

2 Richmond Planning Commission  
3 REGULAR Meeting  
4 UNAPPROVED MINUTES FOR July 1, 2020 MEETING  
5

---

Members Present: Chris Cole, Scott Nickerson, Alison Anand (joined at 7:10 pm), Jake Kornfeld, Brian Tellstone (joined at 7:10 pm), Chris Granda, Mark Fausel  
Members Absent: Joy Reap, Virginia Clarke  
Others Present: Ravi Venkataraman (Town Planner/Staff)

---

6

7

8 Chris Cole opened the meeting at 7:07 pm.

9

10 **2. Adjustments to the Agenda**

11

12 None

13

14 **3. Approval of Minutes**

15

16 Motion by Scott Nickerson, seconded by Mark Fausel to approve the June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 Planning  
17 Commission Meeting Minutes. Voting: 4-0 (Chris Granda abstained). Motion passed.

18

19 Motion by Granda, seconded by Nickerson to approve the June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Planning Commission  
20 Meeting Minutes. Voting: 4-0 (Fausel abstained). Motion passed.

21

22 **4. Public Comment for non-agenda items**

23

24 None

25

26 **5. Discussion on creation of Housing Advisory Committee**

27

28 Cole provided stated that this is a continued item from the previous meeting. Cole asked the Planning  
29 Commission to review of red underlined text newly added in the meeting materials. Nickerson said he  
30 liked the update to the statement of purpose because it fits the commission’s intent and promotes  
31 inclusivity.

32

33 Motion by Nickerson, seconded by Granda to recommend to the Selectboard the creation of the Town of  
34 Richmond Housing Committee with the charges outlined in the enclosure. Voting: unanimous. Motion  
35 passed.

36

37 Cole asked Ravi Venkataraman about timeline for forwarding the recommendation and charges to the  
38 Selectboard. Venkataraman said that this will be mentioned during the July 6<sup>th</sup> Selectboard meeting  
39 when he presents his proposal for a Municipal Planning Grant to help establish the housing committee,  
40 and that he expects the Selectboard to review the draft charge during the ensuing Selectboard meeting.

41

42 **5. Discussion of Village Commercial and Residential Commercial Zoning Districts**

43

44 Cole asked about the enclosed checklist in the meeting materials for this agenda item.  
45 Venkataraman said that he recommends the Planning Commission to use the checklist to guide  
46 the conversation about this topic this evening. Cole asked the commission to review the maps.

47 Fausel asked about the status of combining the Village Commercial and Residential  
48 Commercial Zoning Districts. Cole said that at this stage this was a suggestion based on  
49 Virginia Clarke's comments. Cole said that during the last meeting, the commission decided  
50 that it wanted to protect existing neighborhoods, and to increase the density up to twofold in  
51 certain parts of the Village. Venkataraman added that regarding density, he provided a number  
52 of maps indicating acreage in order to help the commission come to a decision on density.  
53 Venkataraman overviews the current zoning map that was enclosed in the meeting materials.  
54 Alison Anand asked about the location of the nursing home. Cole asked which districts allowed  
55 nursing home uses. Cole revised his question to ask if rezoning the parcel hosting the nursing  
56 home was necessary. Tellstone said that parcels should be left mixed use wherever possible  
57 and rezoning would not be necessary in this case. Cole asked about considering rezoning  
58 portions of parcels. Venkataraman said placing different portions of parcels in different zones is  
59 legal, but an annoyance for permitting and allowing uses. Cole asked about the status of the  
60 lots as agricultural, and residential. Jake Kornfeld asked if zoning affects the tax rate. Cole said  
61 that taxation would be based on the current use and structures on the property, not the most  
62 valuable use the property could hold. Fausel said that expanding allowances south of the  
63 Winooski River is practical, and that a lot of the land south of the river is conserved lands and  
64 floodplains. Cole said that Clarke suggested placing the parcel hosting the Round Church to be  
65 in its own district, possibly even a historic district. Fausel said that many of the buildings south  
66 of the river are historic. Cole asked the commission questions from the checklist, starting with  
67 the first question about purpose. Cole asked which districts should be set aside into distinct  
68 districts, and the current zones of the areas the commission would like to protect. Fausel said  
69 high density residential. Cole identified Esplanade, Church Street, Pleasant Street, Depot  
70 Street, and the residential neighborhoods on West Main Street as residential neighborhoods  
71 worth protecting. Cole asked if the residential neighborhoods on Church Street zoned  
72 agricultural should be rezoned. Fausel said that the impact of rezoning would be minimal  
73 because most of the land is conserved within a PUD. Anand said that during the Town Plan  
74 process, they discussed bringing lots into conformance via zoning. Fausel and Nickerson said  
75 that upzoning in the Tilden Avenue neighborhood was great concern to the residents. Fausel  
76 said that further discussion about upzoning with the community is needed. Granda said that  
77 upzoning would create conformity for the existing nonconforming lots, and allow for certain lots  
78 to be redeveloped to the existing character of the district. Nickerson said that a reevaluation of  
79 the high density residential district may be needed, and recommended creating a village  
80 neighborhoods district encompassing the residential districts in the village the commission  
81 wants to protect. Cole liked Nickerson's idea. Fausel said that most of the areas identified are  
82 already fully developed. Cole said that the residential neighborhoods north of Route 2 and  
83 south of I-89 are similar in character and density. All commissioners agreed. Cole asked  
84 Venkataraman to place a marker recognizing the residential areas in the village as a separate  
85 district. Fausel asked about the feasibility of extending water and sewer lines to areas north of  
86 I-89. Anand mentioned the presence of deer yards in the areas north of I-89. Cole asked about  
87 developability of those areas. Fausel asked if the commission wants to create the options for  
88 developability in areas north of I-89. Cole asked about the form of possible developments in  
89 this area, and how suburban it would look. Anand said that septic systems and steep slopes  
90 would prevent further development. Cole suggested that further discussions on the feasibility of  
91 development if upzoned and utility connections are needed. Cole and Nickerson identified four  
92 neighborhoods to protect via the village residential district. Fausel discussed the inclusion of  
93 Depot Street and Borden Street in the residential district. Venkataraman said that the large  
94 parcel at the end of Borden Street and Church Street are probably part of a PUD with most of  
95 the land protected as open space. Cole said that the commission should identify future areas of

