

Minutes of the Town of Vinton Urban Development Areas (UDA) Advisory Committee Kick-off Meeting/Code Revisions Held on Thursday, January 25, 2018, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Vinton Municipal Building, Council Chambers, at 311 S. Pollard Street

STAFF PRESENT: Anita McMillan, Planning and Zoning Director
Joey Hiner, Public Work Director
Julie Tucei, Planning and Zoning Coordinator
Miranda “Roxy” Brown, Code Compliance Officer

COUNCIL PRESENT: Mayor Brad Grose
Council Member Janet Scheid
Council Member/Planning Commissioner Keith Liles

CONSULTANTS PRESENT: Vlad Gavrilovic, EPRPC
Max Pastore, Rhodeside & Harwell
Sam Shreder, Rhodeside & Harwell

OTHER PRESENT: Allison Finney, Business/Property Owner
Tim Greenway, Business/Property Owner
Tammy Rickman, Business/Property Owner
Stephanie Brown-Mead, Business/Property Owner
Dale Wilkinson, Developer/Property Owner
John Berry, Citizen/Property Owner
Mick Michelsen, Vinton Board of Zoning Appeals
Debbie Adams, *The Vinton Messenger*
Phillip Thompson, County of Roanoke
Tara Pattisall, County of Roanoke
Alexander Jones, County of Roanoke
John Murphy, County of Roanoke
Amanda McGee, Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC)
Bryan Hill, Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC)

Agenda

1. **Introductions:**
 - a) Town of Vinton Staff
 - b) Consultant Teams
 - c) Advisory Committee Members
2. **Background:**
 - a) What is the UDA Program?
 - b) Consultant Team's experience with other UDA
 - c) Vinton's adopted UDA Plan
3. **Current UDA Grant/Schedules:**
 - a) Why did Vinton apply for another UDA Grant?
 - b) Current UDA Scope of Work
 - c) Overall Project Schedule
 - d) Tentative Schedule for various types of meetings and site visits
 - e) Public Outreach
 - f) What current issues/concerns would you like to see this process address?

Urban Development Areas (UDA) Advisory Committee

Kick-off Meeting/Code Revisions

Thursday, January 25, 2018

Page 2 of 5

g) What do you hope that the Vinton Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Revisions, and the possible addition of Design Guidelines will accomplish?

h) Which areas within the designated UDAs should this effort focus on? Priorities?

- **Mark-up of the large-scale UDA Map**

4. Comments/Questions

The kickoff meeting began at 11 a.m. with a welcome by Mayor Grose. He thanked Town staff for the work on this project and thanked everyone for taking the time to attend the kickoff meeting.

Ms. McMillan introduced everyone in attendance, as well as the consultants. One of the consultants, Mr. Gavrilovic of EPRPC firm, stated that he is very impressed with the framework Vinton has so far.

Next, Mr. Shreder, from Rhodeside & Harwell, presented a PowerPoint which outlined the items included on the agenda. A copy of the PowerPoint will be included as a part of the minutes. Some of the points covered in the PowerPoint included an explanation of Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND); and a list of some of the other surrounding localities the consultants have worked with including Botetourt County, Christiansburg, and Salem.

Mr. Shreder went over what the consultants envision as the scope of work. Phase 1 will be Project Initiation and Scoping, from January to February. Phase 2 will be Policy/Code and Urban Design Audit, from February to June. Phase 3 will be for Revisions and the Design Guidelines, from July to September.

Next, they asked those in attendance what issues and concerns they would like to see this process address. Mr. Berry asked what constitutes a small business and how will they come into play. Mr. Gavrilovic said that was a great point, and he said that with TND, existing businesses will be supported and new businesses may be attracted to the area.

Ms. Mead said that basically in downtown Vinton, business dies after 5:00 p.m., but it has gotten a little better with the brewery being there now. She would like to see businesses stay open later and for the area to have better walkability. Mr. Gavrilovic said that having evening events and programs at the Farmers' Market will help with after-hours business. He said that also the population around the downtown area could be drawn in to the area, as well as through traffic. He stated that the design of infrastructure improvements around the downtown area would help with that. Mr. Pastore, from Rhodeside & Harwell mentioned that having apartments above businesses would also help, and that the UDA can encourage that to happen and make it easier.

Mr. Wilkinson suggested that they think of the whole Town as a Planned Unit Development (PUD)—to have a broader vision. He mentioned that people like to go places where there is already buy-in. He said that was one of the reasons he came on board with the Roland E. Cook renovation because of the hand-in-hand relationship with the localities involved.

Mr. Pastore, asked if there were other places like towns or cities that they like. Ms. McGee, of RVARC, mentioned that downtown Vinton could be more like the Grandin Village in Roanoke City. Ms. Mead said she also agrees that Vinton could be like Grandin. Mr. Liles stated that the Town needs walkability like Grandin has. Mr. Liles said our downtown has a spark already going. He said accessibility is

Urban Development Areas (UDA) Advisory Committee

Kick-off Meeting/Code Revisions

Thursday, January 25, 2018

Page 3 of 5

important, as well as the connection of the neighborhoods to downtown. He said there are some barriers to getting people to walk right now.

