
Richmond Planning Commission
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR March 3, 2021

Members Present: Chris Cole, Virginia Clarke, Chris Granda, Alison Anand, Mark Fausel, Caitlin Littlefield, Jake Kornfeld, Joy Reap

Members Absent: Brian Tellstone,

Others Present: Ravi Venkataraman (Town Planner/Staff), Judy McVickar, Allen Knowles, Matt Thompson, Trish Healy, Christy Witters, Bard Hill, Jenna Antonino DiMare, Marshall Paulsen, John Rankin, Bob Heiser, Paul Hauf, Becky Vigneault, Ann Naumann, Jessie Heiser, Kendra Ramsey, iPhone, Melissa Wolaver

1. Welcome and troubleshooting

Chris Cole called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

2. Adjustments to the Agenda

None

3. Public Comment for non-agenda items

None

4. Planning Commission Community Outreach: Village residential neighborhoods, currently zoned as High Density Residential District (Pleasant St, Church St, Esplanade, Tilden Ave, Baker St, Brown's Ct, Burnett Ct, Lemroy Ct, Borden St.)

Cole overviewed the Planning Commission's purpose of the discussion, and their intentions with renaming the district. Members of the public introduced themselves. Virginia Clarke went over the discussion document, the differences in uses in the existing and proposed districts, uses that have protections by statute, dimensional requirements and other requirements. Cole said that the commission's aim is to put forth the least amount of change for the areas under discussion, because of the small lot sizes and the existing fully built conditions. John Rankin said he likes the existing density allowances, and had concerns that residents outside the village are aiming to solve housing issues by placing allowances within the village. Cole said that the Town Plan calls for increasing density within the village, but the goal of these discussions are to make sure that the proposals are reflective of the character of the neighborhoods. Clarke said that the impact of climate change and increasing walkability should be taken into consideration with the proposed regulation ideas. Paul Hauf said rebuilding existing houses are not allowed per the zoning regulations which should be reconsidered, that the commission should consider the impacts of rental units with multifamily dwellings on existing neighborhoods, and that the commission should consider the impacts of domesticated animals on the existing neighborhood. Christy Witters provided a presentation on the character of the existing neighborhood, supported changes to the minimum lot size standard. Specifically, Witters said that allowing multiple uses on a lot, multiple primary structures on a lot, sidewalk requirements, commercial uses, and more than two dwelling units per lot within the district would not be consistent with the character of the district. Cole said speaking from experience, he cannot imagine a triplex or quadplex being viable on a quarter-acre lot. Ann Naumann said that that from her experience the renters in the neighborhood do not tend to be a part of the neighborhood and additional rental properties would not be consistent with the character of the neighborhood. Bard Hill said that Tilden Avenue does not need a sidewalk, unlike Baker street.

Marshall Paulsen said that sidewalks and commercial uses would be difficult to incorporate into Pleasant Street. Paul Hauf questioned the commission's rationale for minimum lot size. Kendra Ramsey voiced concerns about density and the existing character of the neighborhoods. Witters asked the commission about the process for zoning amendments. Cole said the process is to be determined on how many amendments the commission would forward to the Selectboard for approval, but the commission intends to forward one to two amendments at a time to the Selectboard. Witters asked about consideration for outside the village. Cole said that that is to be determined, but that the commission will be carefully considering any possible changes outside the village. Melissa Wolaver said that the commission should consider the performance impacts of multifamily dwellings on the neighboring residences.

5. Other Business, Correspondence, and Adjournment

Chris Granda said that he and Venkataraman are making progress on discussions in April on energy codes.

Cole said that to progress possible changes to the Gateway District, he said that commission members participate on a subcommittee to put together zoning amendment ideas. Cole asked that Joy Reap organize the neighbors and provide ideas for the subcommittee in future public meetings.

Reap asked if Venkataraman has been checking attendance of the public with recent meetings. Venkataraman said that he is still required to list the names of all attendees in the minutes, but sometimes fails to do so because of attendees who arrive late and leave before the meeting ends. Reap asked if there are ways for attendees to sign in. Cole suggested that attendees sign in via the chat and that this will be added to future meetings.

Mark Fausel recommended serving on the Gateway District subcommittee.

Clarke suggested that the next meeting agenda include a debrief of all the neighborhoods discussed.

Caitlin Littlefield suggested that future meetings during the summer months should include discussions on ideas and concepts the forest subcommittee has researched.

Motion by Fausel, seconded by Alison Anand to adjourn the meeting. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Ravi Venkataraman, Town Planner