96 growth and devise methods for responsible growth. Anand asked Venkataraman about  
97 examples in which a non-alignment between the zoning map and parcel map created issues.  
98 Venkataraman said he is not aware of issues currently, since he does not regularly issue  
99 zoning permits, but can understand the difficulty if and when such issues arise. Cole discussed  
100 establishing a plan going forward. Cole recommended providing the option for mixed use on the  
101 west side of Main Street, thus allowing mixed use on Depot Street, West Main Street, and East  
102 Main Street. Fausel discussed identifying infrastructure lines and prioritizing commercial  
103 development based on infrastructure access. Cole said that this may promote strip  
104 development, which goes against the state's initiatives. Cole asked about including residential  
105 houses across from Stone Corral Brewery south of the Winooski River in the conceptual village  
106 residential neighborhoods district. Fausel recommended mixed use for that area. Nickerson  
107 agreed but called for respect to the Round Church. Fausel recommended integrating more  
108 form-based zoning qualities to control the aesthetics of the neighborhood. Cole agreed.  
109 Venkataraman said that the commission should be cautious about aesthetic and compatibility  
110 standards, as a DRB is not equipped to retain the historic quality of an area. Fausel agreed that  
111 the DRB and Zoning Administrator's determinations cannot rest on interpretation. Cole said that  
112 form-based zoning are more commonly a feature in large cities rather than small towns.  
113 Venkataraman said that there are small towns that do have form-based zoning, but none come  
114 to mind. Fausel cited Waitsfield, Warren and Stowe with form-based zoning.

115

## 116 **6. Timeline and logistics of public outreach**

117

118 Cole asked about the goals of the public outreach. Fausel said the purpose is a general heads  
119 up via Front Porch Forum and other media, as well as specific people in the core village area.  
120 Cole said that the commission would be ready for that after the next meeting with further  
121 clarification on neighborhoods and density. Cole recommended sending out a general update  
122 on the Planning Commission's work. Fausel recommended sending information out earlier to  
123 allow the community to be more involved in the discussion. Nickerson said sharing a proposed  
124 map would be helpful. Granda recommended establishing an overall vision, because a general  
125 message may warrant fear and a vision focuses discussion. Cole agreed with Fausel,  
126 Nickerson and Granda to include the community in the process but with a concrete  
127 understanding of the process established first. Cole said he wants both agenda items on the  
128 next meeting agenda.

129

## 130 **7. Other Business, Correspondence, and Adjournment**

131

132 Cole recommended discussing the Planning Commission work plan that was discussed during the  
133 February 19, 2020 Planning Commission meeting during the next meeting.

134

135 Motion by Tellstone, seconded by Fausel to adjourn the meeting. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried.  
136 The meeting adjourned at 9:09 pm.

137

138 Respectfully submitted by Ravi Venkataraman, Town Planner