
2 Richmond Planning Commission
3 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR October 7, 2020
4

Members Present: Chris Cole, Scott Nickerson, Virginia Clarke, Chris Granda, Alison Anand,
Mark Fausel, Brian Tellstone (joined at 7:30 pm)
Members Absent: Joy Reap, Jake Kornfeld,
Others Present: Ravi Venkataraman (Town Planner/Staff), Mark Hall, Marshall Paulsen,
5 Don Morin

6 **1. Welcome and troubleshooting**
7

8 Chris Cole called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm
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10 **2. Adjustments to the Agenda**
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12 Scott Nickerson said he would like to address his resignation from the Planning Commission. Cole
13 thanked him for his service, and the perspective and knowledge he brought to the Planning
14 Commission. Nickerson expressed his gratitude to Planning Commission members and wished the
15 members all the best.
16

17 **3. Public Comment for non-agenda items**
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19 Don Morin said he owned three or four properties in Richmond, including his house. Morin said that he
20 approached the DRB in 2014 to propose a four-unit building to replace the single-family dwelling at 112
21 E. Main Street, and was rejected by the DRB at the time. Morin said that he sold the property last
22 month. Morin expressed the need to increase density allowances in zoning to the commission. He said
23 the subject lot is 0.47 acres, and the neighboring property is 0.35 acres and has four units, and other
24 properties along Main Street are similar to his, concluding that the number of units under present
25 conditions do not coincide with the zoning regulations. Morin said that he is in favor of allowing more
26 density in the village. Cole said that the Town Plan calls for higher density and the commission is
27 looking into adding density along major corridors in a manner that is compatible with the existing built
28 environment. Fausel said that he recognizes that the speed in which the Planning Commission works is
29 not responsive enough and has affected the community, apologizes for it, and hopes to improve going
30 forward. Morin acknowledged the needed role of the Planning Commission and its pace of work, and
31 added that increased density allowances would lead to better buildings. Cole said that the commission
32 will have discussions later in the meeting on density allowances and bringing the community into the
33 discussion. Nickerson asked for clarification on whether the property was 112 E. Main Street or 102 E.
34 Main Street, and said that the footprints of the buildings fits well within the village.
35

36 **4. Approval of Minutes**
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38 Motion by Mark Fausel, seconded by Chris Granda, to approve the September 16, 2020 Planning
39 Commission meeting minutes. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried.
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41 **5. Review of Housing Committee applicants**
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43 Cole asked Mark Hall for brief introduction. Hall said he recently moved to Richmond, works for
44 Dealer.com, holds an MBA, is certified in project management, and manages properties in Williston.

45 He said he came to Richmond to grow family, with the intent of becoming longtime residents. Hall said
46 that with his background in business, and as a landlord, he can be an asset to the housing committee.
47 Cole asked Virginia Clarke and Fausel about the process. Clarke said that the commission
48 would recommend the applicant, and that there is only one vacancy on the Housing Committee
49 currently. Granda asked if there were other applicants. Ravi Venkataraman said there weren't,
50 that he had kept the application period open for three weeks for letters of interest, and that
51 therefore applicants had adequate time to file a letter of interest.

52

53 Motion by Granda, seconded by Clarke, to recommend to the Selectboard the appointment of Mark Hall
54 to the Housing Committee. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried.

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56 **6. Review of statement of policy goals guiding our zoning work**

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58 Clarke provided an overview of the posting on Front Porch Forum of the Planning Commission goals
59 document, and said that this would be provided in all future outreach. Clarke said that the Planning
60 Commission should reflect on the Town Plan goals and that the commission should reach out to other
61 stakeholders listed in the Town Plan to check their progress on goals. Cole concurred, and asked
62 Venkataraman if he had the list of goals the commission needed to address. Venkataraman said he did.
63 Venkataraman said that he has received positive feedback on the Front Porch Forum posting from the
64 public, that it may be good for the commission to provide regular updates like this in the future, that
65 other town boards and committees should be invited to Planning Commission meetings for input and
66 feedback. Alison Anand said that the energy section of the Town Plan evoked concern among the
67 public. Clarke asked for suggestions to disseminate the post. Fausel suggested reposting on Front
68 Porch Forum. Granda concurred, adding that it could be posted in the Times Ink. Nickerson suggested
69 posting it on the Planning Commission web page. Venkataraman asked for clarification if this was to be
70 reposted on its own or with the outreach schedule, and recommended reposting with the outreach
71 schedule so that the public would be able to act upon the Planning Commission's post. Clarke
72 concurred.

