

Richmond Planning Commission
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR September 15th, 2021

Members Present:	Lisa Miller, Dan Mullen, Chris Cole, Virginia Clarke, Mark Fausel, Chris Granda, Alison Anand,
Members Absent:	Jake Kornfeld, Joy Reap,
Others Present:	Ravi Venkataraman (Town Planner/Staff), Lauck Parke, Allen Knowles, Rod West, MMCTV

1. Welcome and troubleshooting

Virginia Clarke called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

2. Public Comment for non-agenda items

None

3. Adjustments to the Agenda

Clarke suggested shifting to the "modern way" of accepting the agenda and minutes--approval of the agenda and minutes by consensus, rather than by voting. No adjustments were made to the agenda.

4. Approval of Minutes

Mark Fausel said that he would like the second page of the minutes to be revised on reflect his views that he would not be in support of a legal trail, and instead would be in support of a trail. Clarke noted a number of typos: "Klesch" instead of "Kleisch", "Moultroup" instead of "Moultrop", "motion" instead of "moment".

Ravi Venkataraman asked for clarification on the "modern way" Clarke referred to. Clarke explained that the minutes are automatically accepted after discussions. Cole explained the difference between consent agendas and action items, and said that since the commission does not have a consent agenda, the minutes should be accepted by vote. Clarke said that the minutes do not technically need to be approved by motion, and therefore if there are no corrections, then the minutes currently in the record or as suggested to be changed are accepted automatically. Clarke added that this was how other committees accepted minutes and amended minutes into the record.

5. Discussion on Powered Vehicle Service, Powered Machinery Service, and Vehicle Fueling Stations uses

Clarke presented the current zoning map around Exit 11. Clarke suggested rezoning the Mobil station to a commercial district--similar to existing districts surrounding Exit 11--and combining the commercial

districts around Exit 11.

Clarke introduced the discussion on Vehicle Fueling Stations, directing attention to the number of fueling islands and canopy size, and reviewed the recommended revisions in the meeting materials. Clarke noted that the proposed canopy size limit and limit on the number of fueling islands are based on her investigation of gas stations in Williston and Jericho. She said that none of the fueling stations she saw had six fueling stations, that only one of the gas stations she saw had five pumping islands, and that most fueling stations had either two or four islands.

Fausel asked to see a photo of the gas station with five pumping islands. Clarke presented the photos of all the gas stations she visited, starting with the current Mobil station in Richmond. She noted that the canopy of the Mobil station in Richmond currently is 1890 square feet. Granda asked if regulating both the number of pumping islands and the size of the canopy was necessary since one element determines the other. Cole said that the town would want a canopy over the pumping islands because it reduces point-source pollution from stormwater runoff, and that there is a federal regulation requirement for gas station canopies. Clarke asked based on Cole's comment if a requirement for a canopy is necessary. Cole said he was unsure if the town should require the canopy, but that the town would want a canopy over the fueling islands. Chris Granda said that it was highly likely the proposed gas station would have a canopy regardless based on state regulations.

Clarke presented the photo of the gas station with five pumping islands, and noted that this gas station was much larger in size and scale than the other gas stations along Route 2. Lisa Miller said that she would be in favor of requiring a canopy.

Granda said that he liked the structure of the present iteration of the draft regulations for vehicle fueling stations, that he would be in favor of moving this iteration forward, that the regulation on canopies is redundant since it is likely that a new or renovated gas station will have a canopy, and that the regulation does not need to have a limit on the size of the canopy. Clarke said that the regulation on canopies allows for flexibility with configuration. Fausel asked the commission about allowing only up to four pumping islands. Clarke cited the traffic study the Mobil station engineers provided, identified discrepancies, and concluded that it wasn't strong enough to persuade her that six fueling stations are needed. Cole said that in his experience he has never had to wait for fueling at the Mobil gas station, that demand is lower due to the pandemic and its effects, and that he would be in favor of allowing the number of fueling stations the site currently has. Granda concurred, and noted the proposed EV charging stations and the overall long-term shift in the market to EVs.

Fausel asked about state and local sign regulations. Cole overviewed state sign regulations on state highways, and anti-billboard laws. Venkataraman said that the applicant would have to adhere to the state and local regulations, that the most restrictive requirement applies, and that all free-standing signs in town are limited to 10 feet in height.

