

Richmond Planning Commission

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, August 21, 2013

Approved Minutes

Members Present: Mark Fausel (Chair), Bruce LaBounty (Vice-Chair), Ann Cousins, Marc Hughes, Lauck Parke, Brian Tellstone

Members Absent: Sean Foley

Others Present: Cathleen Gent (Town Planner/Staff to the DRB), Bob Allen, Wright Preston, Brad Elliott

7:06 PM Fausel called the meeting to order.

Public Comments – Bob Allen asked the Planning Commission when the board will take up the revisions to Section 6.8 of the Zoning Bylaws. He pointed out how difficult it is now for property owners in the floodplain who are required to go to the DRB. The Planning Commission and Allen discussed a number of aspects of the current and proposed bylaws, as well as the FEMA minimum standards, etc. Allen agreed that not all the FEMA minimum standards should be adopted, for instance there should not be new fill. He also said he is not certain the town has all the needed resources to implement the Community Rating System Program, although he thinks that program is a good idea. Fausel and LaBounty indicated that the Planning Commission will be deciding whether to take up the Section 6.8 revisions as the top priority for the year and that the six of the seven Planning Commission members have just been appointed. Fausel said the Planning Commission needs to study the FEMA minimum standards before moving in that direction, which is very different from the current and proposed bylaws that the Planning Commission has worked on this spring. Fausel added that there will be a public vote for whatever changes are proposed for Section 6.8 and the changes need to reflect public sentiment. Allen requested that the Planning Commission hold a public forum to get people's input on the proposed bylaw changes.

Administrative Items

Mail – Gent reviewed the mail. Cousins will review the invitation to comment for a telecommunications facility proposed at 1002 Johnnie Brook Road.

Meeting Minutes: For July August 7, 2013 – No edits were offered. Motion by Tellstone, seconded by LaBounty, to approve the minutes as amended. Voting: 4 in favor Fausel, LaBounty, Hughes, Tellstone); 0 opposed; 2 abstentions (Cousins and Parke).

Annual Work Plan Session

Gent distributed the summary sheet which tabulated the Planning Commissioners' individual rankings for priorities. Additional rankings were given by the commissioners who had not provided the rankings in advance of the meeting. The Planning Commission discussed the rankings, combined certain items, and arrived at the final list for the annual work plan priorities (in order of priority):

1. Section 6.8 – Floodplain regulations
2. Revised village zoning districts/village density/traffic in village
3. New zoning for creamery parcel
4. Revised Gateway zoning district
5. Conceptual review of town plan as basis for guiding all future efforts
6. Unified bylaws
7. Energy efficiency

The Planning Commission members agreed that it won't be possible to complete all of the priorities within one year, but they now have a plan in place.

ECOS Science To Action Project

Brad Elliott and Wright Preston joined the Planning Commission for this discussion. Elliott, Preston and the Planning Commission agreed that there is a natural resources angle related to every one of the priorities in the annual work plan. Elliott and Preston discussed the ways in which the ECOS project will be helpful in doing planning work. For instance, if there is a wildlife crossing at a certain point along Route 2, that might not be the best place for dense housing to be located. All agreed that there are deeryards in many places in Richmond and it will be difficult to avoid development in those areas. Preston said that the project is looking at a variety of habitats in the four town study area (Richmond, Jericho, Bolton, and Huntington). The next step will be for the towns to determine what are areas that should be protected. Elliott described how the mapping consultants began with existing maps and then

1 identified a number of locations where they are now examining natural resources on the ground.
2 Preston described how popular Snipe Ireland Road is for recreation – whether snow mobiling, skiing,
3 hunting etc. – and how there should be coordination between public recreation with supporting wildlife.
4 Cousins mentioned that Williston has a green belt corridor that ends at the Richmond boundary, which
5 doesn't make sense since natural resources cross between towns. Parke added that vulnerable areas
6 like floodplain, wetlands, steep slopes, wildlife habitat, etc will be examined, but that not every area is
7 vulnerable and that the town cannot control ever corner of town.
8

9 The Planning Commission reviewed the ECOS Science to Action Project questions for Planning
10 Commission priorities for natural resources. Gent will complete the form and send it to VNRC in
11 advance of the September 18th session with the Richmond Planning Commission. The group discussed
12 the fact that it will be important to have communications with the Conservation Commission about the
13 natural resources inventory project and town priorities.
14

15 Preston and Elliott left at this time.
16

17 The Planning Commission briefly discussed possible elements for Section 6.8. For the homework
18 assignment, the Planning Commission will read the current and proposed bylaws for Section 6.8. Gent
19 will also prepare a bulleted list of the FEMA minimum requirements.
20

21 **Adjournment**

22 Parke made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Cousins. So voted. The meeting adjourned at 9:30PM.
23
24

25 Respectfully submitted by Cathleen Gent, Town Planner/Staff to the DRB