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74 **7. Invitation for residents to participate in the conversation**

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76 Clarke overviewed a draft outreach schedule she wrote. Venkataraman suggested grouping the
77 outreach groups by geography instead of existing groups. Fausel suggested language that suggests
78 that anyone interested in the conversations about the areas identified should attend. Cole said that the
79 schedule should include the opportunity for people who attended to attend again and provide comments
80 on any draft language the Planning Commission formulates. Cole recommended that the public should
81 be informed of the full process, from the input stage to implementation. Cole said that the schedule as
82 presented may be too aggressive. Anand suggested gaps in the schedule to resolve ongoing
83 discussions, and to allow people multiple opportunities to attend. Anand suggested advertising the
84 outreach schedule in various media. Fausel recommended providing a brief statement on Front Porch
85 Forum and a link to the website for the full posting. Fausel said he liked Clarke's schedule, and
86 recommended having public input at the forefront. Granda disagreed with Fausel, suggesting a proposal
87 for the public to review to stimulate discussion. Venkataraman suggested meetings in between public-
88 input focused meetings to debrief and to create discussion questions to guide the conversations. Cole
89 suggested providing images to give a concrete sense of implementation and referred to the "Zoning For
90 Great Neighborhoods" initiative. Clarke asked about the frequency of the outreach meetings. Anand
91 recommended every other meeting. Fausel concurred, and said that an introductory framework should
92 be provided. Granda had concerns about the lack of time in the schedule to process and debrief. Cole
93 said that the commission should rely upon the Town Plan for guidance and use that during the outreach
94 meetings. Venkataraman recommended connecting the Town Plan goals with concrete examples so
95 that the public understands how implementation would occur. Granda concurred. Nickerson cited Don
96 Morin's property as an example of density in the community. Cole said that the commission should
97 provide references to the public on examples of various densities and forms within Richmond.

98 Venkataraman showed the commission a draft table listing the multifamily dwellings in the village, and
99 will be sending this out to the commission in the coming days. Cole said that he, Clarke and
100 Venkataraman will work on a schedule for the commission outside the meeting. Fausel suggested
101 providing maps easily accessible. Venkataraman said he could provide maps and modify the webpage
102 accordingly. Anand suggested reviewing traffic impacts with expansions in density allowances.
103

104 **8. Developing a model for mixed use in the village by looking at the specifics of the current**
105 **Residential/Commercial District**
106

107 Clarke overviewed the document she prepared for the Planning Commission meeting, and areas
108 adjacent to the Residential/Commercial District worth consideration for rezoning. Clarke recommended
109 classifying uses to trigger an administrative site plan review requirement, and had concerns about
110 providing guidelines for the zoning administrator because the zoning administrator may not like it so.
111 Venkataraman said that the commission should think about the impact of the use and then state that the
112 use requires an administrative approval or a DRB approval, because in many cases, the difference is
113 the time the permitting takes and not necessarily the rigor of review. Cole said that the "Zoning for Great
114 Neighborhoods" document is salient and should be applied in this context. Venkataraman added that
115 the commission should not take into consideration whether the zoning administrator or he likes the
116 regulations, and instead the commission should create thorough regulations that provide the zoning
117 administrator support in their decisions and hold in court on appeal.
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119 **10 Adjournment**
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121 Motion by Nickerson, seconded by Granda to adjourn the meeting. Voting: unanimous. Motion
122 carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.
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124 Respectfully submitted by Ravi Venkataraman, Town Planner