

Richmond Planning Commission
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR January 20, 2021

Members Present: Chris Cole, Virginia Clarke, Chris Granda, Alison Anand, Brian Tellstone, Jake Kornfeld, Joy Reap
Members Absent: Mark Fausel, Caitlin Littlefield,
Others Present: Ravi Venkataraman (Town Planner/Staff), Marshall Paulsen, Dan Noyes, Chuck Farr, Paul Dawson, Judy Rosovsky, Terry Farr, Sidney, Lucy Thayer, John Pitrowiski, Heidi Bormann, Andrea Dotolo, Tom Frawley, Huseyin Sevincgil,

1. Welcome and troubleshooting

Chris Cole called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

2. Adjustments to the Agenda

None

3. Public Comment for non-agenda items

Marshall Paulsen said he will be in attendance for a short period.

4. Approval of Minutes

Chris Granda moved to approve the December 16th, 2020 Planning Commission meeting minutes, seconded by Jake Kornfeld. Voting: 6-0 (Joy Reap abstained). Motion carried.

5. Discussion on Community Outreach Work Plan

Cole provided background on the Community Outreach Work Plan and where the Planning Commission is on the work plan. Virginia Clarke said that the intent of this agenda item is to plan for the community outreach meeting on February 3rd. Clarke provided background on rezoning that has already occurred and previous Planning Commission discussions on rezoning. Clarke overviewed the commercial areas under discussion for the February 3rd meeting, the reason to categorize these areas as commercial, and the Planning Commission's intent to allow for flexibility and housing in these areas. Clarke reviewed the draft purpose statement for the proposed Village Commercial District. Cole asked if the Round Church Corners area will be incorporated into the Village Commercial District and does the Village Commercial District allow for housing. Clarke said that housing is allowed through the PUD process and that the commission should consider making the process to build multifamily dwellings and mixed-use buildings easier. Venkataraman recommended removing PUD from the list of uses because PUDs aren't a use, and it is a burdensome process without a rationale for developing multifamily dwellings. Cole said that housing may not be compatible with existing commercial establishments, housing may interfere with the existing ongoing commercial activities, and that he would like to hear from property owners in the district. Dan Noyes said that allowing housing would drive his businesses out of the district and asked about the reason why the commission is looking to expand housing allowances. Cole said that these discussions are preliminary. Noyes said he had concerns about parking and signage allowances. Alison Anand asked about his specific concerns about zoning. Noyes said he was concerned about the grandfathered uses on his property being phased out if the property ever transferred, and about compatibility. Cole asked about the district Noyes's property was located in. Clarke said that Noyes's properties are in the Village Commercial District, and that lumber yard uses are allowed and will continue to be allowed as a use. Noyes asked if lumber yards are allowed in other parts of town. Granda said that he understands Noyes's concerns, that if commercial areas had residential uses, it

would be hard to convert the residential areas back to commercial uses, and that therefore, to preserve commercial areas, these areas would have to be exclusively commercial. Venkataraman asked clarifying questions to Noyes about his hypothetical scenario, and that the lumber yard use would be allowed in certain locations so long as it is explicitly stated in the zoning regulations. Clarke said that during the last major rezoning effort, homeowners wanted opportunities to operate commercial uses on their properties, and now, commercial space is not in as much demand, evidenced by conversations on Jolina Court. Cole provided background on the commission's intent for rezoning the village, and the commission's understanding that the village needs commercial areas. Chuck Farr said that flexibility is needed for landowners to further develop and adapt. Cole said that the commission is looking to allow flexibility, such as mixed-use buildings--along major corridors in the village. Heidi Bormann said that she supports the commission's intent of allowing mixed use buildings in commercial areas in the village because of the changing nature of businesses. Anand voiced concerns about the incompatibility of housing in commercial areas, and said that the commission should ensure that commercial areas have adequate space to be viable. Kornfeld said that based on the conversations, the commission and the property owners seem to be in alignment. Clarke said that both residential and commercial uses are needed in order to create walkable neighborhoods, but the question now is if the residential uses interfere with the operation of the commercial uses and vice versa. Anand said that the input seems like no change is needed to the uses. Granda said that the main purpose of these conversations is to better understand the options business owners have with their property; that in the past, there were no issues with residential uses moving into commercial areas, but rather commercial development encroaching on residential areas; and that flexibility for the future is needed. Clarke said that parking regulations will need to be revised. Noyes said that parking in front of buildings may not be possible because of the railroad, and asks why parking behind a building is necessary. Joy Reap asked Farr if he would like the district expanded to include portions of the farm. Farr said that expansion of allowances to the farm would make sense. Cole said that expanding density allowances and removing permitting barriers is the commission's intent, and asked Clarke about density numbers. Clarke said that the commission is considering six units per acre. Cole thanked the attendees and invited the attendees to come to the next Planning Commission meeting.

