

2 Richmond Planning Commission
3 REGULAR Meeting
4 UNAPPROVED MINUTES FOR July 15, 2020 MEETING
5

Members Present: Chris Cole, Scott Nickerson, Brian Tellstone, Mark Fausel, Joy Reap,
Virginia Clarke, Alison Anand (joined at 7:57 pm)
Members Absent: Chris Granda, Jake Kornfeld,
Others Present: Ravi Venkataraman (Town Planner/Staff)

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8 Chris Cole opened the meeting at 7:02 pm.
9

10 **2. Adjustments to the Agenda**

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12 Ravi Venkataraman requested time to talk about the Housing Committee during Other Business.
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14 **3. Approval of Minutes**

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16 Motion by Virginia Clarke, seconded by Brian Tellstone, to approve the July 1st. 2020 Planning
17 Commission meeting minutes. Voting: 5-1 (Clarke abstained). Motion carried
18

19 Virginia Clarke asked about procedure, and how the minutes were passed in the last meeting without a
20 quorum to approve the meeting minutes. Venkataraman said that according to the Planning
21 Commission Rules of Procedure, a quorum was not needed to approve items, only a simple majority.
22 Clarke said that that should be further discussed because it does not follow Robert’s Rules of Order and
23 may be problematic.
24

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

26
27 Joy Reap discussed an issue she recently had with her driveway—that she had to change the
28 configuration of the driveway to meet the town’s zoning regulations, but in return makes the driveway
29 more dangerous. Clarke cited town Zoning Regulations Section 6.2 regarding driveway standards. Cole
30 asked Venkataraman if a discussion of driveway standards could be included in the next meeting
31 agenda. Reap said that this was an issue recently brought up by other property owners as well. Cole
32 asked Venkataraman for driveway standards in nearby municipalities. Clarke added more information
33 about previous discussions on driveway standards, stating that the current set of regulations was a
34 compromise. Cole said that this issue is not only an emergency access issue but also an erosion issue.
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36 **5. Resolution to pursue Municipal Planning Grant**

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38 Venkataraman provided an overview to the Planning Commission, stating that the Selectboard voted to
39 approve the enclosed resolution, and that the grant would support the housing committee to create
40 affordable housing regulations.
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42 Motion by Mark Fausel, seconded by Scott Nickerson, to adopt the resolution for the FY21 Planning
43 Grant. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried.
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45 **6. Discussion on creating requirements for property owners claiming exemption per 24 V.S.A.**
46 **§4413**

47

48 Venkataraman provided a brief overview about the court order from January 2017, which specifies this
49 requirement by the town to change its regulations regarding uses listed as exceptions under 24 V.S.A.
50 4413. Clarke asked about how the new regulations clarify requirements for farm structures.
51 Venkataraman pointed to sections of the zoning regulations that may be construed as misleading, and
52 referred to zoning regulations from other towns that specify the parameters of applicability in the
53 applicability section. Cole asked about the court case. Venkataraman said the plaintiff erected a farm
54 structure without notifying the town, the town discovered this and encouraged compliance, the plaintiff
55 did not comply, the town issued a zoning violation, and the town and the plaintiff settled before the court
56 could hear the appeal. Cole asked for further clarification about the nature of the violation. Clarke said
57 that the proposed regulations would require landowners building farm structures to supply written
58 notification and a sketch. Venkataraman said that under 24 V.S.A. 4413, landowners are required to
59 provide the town written notification and a sketch, but do not need a zoning permit prior to construction.
60 Clarke said that the zoning regulations should then include the state's requirements. Fausel asked about
61 inserting the entire reference to 24 V.S.A. 4413 in the zoning regulations. Cole said that the proposal as
62 presented specifies the requirements without requiring the landowner to reference 24 V.S.A. 4413
63 separately. Clarke asked if the proposed zoning regulations solves the issue at hand, and recommended
64 the removal of the term "exempted". Cole concurred. Cole and Clarke recommended the revision to
65 include the following language "In accordance with 24 V.S.A. 4413, the following uses do not require a
66 Zoning Permit prior to land development". Nickerson noted that the proposal has two subsection "c"s.
67 Clarke recommended making the sentence structure parallel. Cole recommended the following language:
68 "In accordance with 24 V.S.A. 4413, the following uses are partially exempted from the local zoning
69 regulations". Clarke asked about clarification about "partially exempted uses". Venkataraman said that
70 those uses require permits. Clarke recommended removal of the term "partially exempted" from the
71 proposed zoning regulations. Clarke recommended revisions and review of a revised document during
72 the next meeting. Nickerson asked about the term "exempted", since it is not used in 24 V.S.A. 4413.
73 Venkataraman said he used that term to categorize different uses, as other towns have in their zoning
74 regulations. Cole asked about the difference between uses under subsections b and c. Venkataraman said
75 that the uses under subsection c are subject to Flood Hazard Overlay District regulations. Nickerson
76 recommended moving the second subsection c up, so that readers would understand the overall permit
77 requirements for all "partially exempted" uses. Cole agreed. Fausel recommended keeping the sections
78 listed for removal in the proposed zoning regulations.

