Called to Order: 7:07pm

Present: Mark Fausel, Alison Anand, Joy Reap, Scott Nickerson, Virginia Clarke, Lauck Parke

Absent: Brian Tellstone

Public Comment: None

Minutes Approval: Virginia Clarke moved to approve the minutes of 1-2-19. Seconded by Lauck Parke. Discussion: Virginia’s name missing a letter (typo). Mark Fausel, Scott Nickerson, and Virginia Clarke voted in favor. Joy Reap abstained. Alison Anand was absent for the vote.

Village Center Designation: Jessica Draper recapped the meeting with she and three of the planning commission members had earlier that day with the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development regarding Richmond’s expired Village Center Designation. Discussion ensued regarding Neighborhood Development Area program, and that for now we are only pursuing the VCD and possibly considering altering the boundaries of the previous designation.

Airport Request: Jessica Draper explained that the Burlington Airport has been reaching out for the last few years to request a change to the zoning regulations in Richmond to include language about structure height. She said that right now, Richmond regulates almost all structures to be less than 35ft in height, and that structures not included are utilities and silos, because those are regulated by the state. The planning commission agreed to consider it as a minor change.

Buttermilk: Jessica explained to the planning commission that the Creamery Redevelopment project has hit a snag, because the developers have started and possibly completed four more residential units than they were permitted for. She said that they would like to amend their permit to include the four units, but the underlying zoning district does not even allow the 10 units that were permitted under interim zoning. The planning commission requested more information about the issue for the next meeting including what their tax stabilization contract included, and whether they were under Act 250 jurisdiction. They agreed that Lauck would go to the town center tomorrow to review their file and paperwork. They also agreed to have a discussion with the DRB chair, members of the selectboard, and the town manager at the next meeting on February 6th to clarify the roles of each entity moving forward with that project.

Zoning: The planning commission discussed the merits of form-based zoning. They agreed that form-based zoning could allow flexibility to developers to follow the trends of the market, rather than pigeonholing them into existing restrictions of ratios and density limits. The commission also agreed that much of the concern in town is how the village will look if housing becomes more dense. They agreed that there are other concerns such as parking, noise, traffic, etc. but that a major factor is the aesthetic effects on the village. It was explained for those that did not know, that form based zoning requires specific physical aesthetic characteristics while allowing internal structures and styles to fit the needs of the user. The planning commission also agreed that a density bonus may also achieve some flexibility with residential development in our commercial areas as well. Jessica explained that a density bonus could function like an overlay district including specific areas of the village where density is more desirable. She also explained that these bonuses usually include requirements such as affordability, accessibility, elderly, and/or energy efficiency. A few members expressed concern about viability of business in town if flexibility is not allowed. The commission agreed to dedicate their second meeting in February to inviting experts to come speak regarding economics, form based zoning, and density bonuses. Joy Reap made the point that affordability of housing will happen as soon as supply of housing increases enough for the demand. Mark Fausel stated concern that if residential use takes over you will lose tax revenue from commercial properties. Joy asked that a list of issues that could be solved by form-based zoning be created and presented at the second meeting. Lauck expressed that he saw urgency for the commission to act on village zoning. The commission agreed to discuss village zoning and the buttermilk parcel at the meeting on February 6th, and save the presentations on zoning for the meeting on February 20th.

Meeting Assignments: Jessica volunteered to present to the selectboard regarding their actions in the town plan. Alison agreed to present to the conservation commission and the supervisory union regarding their actions in the town plan.

Joy Reap moved to adjourn. Seconded by Scott Nickerson. All were in favor. Adjourned 9:07pm.