

2 Richmond Planning Commission
3 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR August 5, 2020
4

Members Present: Chris Cole, Scott Nickerson, Brian Tellstone, Mark Fausel, Joy Reap (left at 8:48 pm), Virginia Clarke, Alison Anand (joined at 7:30 pm), Chris Granda, Jake Kornfeld,

Members Absent:

Others Present: Ravi Venkataraman (Town Planner/Staff), Connie van Eeghen, John Rankin, Marshall Paulsen, Zachary Maia

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7 Chris Cole opened the meeting at 7:03 pm.

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9 **2. Adjustments to the Agenda**

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11 None

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13 **3. Approval of Minutes**

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15 Motion by Mark Fausel, seconded by Virginia Clarke to approve the June 3rd, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes. Voting: unanimous. Motion passed.

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18 Motion by Clarke, seconded by Brian Tellstone to approve the June 17th, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes. Voting: unanimous. Motion passed

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21 Motion by Tellstone, seconded by Clarke to approve the July 15th, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes. Voting: unanimous. Motion passed.

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

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26 Cole invited public to introduce themselves. Connie van Eeghen, John Rankin, Marshall Paulsen and Zachary Maia respectively introduced themselves and tell the Planning Commission of their items of interest. Ravi Venkataraman told the Planning Commission that he had enclosed an email from the public in response to the discussions about driveway standards during its previous meeting.

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32 **5. Discussion of possible new zoning districts within the Richmond Village**

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34 Cole provided an overview of the Planning Commissions current tasks of reviewing the zoning within Richmond Village. Clarke summarized the zoning revisions the Planning Commission has accomplished so far, areas of town the Planning Commission is currently considering and aspects—including the protection of existing residential districts, the ability to create mixed-use developments along major corridors, the preservation of historic resources, and the ability to develop higher density housing to facilitate the expansion of affordable housing--the Planning Commission is looking to integrate into the new zoning districts. Clarke said that the Planning Commission is currently considering allowing six units per acre in the mixed use district the commission would newly create along major corridors, and not changing the density allowances in the village residential neighborhoods district the commission would newly create to encompass existing residential areas within the village. Cole opened the discussion for public comment. Marshall Paulsen expressed interest in ongoing discussions on rezoning parts of Richmond Village, and said that the commission should take into consideration of sound and

45 parking impacts of the increased allowances for development. Cole asked Clarke clarification on the
46 density allowances for the proposed village residential neighborhoods district. Clarke said that density
47 allowances and allowable uses are under review, in order to protect the existing neighborhoods. John
48 Rankin said that he took note of the proposed rezoning of the parcels surrounding his to mixed use, and
49 will be looking out for the finalized density allowances for the proposed districts. Rankin also suggested
50 to the Planning Commission to take into consideration the wants of property owners into the rezoning.
51 Cole asked Clarke about when the east side of Main Street was rezoned and what that portion of town
52 used to be zoned. Clarke said this may have occurred 20 years ago and that that part of town used to
53 be part of the agricultural/residential district. Cole concluded that zoning is a process that occurs with
54 time organically. Clarke said that the allowances of the rezoning 20 years ago provided flexibility to
55 adapt existing buildings to fit shifting trends in uses. Connie van Eeghen asked how the Planning
56 Commission assesses demand for commercial and residential uses. Cole said that the state tracks
57 housing needs using a variety of data points, Chittenden County has had a dire need for affordable
58 housing in the last 20 years, and public input on density allowances guide the Planning Commission's
59 work. Clarke said that the work of the Housing Commission would also guide the Planning
60 Commission's work. Scott Nickerson asked Venkataraman about conducting a buildout analysis.
61 Venkataraman said that he has been in touch with CCRPC about conducting a buildout analysis, that
62 such a buildout analysis would take time to do, and that CCRPC will be sending out a demo of software
63 that could provide the tools to conduct a buildout analysis. Cole said that such a tool could benefit the
64 commission. Cole asked Venkataraman and Clarke on how they would like to proceed. Clarke asked
65 the commission if it would like to call the proposed district the mixed use district and how flexible this
66 mixed use district would be. Cole said that the nature of the proposed district would depend on the
67 activities the commission envisions within the district, and that he is not as concerned with the precise
68 name of the district yet. Cole said that one aspect the commission will need to straighten out is the
69 compatibility of future structures and uses on the existing built environment. Alison Anand asked if the
70 commission wanted to maintain a certain ratio on commercial and residential uses in order to make
71 future developments more compatible with existing development. Clarke suggested allowing multiple
72 uses, multiple structures, and condominiums in the proposed mixed use district. Joy Reap said that she
73 hopes that the commission makes the proposed mixed use district flexible and without the requirement
74 for commercial uses. Clarke said that such a restriction was in the Jolina Court District regulations due
75 to its proximity to the downtown area. Clarke discussed allowable uses in the proposed mixed use
76 district. Venkataraman suggested that the Planning Commission look at the list of uses currently in the
77 zoning regulations that he compiled for one of the previous Planning Commission meetings. Cole
78 recommended that the list be included in the next meeting packet. Clarke discussed revising the PUD
79 regulations.

