

R I C H M O N D S E L E C T B O A R D
S P E C I A L H E A R I N G
D e c e m b e r 1 1 , 2 0 1 4 M I N U T E S

Members Present: Taylor Yeates; Chris Granda; Bard Hill; Ellen Kane
Absent: David Sander
Others Present: Geoffrey Urbanik, Town Manager; Clare Rock, Town Planner; Marie Thomas; Joy and Robert Reap; Jared Katz; Brad Elliott; Marshall Paulsen; Mike Stromme; Glenn Glasstetter; Luke Cady; Katie Loesel; Jason McCone-Sanders; Christy Witters; Gary Bressor; Jean Bressor; Bonny Stevens; Mike Lawlor; Pete Pochop, Green Mountain Engineering; Ann and Terry Naumann; Betsy Hardy; Mark Fausel; Tammy Schley; Tyler Merritt; Jon Kart; Rich First; and others; and Ruth Miller was present to videotape the meeting for MMCTV Channel 15.

NOTE: This meeting was originally warned to be located at Camels Hump Middle School. Inclement weather closed the school, which was then unavailable for use. Staff posted notices on the doors of the school to change the location to the Town Center Meeting Room. Notices were placed online at the town's website and Front Porch Forum as well.

Taylor Yeates called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

1. Introduction of Amendments to Gateway Zoning District

Ellen Kane explained the background behind the amendments, and pointed to the Questions and Answers which were provided to the audience and located on the town's website. Ms. Kane noted the high water rates and the need to grow the number of users on the system as one motivating factor. There were some proposed developments in the Gateway that could more fully utilize lot space if there were public water and sewer, and future growth of the Gateway and beyond could utilize public water and sewer and both grow the water system base and tax base.

Ms. Kane outlined some of the noticeable changes – maximum building footprint was increasing from 10,000 square feet to 17,000 square feet; currently there was a requirement that all roofs have pitch, but the amendment was to allow flat roofs for the largest buildings – over 10,000 square foot footprint; the aesthetic requirement of wood or brick, or the appearance of wood or brick, was being eliminated; a residential to commercial ratio was being established as 60/40 – where no ratio existed now; and some additional uses were being added to the zone.

Mr. Granda followed up and said that the reason the Gateway was not developed more was due to a poor economy, existing zoning and no public water and sewer. Since the economy is changing, there is a possibility of extending water and sewer into the Gateway district. He wanted us to have a positive discussion on whether things should change or how they should change. Real estate has always seen Richmond as a bedroom community, so having some commercial space was important.

Clare Rock, Town Planner, provided a presentation similar to that given at the Planning Commission's public hearing from November. Ms. Rock explained the rationale behind the Planning Commission's recommendations for change. Mr. Yeates opened the hearing to the public.

1 Marshall Paulsen asked how large the existing barn on the Willis property was, and Ms. Rock said
2 about 6,000 square feet in footprint.

3
4 Betsy Hardy asked what a “large square” footprint might be in the illustration, and Ms. Rock said that
5 most supermarkets are around 40,000 square feet. There were several other questions of this nature,
6 asking what size certain buildings in town were, in terms of footprint. It was noted that the Town
7 Center building was roughly 10,000 square feet in footprint.

8
9 Mr. Granda suggested putting a time limit on the meeting of 8:30pm, but the board could decide to go
10 longer if they wished. The Selectboard agreed.

11
12 Mr. Yeates proceeded to go through the amended sections of the Gateway chapter of the zoning
13 regulations. The discussion began with section 3.4.2 and the permitted and conditional uses. There
14 was a significant discussion of screening for a Business Yard, and whether to allow this use or not.
15 This included a discussion of the fifty foot buffer area and how much of that had to be landscaping.

16
17 Mark Fausel, Planning Commission chair, said that for some of this, it was designed around a potential
18 use by the State as an agricultural research station that required some outdoor storage of equipment, or
19 a Police Barracks. It was noted that at this time, the center had decided to locate at Vermont Technical
20 College.

21
22 There was additional discussion about the number of employees and increased traffic. Mr. Yeates
23 moved to section 3.4.4 and the discussion turned to access, interior requirements and how these were
24 supposed to come about without development planned across parcels. There was a discussion about
25 what particular types of businesses were showing interest in the area.

26
27 Mr. Yeates moved to section 3.4.5 and discussed storage requirements, parking in front of buildings
28 that were more than two hundred feet from the road, pitched roofing.

29
30 Don Morin said he felt buildings here should be in character with buildings in the village. He did not
31 like flat roofs and said that roof equipment needed to be screened somehow. This view was shared by
32 others.

33
34 There was a discussion about parking and where it should be placed. The placement behind or beside
35 buildings was kept for those under a 10,000 square foot footprint, but allowed in front with screening
36 on the larger buildings.

37
38 Gary Bressor was concerned that some changes were not being made that should be made. He was
39 concerned that a McDonalds could be built within the existing zoning if water and sewer are brought
40 in. He felt this was a missed opportunity to make changes to prevent this kind of development if water
41 and sewer is brought to this area.

42
43 Mr. Granda urged a slow-down of these changes. He said that the planning process felt rushed, and
44 while he appreciates the work of those involved, there hasn't been enough time to allow for review of
45 these proposed amendments.

46
47 Luke Cady asked about potential expansion of the mobile home park.

48
49 There was additional discussion on allowable uses, “small box” stores, desired development and
50 preservation goals. Several suggestions for changing the zoning were made, and noted by the

1 Selectboard. Several people urged the board to not move the amendments forward for voting. At
2 8:30, the Selectboard agreed to continue with the hearing this evening.

3
4 The Manager announced that he had been reviewing the issue of changing the hearing location at the
5 last minute with the town attorney, Mark Sperry. The conversation changed to the deadlines, and
6 statutory requirements for Australian Ballot. Mr. Sperry had commented that section 24 VSA section
7 4442 said that the Selectboard could, if they chose, move zoning amendments to a vote by Australian
8 Ballot. The Manager said that in 2012 when the large zoning measure came before the voters, the
9 town had chosen to discuss the Australian Ballot method in a special meeting. Now, the town attorney
10 says that is unnecessary. Therefore, the Selectboard was able to make changes to the amendments,
11 schedule one additional public hearing on these amendments, and move them to an Australian Ballot
12 vote in March – if they chose to do so.

13
14 Mr. Granda asked how could we bring this forward with clean support? He did not want a close vote,
15 he wanted to reflect the ideas of the town. He asked if we had time to make a political impression
16 with these amendments?

17
18 There was significant Selectboard discussion on this, the need for change, and how to proceed. Mr.
19 Yeates noted that due to the fact that there was no longer a deadline by which to act tonight, the
20 Selectboard would discuss how to proceed at their next meeting on December 15th. Mr. Yeates closed
21 the hearing.

22
23 **2. Adjourn**

24 Motion by Mr. Hill to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Granda. So voted.