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80 **7. Discussion of possible new zoning districts within the Richmond Village**

81

82 Cole provided a summary of discussions from the previous Planning Commission meeting.
83 Clarke asked about the creation of the conceptual neighborhoods residential district. Fausel
84 said that the neighborhoods district would address concerns specific to residents in the village
85—who have concerns different from residents in other parts of the high-density residential
86 district. Fausel said that the neighborhoods district would not include portions of Depot Street
87 and Railroad Street, which already have mixed and commercial uses. Fausel said that the
88 character of the residential areas in the village is different from the character of the high-density
89 residential district north of I-89, and that residential development in areas north of I-89 is still
90 feasible. Fausel said that parcels along Jericho Road have the possibility of mixed use and a
91 higher density. Clarke asked if the key difference in the distinction between high-density
92 residential and village neighborhoods is density allowances. Fausel affirmed. Clarke asked
93 about density allowances. Cole said the commission have not discussed that yet and were still
94 determining what to include in the districts. Clarke asked if the village commercial areas should
95 be called "mixed" and include a residential component. Fausel said that that is the intent of

96 areas along major roadways. Nickerson said that the current term is a placeholder, with uses
97 being further defined at a later date. Fausel suggested extending the commercial district up
98 Jericho Road to include existing commercial uses in the area. Clarke recommended a
99 discussion with property owners on the changes to the district. Reap asked if mixed use implies
100 additional density and commercial uses on the same lot. Fausel affirmed. Clarke suggested
101 incremental upzoning. Fausel said the mixed use district should emphasize dynamic
102 commercial uses and form-based zoning to ensure compatibility. Clarke said she would like
103 more input from the DRB on ensuring neighborhood compatibility. Reap asked about
104 conversions from residences to office uses in the agricultural/residential district. Venkataraman
105 said that converting a residence to an office use of less than 2,500 in the district is allowed, as
106 long as the property owner has Conditional Use and Site Plan Review approval. Clarke said the
107 office uses would be allowed in the High Density Residential District. Fausel talked about
108 discussions about areas south of Winooski River during the previous Planning Commission
109 meeting. Venkataraman asked for clarification on which areas the Planning Commission
110 wanted to categorize as mixed use. Fausel said that the commission wanted to make sure
111 protections were in place for the four corners area but allowances for mixed uses across from
112 the existing commercial district and up Thompson Road and Cochran Road. Clarke mentioned
113 Gary Bressor's approved land development. Nickerson asked if PUDs are allowed more units
114 than the base density. Fausel said duplexes are an allowed use in the agricultural/residential
115 district. Fausel said that Thompson Road and Cochran Road appears ideal for increased
116 density because of the availability of water and sewer connections, and its proximity to the
117 village. Clarke asked about including portions of the Farr's property in the mixed use area. Cole
118 said this was discussed during the last meeting, and the commissioners agreed with that idea.
119 Reap asked to include a property on East Main Street into consideration for higher density.
120 Clarke said that further discussions are necessary to determine a reasonable density for
121 upzoning. Clarke asked about the extent of the sewer service area. Nickerson said that the
122 sewer and water service area map was included in the packet for the previous meeting.
123 Nickerson asked about ways to protect the historic Round Church area and historic overlay
124 districts. Venkataraman said that establishing a historic district is the best way to maintain
125 historic structures or a historic district, but if the commission does not want to establish a
126 historic overlay district at this point, leaving it in the agricultural/residential district would be the