Clarke overviewed the revisions to the powered vehicle service and machinery service definition, and asked the commission if there are areas in town members would want to permit powered vehicle service uses and not machinery service, or vice versa. Clarke said that this definition differs from cottage industry and home occupation allowances. Clarke noted the overlap in where the members

could envision these uses to be located, and in what the members want for requirements for powered vehicle and powered machinery service uses. Fausel asked for clarification on the vehicle sales allowances as accessory uses. Clarke explained the difference between vehicle sales as accessory and primary uses. Dan Mullen identified syntactical oddities in the proposed definitions. Miller explained her understanding of the differing aesthetics of the powered vehicle service and powered machinery service, and suggested that the powered vehicle service uses should be in the Industrial/Commercial District and that the powered machinery service uses should be closer to the village. Clarke asked for clarification on which districts Miller would place powered machinery service uses and powered vehicle service uses. Miller said she would recommend allowing powered machinery service uses in the Commercial, and Village Commercial Districts, and would not place powered vehicle service uses in the Village Commercial District. Clarke said that the commission should allow powered vehicle service uses in the Village Commercial District because of Mann and Machine. Miller said that River Road would be an ideal location for powered vehicle service uses. Miller suggested creating size classifications for powered vehicle service to allow for such uses closer to the village. Granda said that there is a vehicle repair use in Jonesville. Clarke said that the commission will have to address Jonesville eventually. Fausel said that he can envision vehicle repair uses in the village and the Gateway, that he likes vehicle repair uses in the village because he likes to be able to walk to nearby businesses while his car is being serviced. Clarke asked Fausel about combining the definitions. Fausel said that he can see the use of separate definitions along Jericho Road and West Main Street, but that he can see the overlap in both uses that one definition would suffice. Clarke asked about allowing a single definition vehicle/powered machinery service in the Residential/Commercial District. Fausel said he wouldn't place the vehicle/powered machinery service use in the Residential/Commercial District because of the residential character of the district. Clarke clarified that such uses could be permitted as home occupations or cottage industries.

Clarke asked commission members for their thoughts on a combined definition. Granda said he had no issue with a combined definition for the uses. Mullen said the combined definition as presented with comments is fine.

6. Discussion on Nonconforming Uses and Structures

Clarke overviewed the topic, and explained what nonconforming structures are and the current regulations. Clarke explained the proposed allowances for nonconforming structures within buffers and its potential impacts. Cole asked if the Mobil station redevelopment would meet the criteria listed in the proposed regulations. Clarke said that it would since the proposed plan would increase flood storage potential and improve water quality. Miller asked for clarification on if the proposed regulations would create undue consequences and on how nonconforming the Mobil gas station site is. Clarke noted the location of the septic tank on-site. Clarke asked Mullen for a legal perspective. Mullen said the language as-is would work well.

Fausel asked if the language has been reviewed by the Conservation Commission. Clarke and Venkataraman said that the proposed language will be sent to the Conservation Commission.

Venkataraman overviewed the suggested revisions for nonconforming uses regulations. Clarke explained the proposed revisions to definitions.

7. Discussion on October 6th Meeting Agenda

Clarke provided an update to the Zoning for Affordable Housing project, noting that consultant Brandy Saxton has finished her technical review and that she will provide an update at an upcoming meeting.

Clarke noted the Gateway sewer expansion project, that water will not be provided, and that the commission should talk about the Gateway District in the near future. Granda asked for more clarification on how the commission will approach discussions about the Gateway, and for additional information about the feasibility of allowing particular uses based on rates. Clarke said that the rates were discussed at the last Water/Sewer Commission meeting, that the rates for existing customers will go down, and that someone from the Water/Sewer Commission could attend a future meeting to discuss rates. Granda said he would appreciate an explanation of the numbers from a member of the Water/Sewer Commission. Venkataraman suggested that Granda reach out to Bard Hill since Hill said at a previous Planning Commission meeting that he had spreadsheets detailing the rates, and said that from his understanding the rates would go down as more connections improve the function of the wastewater plant.

Clarke said that the commission will have to discuss wetlands, and whether the Planning and Conservation Commissions will want a town-wide wetlands inventory.

Clarke said that discussion on the coordinating subcommittee--which will coordinate among the various town boards/committees--is needed, and that another person from the Planning Commission is needed for the subcommittee.

8. Other Business, Correspondence, and Adjournment

Clarke noted the final draft of the Williams Hill Road letter in the meeting packet. Fausel said the letter was great and suggested that commission members attend the hearing.

Clarke asked the public for final comments. Rod West let the committee know that the Selectboard and Water/Sewer Commission have differing perspectives and approaches to the town planning process, that the Water/Sewer Commission's scope is not wide enough, and that the Planning Commission should look towards allowing more housing at a wider vantage point.

Clarke told the commission that it should look into the location of the existing commercial districts and the functions of the uses in these locations.

Motion by Granda, seconded by Cole to adjourn the meeting. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Ravi Venkataraman, Town Planner