

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN OF VINTON PLANNING
COMMISSION HELD ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2016, AT 6:30 P.M., AT THE VINTON
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 311 SOUTH POLLARD STREET.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Dave Jones, Chairman**
 Keith Liles, Vice 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—6:30 P.M.

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Approval of Minutes: November 5, 2015, Work Session and Public Hearing**
- III. Update on the Urban Development Areas (UDA) Planning Grant Program for Planning Consultant Assistance**
- IV. Discussion on Mobile Vending/Food Truck Regulations and Policies**
- V. Future Meetings Schedule**
- VI. Comments of Planning Commissioners and Planning Staff**
- VII. Adjournment**

The work session of the Vinton Planning Commission was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman Jones. All five members were present.

The first item on the agenda was the approval of the minutes from the November 5, 2015, work session and public hearing. Mr. Patterson made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted, and Mr. Booth seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and all members voted in favor of the motion.

The next item on the work session agenda was the update on the UDA Planning Grant Program for Planning Consultant Assistance. Ms. McMillan said the UDA meetings are open meetings, and everyone is invited to attend. The February meeting that was scheduled was cancelled due to snow. It was rescheduled for Tuesday, March 8th, at 4 p.m. Ms. McMillan reminded them that she sent them the information for the meeting by email, including the proposed UDA criteria. Chairman Jones asked if the cancellation of the meeting has caused the deadline to be pushed back. Ms. McMillan said they have 8 months to get everything done, and VDOT was told we should be done by June, or at the latest, by August. She said VDOT is flexible in the timeframe. She asked if anyone had any questions. Mr. Booth asked how the library traffic is going. Ms. McMillan said the library seems to be doing well. She said the coffee shop also seems to be doing well. He asked if they have more traffic than the former Washington Avenue location. Ms. McMillan said she thinks they do. She said she even had trouble finding an open date to use the library's meeting room, and the library itself seems to be really busy. Mr. Booth mentioned that he would like to see the 3-D printer. Ms. Michelsen asked if the meeting is open to citizens, including her husband, Mick. Ms. McMillan said the meeting is open to anyone. She asked them who plans to come so she will know how much food to order and how to set up the room. Vice Chairman Liles and Ms. Michelsen said they will both attend. Mr. Booth will call in advance if he would like to attend. Ms. Michelsen will call if her husband would like to attend. Chairman Jones and

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Mr. Patterson both said they will be unable to attend.

The next item on the agenda was the discussion of the Mobile Vending/Food Truck Regulations. Ms. McMillan said that currently a temporary vendor must pay an itinerant vendor fee of \$500. She said that Mayor Grose said he has received complaints about the high cost of the itinerant vendor fee. She stated that Roanoke County recently reduced their fee from \$500 to \$50, and the City of Roanoke went from \$500 to \$75. The Town of Blacksburg is considering reducing their fee, but they also restrict where the vendors can be located. Ms. McMillan said the City of Roanoke is changing their policy on vendors in addition to lowering the fee. She mentioned that in the City of Salem, where Parkway Brewery is located, has food trucks regularly. She said that microbreweries need to have food sold onsite because of the regulations on serving alcohol. Ms. McMillan mentioned that there are tentative plans to hold a food truck rodeo at the Vinton War Memorial. She said their direction is needed on this issue. She mentioned that the simple solution is to reduce the itinerate vendor fee like other localities have done. She said the other alternative is to regulate it more by amending the zoning ordinance to cover where they can locate the food trucks etc. She said tonight's discussion is just a brief one on this issue. She stated that the Planning Commission has been asked to look into the issue by Town Council. She said they would like a recommendation on whether they should just lower the itinerate vendor fee or whether they should amend the ordinance to add regulations on food trucks. She stated that food trucks are different than ice cream trucks that are mostly on the move. Food trucks are stationary for 4 to 5 hours normally. Vice Chairman Liles said he doesn't want them to be in competition with our existing restaurants. However, he said it would bring possible new businesses to Vinton if they are successful and do well here. He mentioned that it would also bring more people into Vinton to visit the food trucks. He said he thinks the chamber should also be involved in this process. Ms. Turman mentioned that some trucks have Facebook pages where they post their locations, and people will follow them to the different locations. Ms. Michelsen thinks an ordinance is a good idea which would be proactive. Ms. McMillan said that the City of Roanoke has good information for food vendors and what steps they have to follow, such as health department approval. She mentioned that one issue is how to address refuse created by the food truck and its patrons. Also, will they only be allowed to sell carry out food or will they be allowed have sitting areas as well. Ms. McMillan said that there is more than just allowing it; there are a lot of other areas that need to be addressed. Chairman Jones asked what all could go against the existing restaurants. Vice Chairman Liles said the Town wants competition, and this could help draw people in with the variety of trucks that might come to vend. He said that the food trucks would still have to pay sales tax and meals tax. Mr. Booth said he definitely thinks the itinerate vendor fee is way too high when the other localities are only charging \$50 to \$75. Ms. McMillan stated that as of right now food trucks are allowed to park on private commercial properties with the permission of owner. She said that some localities have a trial period for a few months with a lowered fee to see how things go. Generally, most food trucks will park for 4 to 5 hours to make it worth the setup time. Ms. McMillan mentioned that the City of Roanoke requires proof of a health department inspection. Mr. Booth suggested that the Town just reduce the vendor fee for a simple solution and adhere to the current regulations to see how it goes. Vice Chairman Liles said they need to look at things like hours of operation that will be allowed in order to protect existing restaurants. Chairman Jones said that we should invite the Chamber to participate in the discussion. Ms. McMillan said they could go ahead and do the simple solution while they are working on the other regulations, along with the Chamber and Restaurant input. Ms. Turman asked if a zoning permit will be required or not. Ms. McMillan stated that, once it is added to the ordinance, there will have to be regulations for permits and fees. Ms. Michelsen said they should look at different localities' ordinances and adopt one that fits the Town.