127 best option to preserve the structure. Clarke asked if the sewer serves the town highway
128 garage and if the sewer could serve portions of the Farr property. Cole said that extending the
129 sewer line would be feasible. Cole said further discussions with property owners are needed.
130 Cole asked about converting sections of Cochran Road into mixed use. Fausel affirmed,
131 because of its walkability. Reap said a sidewalk would need to be installed. Clarke said that
132 sidewalks should be made a requirement for development in this mixed use district. Nickerson
133 asked if the commission was satisfied with the proposed maps. Cole identified Jericho Road as
134 a discussion point. Clarke said that the commission should finalize the map and numbers for
135 density allowances, and invite property owners for discussion of the proposed zoning. Reap
136 asked about floor-based use restrictions. Cole and Clarke said further discussion on that is
137 needed. Clarke said that allowances for multi-family dwellings will need to be added. Reap
138 agreed. Fausel asked how the Planning Commission is going to reach out to property owners.
139 Cole said that should be discussed after the next meeting. Cole asked about finalizing the
140 northern portion of the village, suggesting that Jericho Road should remain in the
141 neighborhoods residential district. Fausel said that the property owners should be given more
142 options, via the mixed use district designation. Clarke recommended creating three proposed
143 maps to share with village residents. Venkataraman said that when the commission is ready,
144 he would send out a mailing to property owners with the proposed maps, qualities of the

145 districts, and meeting information. Cole suggested include all properties fronting Jericho Road
146 in the village mixed district. Fausel requested from Venkataraman a current zoning map.
147 Nickerson said all the maps from previous meetings are on the Town of Richmond website.
148 Nickerson said that in the Town Plan maps, Jonesville had a unique designation with higher
149 density. Venkataraman said that unique designation as a node is also mentioned in the failed
150 zoning. Reap said that consideration should be made for the Gateway District, where water and
151 sewer will be available in the near future.

152

153 **8. Other Business**

154

155 Venkataraman talked about the Housing Committee and that he will be collecting letters of
156 interest until July 29th. Cole said that having Planning Commission members on the Housing
157 Committee will be critical because the Housing Committee is working on zoning regulations,
158 and maintaining lines of communication will be key. Clarke said she will be sending
159 Venkataraman a letter of interest. Reap asked about how frequently the committee would meet.
160 Venkataraman said he expects the committee to meet once a month for the time being, but
161 expects more meetings depending on if the town receives the Municipal Planning Grant and the
162 availability of the future members.

163

164 **9. Review List of Future Priorities**

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166 Cole had requested Venkataraman to include the list of future priorities for this meeting. Cole asked the
167 commission members to send Venkataraman their respective top three list of priorities. Cole overviewed
168 the Downtown Designation program and its potential financial benefits for the town. Fausel said that
169 certain costs to the Downtown Designation program gave the Planning Commission reservations about
170 the designation in the past. Cole asked Venkataraman for an overview of the designation program when
171 he has done the needed research.

172

173 **Correspondence, and Adjournment**

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175 Clarke asked Venkataraman when the next meeting will be. Venkataraman said the next meeting will
176 be on August 5th. Clark requested that Venkataraman send out draft zoning maps for the Planning
177 Commission to consider in the meantime.

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180 Motion by Reap, seconded by Tellstone to adjourn the meeting. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried.
181 The meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

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183 Respectfully submitted by Ravi Venkataraman, Town Planner