

Richmond Planning Commission
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR July 7, 2021

Members Present:	Virginia Clarke, Lisa Miller, Mark Fausel, Jake Kornfeld, Dan Mullen, Chris Granda
Members Absent:	Joy Reap, Chris Cole, Alison Anand
Others Present:	Ravi Venkataraman (Town Planner/Staff), GC Morris

1. Welcome and troubleshooting

Virginia Clarke called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. Clarke welcomed Dan Mullen to the Planning Commission. Mullen introduced himself to the commission

2. Public Comment for non-agenda items

None

3. Adjustments to the Agenda

Clarke added an item after the approval of minutes to introduce to the newest Planning Commission members the committee's work plans.

Chris Granda asked about items that the commission could not address in its previous meeting requested time to make an announcement regarding building energy codes. Clarke said that today's meeting agenda includes a discussion on energy planning.

4a. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Lisa Miller seconded by Dan Mullen, to approve the June 16, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried.

4b. Introduction of Planning Commission's general work plan

Clarke overviewed the commission's tasks of carrying out the Town Plan goals, the commission's current tasks of revising the zoning regulations, and the role of staff, other committees, and other organizations in relation to the Planning Commission.

5. Discussion on Automobile Service Station Uses

Clarke reviewed the purpose of revising the definition of automobile service station uses and previous discussions with the Mobil gas station owners, as well as the draft language.

Joy Reap asked if the proposed language intended for four vehicles per pumping island or four vehicles total could be filled, and said that that needed to be clarified. Venkataraman clarified that the intent was for four vehicles per pumping island.

Mark Fausel asked if the proposed language would allow for restaurants and that restaurants within fueling stations has received push back. Granda suggested that if the commission does not want to include restaurant uses, that should be specified in the definition. Reap asked how the commission felt about food services uses within the Gateway District. Granda said he is opposed to it, because such food service uses would compete with such uses in the village and would face resistance from the public. Reap said that food service uses accessory to a fueling station wouldn't necessarily compete with businesses in the village--especially for people stopping to purchase fuel and continue onward--and that it could draw more people into the village. Reap said that from her knowledge, the convenience store aspect is how fueling stations sustain themselves. Fausel and Reap said that currently, restaurants are not allowed in the Gateway District but breweries and wineries are allowed. Granda said that this discussion should be broader and not just focus on the Gateway District. Clarke asked if the term "customary" in association with accessory uses impacts the commission's interpretation. Miller said that "other convenience store items" could be used to limit the types of uses.

GC Morris said that further discussion on the future of fueling stations is needed and that typically the business of fueling stations is dependent upon the convenience store in order to remain solvent. Granda emphasized that the future of vehicles and fueling is electric; that, in emergency situations, people will need to rely on Level 3 chargers, not Level 2; that the discussion should focus on liquid fuels so that electric vehicle charging is not constrained. Miller noted the natural constraints on the Mobil gas station site. Jake Kornfeld noted that the revision of the definition is for future reference townwide, not necessarily for one particular use. Morris advised that the commission should not limit development based on the type of fuel. Miller and Kornfeld made note that the commission needs to address how much food service should be allowed to make sure that the vehicle fueling station remains the primary use. Morris suggested limitations on size. Clarke suggested basing accessory uses on the permitted and conditional uses in the underlying district. Kornfeld, Fausel, and Granda approved of this idea. Venkataraman said that the commission should define the accessory uses for the vehicle fueling station use, that accessory uses are incidental, subordinate to, and customary with the primary use on the lot, that it should keep in mind that with this definition, the primary use of the property is a fueling station, and that it shouldn't consider how electric vehicle charging is becoming more common as accessory structures in commercially used properties. Kornfeld said that if accessory uses are supposed to be incidental and subordinate, and that if the Mobil gas station owners are relying on the convenience store, then would the proposed definition be applicable. Clarke said the definition is a transitional definition and that she is unsure if the applicant can apply for the convenience store as the primary use and the vehicle fueling uses as an accessory use.

Clarke suggested including "take-out food and beverage". Fausel suggested "prepared foods". Clarke asked Reap her opinion on the sentiment about food service uses in the Gateway District. Reap said that sentiment ranges. Reap also said that limitations on size and location can be off-putting. Venkataraman said that the discussions today on definitions are the first step, and that additional conversations about limitations to accessory uses and signage should be forthcoming. Granda said he would like to draft a revision of the definition of Vehicle Fueling Stations for the commission's

consideration.

Clarke asked the commission to consider the vehicle/machinery repair definition for the next meeting. Venkataraman clarified that the commission should think about whether it would like to allow vehicle repair and machine repair in the same locations or in different locations.

6. Discussion on Energy Planning

Granda informed the commission that he and Jeff Forward will be withdrawing their zoning proposals due to the insufficient support for builders from Efficiency Vermont.

Clarke overviewed the ongoing energy planning items--the work of the climate action committee, the Climate Action Plan, the Comprehensive Energy Plan--and discussion topics to improve weatherization, carbon sequestration, land use, and solar siting.

Miller asked about particularities about solar siting within the town. Venkataraman said that mapping and analysis for solar siting was done as part of the 2018 Town Plan in order to be in compliance with the Enhanced Energy Plan requirements.

7. Town Plan Goals Update and Coordinating with Planning Advisory Committees

Clarke reviewed the letter Venkataraman sent out to all the town boards and committees regarding checking in on the Town Plan, and recommended that the commission review its progress on the goals in the Town Plan. Miller noted that the information needed could be overwhelming and difficult to obtain. Clarke said that the review of many of these goals would involve subjectivity.

Clarke asked how the commission would like to proceed with reviewing the Town Plan goals. Alison Anand expressed interest in the energy planning goals. Fausel requested an Excel spreadsheet of the document to provide comments. Kornfeld recommended a numerical based system to review the goals and to understand its importance to the commission.

Reap noted how some goals have to be accomplished with other committees, and asked the committee about the Williams Hill Road conversation. Venkataraman reviewed the ongoing conversations at the Selectboard regarding Williams Hill Road, the petition to discontinue the road, and the public hearing date in September. Reap advocated for the commission to support the Trails Committee's work of improving the town's trails network, as it states in the Town Plan. Clarke recommended that the commission discuss this item at a meeting. Venkataraman said that as general advice, towns should never throw up roads because there may be a need in the distant future for the right of way. Reap suggested that a member of the Trails Committee should attend an upcoming Planning Commission meeting to speak about this subject. Morris advised that the Planning Commission should be a party in standing for the public hearing. Clarke suggested reaching out to the Transportation Committee.

Morris suggested that Clarke and Venkataraman establish a rubric to grade progress on the goals.

8. Discussion on July 21st Meeting Agenda

Clarke said that the following will be discussed during the next meeting:

- Public Hearing on State Permit references
- Granda's revision on the Vehicle Service Station definition
- Finish Village South Districts

Reap asked about the role of the housing consultant. Clarke said that the commission should finalize regulations within the village and forward those draft revisions to the consultant to work on instead of the existing zoning. Fausel asked for a summary document that outlines the general consensus. Clarke said that document will be provided ahead of the next meeting.

Reap asked about which meeting she should invite Trails Committee members for discussions on Williams Hill Road. Clarke said the meeting in the beginning of August.

9. Other Business, Correspondence, and Adjournment

Motion by Anand, seconded by Fausel to adjourn the meeting. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Ravi Venkataraman, Town Planner