## Richmond Planning Commission

Wednesday, April 18th, 2018

Unapproved Minutes

Members Present: Mark Fausel, Scott Nickerson, Joy Reap, Brian Tellstone, Lauck Parke

Members Absent: Virginia Clarke, Alison Anand

Others Present: Jessica Draper, Town Planner; David Sunshine, Ian Bender, Jeff Forward, Jack Linn, Geoffrey Urbanik, Gary Bressor, Chris Granda, Don Morin, Bard Hill, Steve Ackerman, Judy Rosovsky, Stefani Hartsfield, Bob Low, Jean Kelly, Betsy Hardy

Called to Order: 7:01 pm

Public Comment

Jack stated that the planning commission is running short on time.

David spoke on behalf of the DRB and urged the planning commission to compromise and work to get the plan done so that the town can move on with their business. He also mentioned that it has put the DRB in a tough spot with Buttermilk (creamery redevelopment) and fears that without compromise the plan will fail and the town will be dead in the water with zoning and other issues.

Jeff stated that Melanie Needle of regional planning would be unable to attend this meeting due to a last minute injury.

Ian reiterated David’s plea to get the plan done. He also urged the commission to make hard line decisions if they need to. He also shared concern about town residents subverting the editing process.

Geoffrey offered moral support to the planning commission to stay on track and trudge forward to the deadline.

Brian said that although the first hearing was a disaster, he believes we are on the right track now and this version should be better.

Scott said that the December hearing was informative, but now those parties are on board and have been since.

Don thanked the commission for their effort and requested that density be addressed in the plan. He suggested a 5000sqft per dwelling unit density similar to that of the Borden Street units. He expressed a conflict between town plans past that promote open spaces and dense villages, and current zoning that does not. He said he will actively support the plan if density is increased in the village.

Mark said he wants to encourage concentrated growth, but that we need to find compromises on density in certain districts.

Don said we should compromise now, but that the town plan should represent the desires of the majority either way.

Chris said he agrees with Don, and that the failed zoning effort failed because the changes on the ground were not well explained.

Administrative Items & Updates

Minutes: Brian moved to accept the minutes from 4/12. Seconded by Lauck. All were in favor.

Joy expressed that she was frustrated with the process so far. She did not understand why the members of the public were still rewriting sections of the town plan instead of providing comment. She said that Jessica has the time to make these edits and should be the one proposing them. She requested that moving forward all comment be brought before the commission before being integrated.

Mark said that he considers the rewrites as a form of comment, and we only have a few sections left.

Joy explained that she would have preferred to see comments ahead of edits.

Mark said we had been making subcommittee decisions on edits all along.

Lauck commented that the Future Land Use edits that were proposed are 60% new material and the Housing section is higher. He said these are substantial and not comments. He also expressed concern over pleasing a small segment of the population with making these kinds of changes. He agreed with Joy that there has been a perversion of the process.

Discussion ensued over how to proceed with the draft of future land use. Lauck moved to reschedule future land use for the following week’s meeting. Brian seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Judy Rosovsky asked Lauck to clarify what he meant by perversion. He said he meant the issues of people rewriting and submitting instead of providing commentary.

Jessica offered to increase her hours to accommodate the timeline, pending Geoffrey’s approval.

Joy urged those present to please submit comments instead of major rewrites.

Town Plan

Gary Bressor spoke on behalf of his Housing rewrite. He apologized if it seemed last minute. He explained that the original Housing draft came across as slanted toward affordable rental units and disregarded older homes. He also presented his idea for the village which would include portions of Thompson Rd, Cochran Rd, and Bridge Street. He is concerned that rental has increased over the last 20 years and that owner occupied homes would be better maintained and civic involvement would be better as well with owner occupation.

Jack asked Gary how the town might promote or require owner occupation.

Gary said it could be a requirement similar to the accessory dwelling requirement or could be incentivized.

David suggested that something of that nature is difficult to enforce.

Gary said that other towns are more proactive about zoning enforcement.

Bard mentioned that he is a village resident in an older home and would love to see some of the homes replaced. He also said that many Richmond renters are long term, and that it may be a stability issue versus ownership residency causing civic involvement decline.

It was asked whether this topic came up in the visioning process. Mark explained that town position vacancies were a concern at that time and now.

Lauck said that young and old are both struggling to buy and sell homes.

Don said home ownership is nice, but impossible for some. He also said that the planning commission needs to prioritize parts of the plan to solve this problem.

David and Ian discussed the recent issue over a proposed triplex on Tilden Ave. They said that people were more concerned with the traffic or noise rather than the occupants themselves being residents.

Mark stated that we cannot achieve a concrete solution with the plan itself, and we need to represent all perspectives.

Joy said that we cannot ignore the affordability aspect of this issue.

Gary clarified that he did not want to remove renters from town entirely.

Don asked about how much authority the DRB could be given to make density decisions case by case.

Brian asked if the DRB would like that authority.

David said that the process is frustrating as it is, but it could be possible to incorporate broader DRB authority in the zoning.

All commissioners agreed to start with the original Housing draft and pull from the two proposed drafts to create a new draft for the next meeting.

Jessica expressed difficulty in turning drafts around after Thursday night meetings.

Discussion ensued of how to proceed to a housing compromise. Jeff Forward suggested that maybe it is not far out of reach and by keeping a factual narrative the commission could debate the goals and actions. It was decided to allow Jess to make proposed changes to Future Land Use and Housing and have those ready for a meeting the following week.

Jessica mentioned that she has discussed Future Land Use with CCRPC and they suggested toning down some of the language under “purpose” as it is very specific and strongly worded.

Jessica discussed the changes to the Utilities and Facilities section, as well as Bob Low’s proposed minor changes. Jeff Forward asked about the capital reserve fund being included in this section. Jessica said she would look into it.

Adjourn

Brian made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Scott.

All in favor,

Meeting adjourned at 8:57 pm

Respectfully submitted, Jessica Draper, Town Planner