Mr. Hiner mentioned that residential density could choke out businesses. He mentioned, though, that the tax base does come from businesses.

Ms. McGee mentioned that Grandin has anchors like the Coop and the theatre.

Mr. Gavrilovic mentioned that Charlottesville has been successful in using housing and entertainment to draw businesses in.

Mr. Wilkinson said it is the old adage as which came first—the chicken or the egg—question. He said that government sets the framework for people to come and take a chance on the area.

Mr. Gavrilovic asked what they think are barriers that will need to be addressed during this process. Mayor Grose said that the committee will be very important in this part of the process. He said the Town will need to make sure that proper zoning is in place to attract businesses.

Ms. Mead said sidewalks are definitely needed to make safe places for people to walk. Greenways and bike trails are also important.

Mr. Shreder said that identifying key links can be an important part of the process.

Mr. Berry said he is trying to learn about the timing on new projects. He asked if it takes 3 years or more to do projects, and said that regardless of the amount of time it takes, the process should be streamlined for new development. Ms. McMillan stated that the County of Roanoke and Town have already streamlined the project review process. However, there are other challenges to new development including infrastructure like fire flow and water and sewer availability. She said it is important for the Town to balance the needs of existing property owners with the needs of new businesses.

Mr. Thompson stated that there are 8 UDA in Town which all have different characteristics in each one. He said there is a lot of focus on the downtown area. He mentioned that design guidelines will play off the zoning ordinance, and could be used during the rezoning process. He said that walkability is very important, and it must be safe. He also mentioned that they should consider how economics will play into development. For example, both school renovations into apartments in Vinton were able to use Historic Tax Credits.

Important points included: 1. What are some financial incentives that make mixed-uses attractive? 2. What are the infrastructure deficiencies? 3. The transportation network—such as slowing traffic down or traffic pattern changes.

Mr. Greenway mentioned that there was a study back in the mid-80s, maybe 1985, that showed additional traffic lights for Washington Avenue to help slow traffic down and get them to actually see what the downtown area has to offer.

Mr. Thompson asked them to consider who would be given priority pedestrians or vehicles.

Urban Development Areas (UDA) Advisory Committee

Kick-off Meeting/Code Revisions

Thursday, January 25, 2018

Page 4 of 5

Mr. Gavrilovic mentioned height and density restrictions and said he doesn't see those as limiting factors right now. He said the economy is the bigger limiting factor.

Mr. Thompson said that parking is always an issue. Ms. McMillan said the new Mixed-Use District has parking provisions included in it.

Ms. McMillan stated that the Town will need commitment from Roanoke County on some financial incentives such as tax breaks.

Mr. Greenway said the water and sewer and the fire flow have always been a big issue in the Town. He said that maybe the Town and developers can share in the costs instead of the Town expecting the developers to pay the full cost of needed improvements. He said that the Town must make water available in order to attract development. He also said that the Planning and Zoning portion of the development process is good and bad. He said that the 2 layer process with the Town and the County can be a challenge. He also said the sign process is challenging and that the Town receives bad publicity about their signage enforcement. Mr. Greenway said connectivity is very important, as well as incentives to bring new businesses, like Macado's, into Town. He said it might be a good idea to try to connect the Macado's with the downtown area.

Mr. Gavrilovic asked about stimulating development on properties in the Town.

Mr. Wilkinson said there is a balance for governments to get involved in buying and marketing properties.

Mr. Gavrilovic mentioned that having UDA, while not required by law any longer, can help the Town get SMART SCALE money for roads improvements and other improvements.

An important point was made about the Comprehensive Plan and other zoning documents being great marketing tools for the Town.

Mr. Liles mentioned the SMART SCALE grant application that the Town has been submitted for sidewalk and pedestrian improvements.

Mr. Thompson said that having uses by right make it easier for developers and property owners to develop their properties.

Mr. Hill mentioned TND/Design Guidelines and density bonus that might be helpful for development.

Mr. Greenway mentioned that municipal/public parking lot can be provided from existing private smaller lots in the downtown area.

Ms. Mead said that development should be taken from a quality approach, not a quantity approach, in order to maintain the uniqueness and quaintness of the Town. The Town should be made as a destination town.

Mr. Thompson mentioned historic districts and architectural review boards and whether the Town will be poised to do that.

Urban Development Areas (UDA) Advisory Committee

Kick-off Meeting/Code Revisions

Thursday, January 25, 2018

Page 5 of 5

Mayor Grose mentioned building guidelines, zoning, subdivision, design guidelines that are important in attracting quality development in the Town.

Towards the end of the meeting, around 1 p.m., the attendees and consultants marked important areas on a large-scale map of Vinton.