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81 **6. Review of Housing Committee membership applications**

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83 Cole overviewed the membership requirements for the Housing Committee and asked if any
84 other Planning Commission members were interested in serving on the Housing Committee.
85 Anand expressed interest, but said that Mark Fausel would make an excellent contribution to
86 the committee. Fausel expressed indifference on whether he or Anand serves, but is interested
87 in serving on the Housing Committee. Clarke asked if there is a limit on the number of public at-
88 large members. Venkataraman said that there was no limit on the number of public at-large
89 members on the committee, and that the seats earmarked for Richmond boards and
90 committees were not restricted and were merely suggestive. Cole asked the applicants present
91 to speak on behalf of their applications. Zachary Maia introduced himself and provided
92 background on his role as a planner for Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and
93 as a recent Richmond transplant trying to find affordable housing in town. Connie van Eeghen
94 introduced herself, and provided her background as a Richmond resident and a public health

95 researcher. Cole went over all the letters of interest. Anand said that the committee has a pool
96 of excellent applicants to choose from, making recommendations will be a hard choice, and that
97 she appreciates the work and thought put in so far by the applicants. Cole concurred, said he
98 appreciated the diverse candidate pool, and asked Clarke for advice on reviewing applications.
99 Clarke said that this was a unique instance of reviewing commission applications, was unsure
100 on how to proceed, and would like to nominate all applicants to the Housing Committee. Chris
101 Granda advised that it would be ungainly to recommend all the applicants to the Selectboard,
102 and recommended having only one liaison from the Planning Commission on the Housing
103 Committee and appointing primary members and alternate members. Cole said he liked both of
104 Granda's suggestions, as it would promote wider participation. Fausel said that he expects
105 alternates to be called upon after the initial phase of the Housing Committee, and that he would
106 like to serve as an alternate. Venkataraman said that, generally, alternate members are written
107 into boards involved in current planning, not for long-range planning boards like the Housing
108 Committee, and that alternates have not been written into the Housing Committee charge. Cole
109 said that the charter can be adjusted with the Planning Commission's recommendations, and
110 that he wanted to encourage participation especially if there are people avidly interested in
111 volunteering time to serve on the committee. Cole recommended Zach Maia and Connie van
112 Eeghen to serve on Housing committee. The other Planning Commission members agreed with
113 Cole. Cole asked the Planning Commission if it had suggestions for alternate members.
114 Granda suggested Jackie Pichette to serve as an alternate because she had no background or
115 experience in housing issues compared to the rest of the applicants. Cole agreed with Granda.
116 Clarke asked how the alternates would serve on the Housing Committee, and if they would
117 serve when a Housing Committee member was absent. Cole affirmed. Venkataraman said that
118 that was how DRB alternates served—by attending in place of an absent member—and
119 therefore would have full voting power. Cole recommends submitting all names for
120 consideration to the Selectboard as at-large members, save Mark Fausel and Jackie Pichette
121 serve as alternate members, and that the charter be amended accordingly.

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123 Motion by Clarke, seconded by Granda, to recommend: the appointment of Virginia Clarke,
124 Wright Cronin, Connie van Eeghen, Carole Furr, Sarah Heim, Miranda Lescaze, Zachary Maia,
125 Andrew Mannix, and Ruth Miller as full-time members of the Town of Richmond Housing
126 Committee; the appointment of Mark Fausel, and Jackie Pichette as alternate members of the
127 Town of Richmond Housing Committee; and the modification of the Town of Richmond Housing
128 Committee Charge to include the provision of two alternate members in the membership
129 section. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried.

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131 **7. Discussion on creating requirements for property owners claiming exemption per 24 V.S.A.**
132 **§4413**
133 3.

134 Clarke provided background on the issue and the documents she included in the packet. Venkataraman
135 provided clarification on forestry/silviculture structure, that the town can request notice prior to the
136 building of any forestry/silviculture structure but cannot enforce setback requirements. Cole suggested
137 utilizing cross references instead of lifting language from state statute directly, so that the zoning
138 regulations do not become obsolete when state statute is amended. Clarke said that this issue arose
139 because the applicant did not refer to the state statute and that she would rather amend the zoning
140 regulations for the sake of clarity. Venkataraman said that based on the current trends, he expects any
141 future revisions to be minor that would expand protections for such uses. Cole asked about the next
142 steps in the process. Venkataraman suggested that the Planning Commission come back to this item in
143 the next meeting with a cleaned up document, so that the commission could potentially warn the
144 amendment for a public hearing. Nickerson said he appreciates the clean up of the zoning regulations

145 on these uses.

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147 **8. Discussion of received requests for zoning changes**

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149 Cole provided an overview of the agenda item. Fausel provided background on the Cochrans' requests,
150 stating that they wanted a wider range of developability for their property, and the Cochrans' property
151 was unique. Cole said that he would like time during the next agenda to talk to Farris and Cochrans.

152 Anand agreed with Cole. Anand added that the issue could be generalized more because others may
153 share the same views. Clarke said that the Farris' request is salient to the ongoing discussions the

154 commission has been having. Cole said that having a conversation with the Farris would be helpful for
155 the commission, and also knowing the types of soils would be helpful. Fausel asked about reaching out

156 to Dan Noyes and to stakeholders in the Commercial District. Anand agreed, and also suggested

157 discussions with the Peet farm. Nickerson agreed and also suggested conversations with the Round

158 Church and the Richmond Historical Society. Cole suggested focusing on one conversation at a time,

159 starting with the Farris and then reaching out to other stakeholders to talk further about their interests as
160 well as means to create more affordable housing in town.

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162 **9. Other Business, Correspondence, and Adjournment**

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164 Motion by Tellstone, seconded by Granda to adjourn the meeting. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried.

165 The meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

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167 Respectfully submitted by Ravi Venkataraman, Town Planner