6. Discussion on Wetlands

Venkataraman summarized past discussions on wetlands, and the packet materials. Cole asked Venkataraman to go over the regulations comparison table in the packet. Venkataraman highlighted permitting processes in nearby municipalities, and overviewed the variance process. Farr discussed his subdivision project, and his intent to build a driveway across a wetland buffer. John Pitrowiski and Tom Frawley introduced themselves, their project team, the site, and the proposed project. Cole asked about impacts on the floodplain. Huseyin Sevincgil explained the site design, conceptual stormwater design, the retaining wall. Cole asked about the parking location. Sevincgil said that parking in front of the store is the preferred design for gas stations nowadays. Sevincgil explained the floodplain storage capacity of the existing and proposed conditions. Lucy Thayer overviewed wetlands in general, the proposed landscape plan, and that the proposed plan includes stormwater treatment. Venkataraman asked about soil remediation and the overall improvement of water quality on the site. Andrea Dotolo said she was not sure about soil remediation, but overall, water quality would be improved by this project. Judy Rosovsky asked about forestalling fomites and invasives within the wetlands. Thayer said that future conversations on invasive phragmites are needed. Reap asked about other conflicts with the plans and the zoning regulations. Frawley said that they are looking to change the definition of automobile service station uses. Reap asked about the issue with the location of the parking. Venkataraman affirmed Reap's statement that parking must be located to the side or rear of the building. Granda asked about the canopy being a building. Venkataraman said that the broadest interpretation of this regulation is that the canopy is a building, and therefore, the parking is in between two buildings on the proposed plan and could be compliance. Cole thanked the project team from attending, and additional conversations within the commission is needed before it can make a final decision. Anand asked if the project team could place their project in a completely different location. Frawley responded that with this project, their aim is to create a minimal impact on the property and also improve the quality of the natural resources on the property.

7. Other Business, Correspondence, and Adjournment

Cole notified the commission of the CCRPC Land Use Planning and Training next Wednesday. Cole asked Venkataraman if he had any other announcements. Venkataraman said that the commission should look over the flowcharts, and reach out to him if members had any questions. Clarke asked about the Residential/Commercial Zoning District subcommittee and its future meetings. Venkataraman said that no meetings have been set yet, but he will follow up to set up a meeting. Granda told the planning commission that he is researching energy codes and asked Cole for a time to present his research to the commission. Cole said that that can be addressed along with the Reaps' request to review the Gateway District after the village zoning districts have been addressed. Cole said that the Mobil project team's requests, wetlands regulations, and variances will be revisited after the village zoning district topics have been addressed. Cole said that the impacts to the floodplains for the Mobil proposed project should not be overlooked, that he is interested in ANR's view of this project, and that he would like the Conservation Commission's view of the proposed project and its impacts. Clarke said that because the Mobil proposed project is unique, changes to the wetlands regulations may not allow the proposed project to go forward as presented to the commission. Cole said that he would like the commission to address this issue in a timely manner to avoid the pressure for development. Reap said that the commission needs to keep the sewer line expansion discussions into consideration. Venkataraman said that the commission should take into consideration other members of the public who attended this meeting and prior meetings regarding wetlands, and their issues specifically with crossings. Cole agreed that the conversations at hand on development within wetlands should focus on minor minimal development that ANR is willing to permit under certain conditions.

Motion by Granda, seconded by Anand to adjourn the meeting. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Ravi Venkataraman, Town Planner