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Ms. McMillan said Blacksburg does not allow food trucks at public places or on the streets unless there is a special event. She said that Roanoke City's regulations cover private property, streets, and public places. She feels they should extend invitations to participate in the discussions to the Chamber and the restaurant owners. Ms. Turman pointed out that, if we do a trial period, then later add restrictions that weren't there from beginning, it could be upsetting to those who get a license before the new regulations. Ms. McMillan mentioned that, as far as the Food Truck Rodeo at War Memorial, we allow them to be at the Farmers Market and the War Memorial is also public property, so they should be allowed there. Vice Chairman Liles mentioned that a fee for a temporary trial period could be a problem if the vendors have to pay a fee again after the trial period ends. Ms. McMillan said the itinerate vendor definition in the Town Code will have to be revised. She said that several meetings will probably be needed to work on this. She asked them if they are willing to work on the issue, and all members agreed that they are willing to do so. She mentioned that Roanoke City changed the City Code for the food trucks. Roanoke County just lowered the itinerate vendor fee because they consist mostly of suburban areas. The Town of Blacksburg changed their ordinance. Mr. Booth said they should look at the surrounding areas to see what would be good for Vinton. He agreed that they do need to look out for the established restaurants. He said he thinks it should be done if a workable solution can be found. Ms. Michelsen said \$500 is cost prohibitive. She wanted to know how they should proceed. Ms. McMillan said if they want a quick fix, then they should recommend that the itinerant vendor fee be lowered and that the Town make use of its current policy. She stated that to do the complete ordinance for it will take at least three months, especially if the Chamber and restaurant owners are going to participate. She mentioned that the Finance Department would need to request a change of the itinerate vendor license fee by Town Council. She mentioned again that the Mayor had received calls from citizens stating that the current fee is prohibitive. She said they can definitely work more on this at a later meeting.

Next was a discussion of upcoming meetings. Ms. McMillan said it is time to hold the work session on the CIP. Vice Chairman Liles asked what the CIP is exactly. Ms. McMillan said it stands for the Capital Improvement Program, and the Planning Commission makes a recommendation to Council on the large projects included on it each year. She said with that coming up and the food truck discussions, they will probably need to meet once per month. She asked if they would also like to do the election of officers tonight or at a later meeting. After a brief discussion, the Commissioners decided to go ahead and hold the elections. Ms. Michelsen made a motion to keep all of the officers the same as last year. Mr. Patterson seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion to keep the same officers as last year. Ms. McMillan said she can email some dates to them on Monday for the next meeting. Ms. Tucei suggested they try using Doodle to poll for the dates. It was agreed to try Doodle to see how its use would work.

Next on the agenda were comments from the Planning Commission and staff. Chairman Jones asked about the status of the project at the former Roland E. Cook building. Ms. McMillan said the developers have applied for the historic tax credits and are waiting to hear if they are approved.

Chairman Jones asked if there has been any news on the former Gish Mill property. Ms. McMillan said the Town plans to hold a community meeting about the property after the budget process is over to see what community would like to see there.

They also discussed Glade Creek Greenway and a portion of proposed greenway on property to be donated to the Town by Precision Fabrics Group. Ms. McMillan showed them a map of each of the

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areas.

Mr. Booth asked about River Park Shopping Center. Ms. McMillan stated that Mr. Dale Wilkinson had purchased the property. Vice Chairman Liles said he thinks Mr. Wilkinson only paid \$800,000 for it, and it is assessed at over a million dollars. Ms. McMillan stated that Mr. Wilkinson may try to rezone the property to the MUD district so he can add some apartments or a hotel.

Ms. Turman gave several updates. First, she mentioned that Mr. Vinyard's contractor obtained a demolition permit to demolish the building at 112 S. Pollard Street. She said she was told that he may decide to go ahead and demolish the whole building.

Ms. Turman said the blighted property at 830 S. Pollard Street has asbestos which will have to be abated before it can be torn down.

Ms. Turman reported that the vacant lot on Hardy Road next to the former Family Dollar has been sold to a dentist who is currently located farther up on Hardy Road.

Ms. Turman stated that the Community Rating System (CRS) application was sent in today. She said the Town might be able to go as low as Level 7, but will probably be a higher level. Ms. McMillan mentioned that Roanoke County is a Level 8, and the City of Roanoke is at Level 7. Even just going down one level for the Town would mean a 5 to 10 percent discount. It would really help businesses, but homeowners would also get a bit of a savings.

Ms. Turman said that Roanoke County is currently working on a Community Strategic Plan, and all citizens can participate. She handed out some information about it.

Vice Chairman Liles stated that he put in his paperwork on Monday to make a run for a Vinton Town Council seat on May 3, 2016.

Ms. McMillan said they are still awaiting approval from FEMA to use the vacant lot on Walnut Avenue for a skatepark. With there being nothing further to discuss in the work session, it was adjourned on a motion by Vice Chairman Liles and a second by Mr. Patterson at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anita McMillan
Planning Commission Secretary