

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes 2/19/2020

Called to order: 7:02 pm

Members present: Mark Fausel, Brian Tellstone, Scott Nickerson, Virginia Clarke, Chris Granda, Alison Anand (Chris Cole, Joy Reap, and Lauck Parke were absent)

Staff present: Ravi Venkataraman, Town Planner

Others present: Stefani Hartsfield, Kyle Hartsfield, Miranda Lescaze

1. Adjustments to the Agenda

Virginia Clarke recommended adjusting the agenda move up Item #8 to after Item #3, postpone Item #7 to a later meeting, and add an update from the February 18th Selectboard meeting.

2. Approval of the minutes

Motion by Mark Fausel, second by Scott Nickerson to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2019, June 5, 2019, June 19, 2019, and February 5, 2020 Planning Commission Meetings. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried.

3. Public comment for non-agenda items

Stefani Hartsfield talked about the DASH Grant the Town of Richmond received from the Illinois Public Health Institute. She explained that the grant touches upon the Town's future planning priorities, and centers on the allocation of resources. One of the deliverables of the grant is to provide information to the public on existing community engagement and public interest resources. She said the total grant amount is \$5,000. She said of the \$5,000, \$2,000 will be spent on a stipend for a person to follow through on the grant deliverables. She also said that more details on the position is to follow.

Mark Fausel commended Hartsfield's efforts to get a grant as a Richmond citizen unaffiliated with the Town, and asked about staff's role in administering this grant. Venkataraman said that he would be a liaison between the hired person conducting the work and the Town, and would also provide support as needed. Fausel said that the Planning Commission would like to be updated on these efforts, and would like to help in any way.

8a. Nomination of an Acting Administrative Officer, per Richmond Zoning Regulations Section 8.1

Venkataraman explained that under any hypothetical dire circumstances, he would need to assume the role of the Acting Administrative Officer, as stated in his job description, until the

permanent Administrative Officer can continue their duties. The Planning Commission's nomination would legitimize this power when triggered.

Motion by Alison Anand, second by Chris Granda to nominate Ravi Venkataraman as the Acting Administrative Officer for the Town of Richmond. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried.

Update from the February 18th Selectboard meeting

Ravi Venkataraman provided an overview of the Selectboard's discussion of the Jolina Court Zoning District draft regulations. Venkataraman said that the Selectboard expressed concerns about regulations for the building footprint, traffic impacts, and parking. Venkataraman said that the Selectboard decided to hold a public meeting on March 9th, but he said he will be talking to the Selectboard until March 9th to address their concerns. Clarke asked if anyone from the Planning Commission can address the Selectboard's concerns with Venkataraman. Venkataraman said Planning Commission members can discuss with the Selectboard their concerns. Anand said that the Selectboard wanted additional time to review the revisions made to the regulations since November 2019, and that it was concerned about the building footprint allowance. Clarke said that the Planning Commission should provide a rationale to the Selectboard. Anand added that the Selectboard was concerned about the capacity of the Fire Department.

Venkataraman suggested providing the Selectboard with a document vetted by the Planning Commission that reviews their rationale for their decisions. Venkataraman also said that individual Planning Commission members are welcome to join in on the meeting with the Selectboard. Chris Granda and Mark Fausel expressed interest in attending the meeting. Clarke suggested that Venkataraman look into Open Meeting Laws.

4. and 5. Future priorities, and Objectives and communication strategy for public input

Clarke said that the Planning Commission should determine a methodology to address the list of priorities and rewriting the zoning ordinance. Clarke suggested reviewing the zoning ordinance on a district-by-district basis, either by working from the center outward, or based on public input. Clarke also suggested creating a checklist in order to evaluate each district.

Venkataraman said that the commission may want to reevaluate the location and boundaries of all the districts so that the commission can map out long-term growth and development. Venkataraman said that the lines currently do not match parcel boundaries and the districts and respective individual parcels may not align with the aspired zone on the transect. Venkataraman said that the commission could create a working zoning map, then reevaluate each location and respective district, and merge the working map with the zoning ordinance when the ordinance is finalized—especially if a reevaluation of the growth boundaries are necessary. Venkataraman said if the commission is satisfied with the current zoning map, then starting from the center and moving outwards would be the logical next step. Anand said that looking at the town from a wider lens is a good approach.

Clarke asked why the zoning map could be changed incrementally as the commission reviews each district. Venkataraman said that can be possible. Clarke said she was concerned about the commission's ability to review an entire zoning map.

Anand raised concerns about long driveways and impacting natural resources with land development.

Fausel said that the Town Plan has an existing working map and creating a new zoning map would be difficult. Fausel said that the commission should refer to the Town Plan map when reviewing each zoning district.

Fausel said that providing a status update on the Planning Commission's progress during Town Meeting Day would be a great opportunity. Fausel said that the Planning Commission should gain input from the public on how they should prioritize their workflow, including their revision of the zoning ordinance.

Clarke said that the commission already has a list of priorities—one of them being revisions to the Village Downtown Zoning District regulations. Clarke said that the commission should address the priority of revising the zoning ordinance.

Anand said that by seeking input, the commission would become aware of problems that they can address by modifying the zoning regulations.

Clarke said that Venkataraman had the idea of developing an online and in-person survey to get public input. Venkataraman said that the commission could inform the town of the Planning Commission's status and the survey during Town Meeting Day. Fausel said that the Planning Commission should have a more structured public outreach component.

Clarke suggested that the commission should spend 75 percent of their meetings focused on zoning going forward, and should approach their revision to the regulations in a particular systematic manner. Clarke said that asking the town a general question about the zoning will not be directed or constructive. Granda said structure and direction with public outreach is necessary in order to get the type of answers the commission wants. Clarke asked the commission if it should advertise the survey during Town Meeting Day. The commission said it should.

Venkataraman said that there are projects and initiatives he would like to work on with the Planning Commission's support. Venkataraman said he would like to work on addressing affordable housing with inclusionary zoning provisions. Fausel said that the commission should define density bonus provisions, not only for affordable housing but also for natural resource protection and other aspects. Venkataraman also suggested putting in place additional PUD standards to protect core forests, prime agricultural lands and other natural resources, as well as transferring development rights. Venkataraman said he would like to pursue a state

Downtown Designation. Venkataraman said he would like to look into establishing a Design Review District. Anand said the commission had considered design review specifications but did not pursue it at the time. Venkataraman also said he would like to establish Tactical Urbanism standards for the town. Venkataraman suggested that the commission should look into integrating elements of SmartCode into the zoning regulations.

Fausel said he would like the commission to be more involved with what is happening on Bridge Street during this summer. Clarke said the town has a transportation commission. Fausel said he would like updates on the transportation commission.

8. Other Business, Correspondence, and Adjournment

Clarke said that for next meeting, the commission should focus on which items it and staff should pursue.

Motion by Tellstone, second by Scott Nickerson, to adjourn. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 pm.