Commissioner appointment to serve on the Town of Vinton Planning Grant Steering Committee to oversee the planning process. Ms. McMillan told them about a grant that was available regarding UDAs and was due by August 31, 2015. She said the grant is for \$65,000 with no matching funds required from the Town. She stated that the Planning Commission has to appoint one member and that a member of Town Council also has to be appointed to the steering committee for the project. She stated that the grant money will help provide a consultant who will assist in evaluating the existing uses in Vinton to see if any areas can be considered as UDAs. Mixed income development and

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mixed use development are included. This will tie into VDOT funding awards for roads. Previously, most of the major street improvements came from being included in the VDOT six year plan. It is expected that this new process will allow the money for road improvements to be distributed more evenly over all areas of the state, not just in the NOVA or Hampton Roads areas. It will also help increase transportation alternatives such as greenways, sidewalks, and public bus service. It will encourage localities to maximize the use of the land. The Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) will make sure the localities have UDAs or significant corridors when ranking projects and awarding funding for roads. Ms. McMillan said that the City of Roanoke plans to designate the whole city as a UDA. She also stated that the City of Salem received the grant and will also have a consultant to help them. She said Salem is looking at Main Street and Apperson Drive. She mentioned that the last Town of Vinton Comprehensive Plan update was about five years ago with the corridor study being added. She said that the grant application was submitted, and the Town was recently awarded the \$65,000 in grant money for the consultant. In order to receive the grant money, an agreement will have to be signed by the Town. She reminded them that they must appoint a member of the Planning Commission to be on the committee. The name of that person has to be sent in with the signed agreement. She said it will involve a commitment to at least two meetings, but not more than four meetings of the committee. Chairman Jones asked about the time they had worked with a consultant about ten years ago, and if it would be the same consultant as back then. Ms. McMillan said maybe he was speaking about the comprehensive plan update done with K. W. Poore as the consultant about 15 years ago. Chairman Jones mentioned that Mr. Poore was not very easy to work with. Ms. McMillan said this project will involve working with consultants from VDOT. She said this will be phasing out the six year plan and replacing it with HB2 (House Bill 2). Ms. Michelsen said she would not mind volunteering to be on the committee with there being limited meetings. Ms. Michelsen also suggested appointing a backup Planning Commissioner in case she cannot be at one of the meetings due to her mom's illness. Ms. McMillan said more than one member can be appointed. Chairman Jones agreed to be the backup committee member. Ms. McMillan said staff will be at the committee meetings as well.

The next item discussed was the spot blight abatement plan for 123 Gus Nicks Boulevard, Tax Map Number 60.16-1-3, Zoned CB Central Business District. Ms. Turman stated that staff has been given permission to proceed with the demolition plan for the house at 123 Gus Nicks Boulevard and clearing of the property. She said the Commission will be asked to make a recommendation to Town Council on whether to demolish the house and clear the property. Ms. Michelsen asked if the Town will have to pay for it. Ms. Turman said the Town will bill the property owner for the work, and if they don't pay, a lien will be placed on the property. She stated that it will cost almost \$30,000 to demolish the structure and clear the property. Chairman Jones asked if that was more than the property is worth. Both Ms. Turman and Ms. McMillan said it is probably not more than the property is worth since it is a downtown property. Ms. McMillan mentioned, though, that the only access to the property is through the alley in the rear. Chairman Jones said that there were several properties around Town that were identified in this process as being blighted in addition to this property, and that it is a controversial issue when you take away people's property. Ms. McMillan said it is not fair for the neighbors to have to live near blighted properties, and it is also hazardous. A fire could easily start in the abandoned properties. Ms. Turman said that two additional properties have also been identified as blighted. She showed them on the map where one is located near Cleveland and Cottage Avenues. Chairman Jones asked about the blighted property located in the Gladetown area. Ms. Turman said the Town already spent a lot of money just on the title search, and there is still no clear title to the property. He asked if there was a way through the state to fix property titles like they can do for automobile titles—maybe the Town attorney could be

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consulted about it. Ms. Turman stated that more money is owed in liens now than in taxes. She said the Town might consider trying to auction the property to get back the money from the liens. Chairman Jones suggested that staff ask the Town attorney if there is a way to re-title a property if no clear title is available. Ms. Turman mentioned that the owner of the property at 123 Gus Nicks Boulevard has paid all taxes and liens. She stated that the Commissioners need to set a public hearing date to hear this case and make a recommendation to Council.

Next on the agenda was a discussion the application received from Healing Solutions, LLC, for a Special Use Permit (SUP) request to operate a counseling services office at 36 West Cleveland Avenue, Tax Map Number 60.15-7-50, Zoned GB General Business District. Ms. Turman said they received a Special Use Permit application from Healing Solutions, LLC, to operate a counseling services office. She said it is zoned GB General Business and won't require a change of use. There are eight marked, paved spaces. Chairman Jones asked what type of counseling services would be offered there. Ms. Turman said it could be any type of counseling necessary—mental, marital etc. Ms. McMillan said the adjoining property owners will be notified as required by the state code. Ms. Turman said the Commission will have to make a recommendation to Town Council on whether or not to approve the SUP application. Ms. Michelsen said she thought a general counseling office would be a benefit to the community. Chairman Jones said it could be kind of an extension of Parkway Physicians which is located across the street. He said he would like to know specifically what kind of counseling will be offered. Ms. Turman said that could be asked during the public hearing. She stated that the applicant has already purchased the building. Ms. Turman read the applicant's description from the application that was received of what is planned for the office. Chairman Jones mentioned setting the hearing up for September since August is about over.

The next item discussed was the meeting schedule for a public hearing and for the UDA Planning Grant Process. Ms. McMillan said the developers for the former Roland E. Cook Elementary School have met with the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors in attempt to proceed with their proposed project for the former school. She mentioned they might receive an application for a mixed use development for it. Chairman Jones said he would like to consider September dates as he already has plans for August 27, 2015. Ms. Turman said the date in August would also not work for the hearing on the blighted house on Gus Nicks Boulevard because they have to give three week's notice to the property owner. The public meeting for the Roland E. Cook building project might be held the week of September 1st or 9th. The Commissioners decided to set September 3, 2015, for the public hearing for blighted house on Gus Nicks Boulevard and for the SUP for the counseling service office. And they tentatively set October 8, 2015, for the Roland Cook school building request. Ms. McMillan mentioned that the developers are attempting to get state and federal historic tax credits for the Roland E. Cook school building.

The last item on the agenda was to hear comments from the Planning Commissioners and Planning Staff. The Commissioners briefly discussed the new library. Chairman Jones also asked Ms. McMillan what projects she is currently working on. Ms. McMillan said that, in addition to her day-to-day Planning and Zoning duties, she is also currently working on the following items for the Town: TMDL plans, a nutrient management plan for the Vinton War Memorial, storm water pollution prevention plans (SWPPP) for the Public Works Department, the Town's annual storm water report, a revenue sharing grant for the Tinker Creek Greenway, and a grant for third phase of the Walnut Avenue road improvement project. She stated that Ms. Turman is currently working on the Town's Community Rating System (CRS) to help possibly decrease the flood insurance costs and the spot blight abatements.

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With there being nothing further to discuss in the work session, Chairman Jones adjourned it at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anita McMillan
Planning Commission Secretary