

Richmond Planning Commission Minutes  
1-2-19

Called to Order: 7:05pm

In Attendance: Mark Fausel, Brian Tellstone, Alison Anand, Virginia Clarke, Scott Nickerson, Lauck Parke, Jessica Draper, Ashley Farr, Erin Farr, Chuck Farr, Gabe Firman, Lars Whitman  
Absent: Joy Reap

Public Comment:

Gabe Firman spoke about his and Lars' interest in developing the former Toscano building. He said that Suzanne instructed them to approach the planning commission with their desired zoning changes. Gabe and Lars spoke about the relation to the town plan, because they would like the building to be mixed use with more residences than the zoning currently allows. Gabe asked about the various venues to getting the zoning changed for that parcel. Mark Fausel said that the selectboard does have the authority to change zoning, but the planning commission is charged with making the changes and asking the selectboard to enact them. He then asked Gabe and Lars to compile a letter outlining their ideas and desired changes to be submitted to the planning commission for their review. Lauck Parke suggested that they cite language in the town plan that would support their request.

The Farr family spoke about their desire to have options for non-agricultural commercial development on their property. They expressed interest in developing a self-storage business. Mark Fausel suggested that they also submit a letter outlining their desired changes and ideas for development. Lauck asked them to provide information about their current crop production. Ashley explained that they currently produce various crops for other farms, a brewery, and cover crops. He said they would like other opportunities for the parcel. Alison Anand asked about their land that is in the floodplain. Chuck said that indeed much of the land is in floodplain, but the location of development for storage would be on the south side of Huntington Road. Ashley said he would prefer storage because he believes it is low impact and goes well with the residential area. Lauck asked if any of the farm structures could be converted. Ashley said that they want to maintain the farm structures for agricultural purposes. Erin said that the area they are looking at is mostly clay and is not crop-friendly. Discussion then ensued about the pace of development in Richmond, and Chuck Farr expressed concern for what zoning changes may be on the horizon. Virginia Clark said that it's good that they're participating, especially early on, to get their desires on the list of possible changes. Mark Fausel said that the goal is to keep the entire town in the loop throughout the process.

Model Communities: Jessica Draper presented the model communities program that had been brought to her attention by Jeff Forward. The planning commission agreed that there was too much on their plate to pursue the program at this point in time.

Village Center Designation: Jessica Draper announced to the commission that the representatives from VT ACCD will be in Richmond on 1/16 to discuss the village center designation and possible neighborhood area designation. Jessica said she would email the commission the day before the meeting to confirm.

Regional Approvals: Jessica Draper told the commission that the plan and the determination of energy compliance are scheduled to be approved at the CCRPC board meeting on 1/16, and would announce the results of that meeting after she hears from regional planning about them.

Buttermilk/Jolina Court: The planning commission decided to review the site plan and expired interim zoning for Jolina Court and discuss at the next meeting on 1/16.

Zoning Change Procedure: Jessica Draper presented a draft procedure for making changes to the zoning regulations. She suggested two different kinds of changes, minor and major, that would have different levels of outreach and approvals. The commission discussed that they should set a time frame for certain changes. Brian Tellstone said he was pretty sure the floodplain regulations are set in stone, and the planning commission agreed that they likely didn't need to be changed.

Implementation Actions: Jessica said she had identified upcoming meetings of the various town organizations for representation of the planning commission to attend and present the actions from the town plan that those organizations are responsible for working on. She said she would bring those dates to the next meeting, and members could volunteer to attend.

EVSE Grant follow up: Mark Fausel spoke about the follow up that he did regarding the issues surrounding the EVSE grant application. He said that he approached the selectboard with a letter outlining the planning commission's concerns about procedure. Mark explained that the selectboard didn't understand quite where he was coming from and responded that they have the authority to make those decisions without the planning commission. Mark also said that he met with Josh after the selectboard meeting to make sure he understood where the planning commission was coming from, and they created a plan to enhance the town policies and procedures. Mark also noted Steve Bower's apology email, and Virginia explained that she had a discussion with the RCAC regarding the changes and why it was an issue to change the grant application after approval. She asked that if the grant policy is revised it should include a large timeframe for approvals to avoid a similar issue in the future.

Alison Anand offered to be the person to attend the conservation commission meeting on behalf of the planning commission.

Brian Tellstone moved to adjourn. Seconded by Scott Nickerson. Adjourned 8:50pm.