

Richmond Planning Commission
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR October 5, 2022

Members Present:	Virginia Clarke, Lisa Miller, Mark Fausel, Chris Cole, Chris Granda, Dan Mullen, Alison Anand,
Members Absent:	Joy Reap,
Others Present:	Ravi Venkataraman (Town Planner/Staff), MMCTV

1. Welcome and troubleshooting

Virginia Clarke called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

2. Review of the agenda and adjustments to the agenda

Clarke reviewed the meeting agenda.

3. Public Comment for non-agenda items

None

4. Approval of Minutes

The September 21, 2022 and September 26, 2022 meeting minutes were accepted into the record as written.

5. Finalize and vote on the Gateway Residential/Commercial District Tangential Amendments (Multifamily Dwelling Standards, Definitions, Site Plan Review, Multiple Uses on Single Lots, Non-Developable portions, Parking)

Clarke reviewed the latest changes to the draft regulations, including grocery store uses. Dan Mullen asked about the size of the Richmond Market. Clarke said that it is about 10,000 square feet. Chris Cole asked if the Town has the authority to limit the amount of curb cuts along Route 2. Ravi Venkataraman said that from his perspective, it seems doable. Cole recommended that the draft regulations be reviewed by the town attorney. Clarke and Venkataraman said that all of the draft regulations will be reviewed by the town attorney after the commission finalizes the draft regulations.

Chris Granda highlighted the usage of “sight impervious” in proposed Section 6.13 and its lack of clarity. Clarke said that that section will be reviewed later during the meeting.

Cole asked if the limits on the placement of parking would not allow for scenarios similar to the Crate Escape currently. Venkataraman said yes, that the intent is to prevent cars from pulling in and out directly onto the road and to improve the bicycle/pedestrian accessibility of the corridor, and that for that property, the current configuration can be kept as-is as long as no modifications or expansions are made.

Clarke reviewed the changes to the site plan review applicability, and the multi-family housing

development standards. Clarke and Granda discussed why the term “sight-impervious” is being used. Venkataraman said he was not sure why that term is being used. Granda suggested using language that is more understandable by the public. Clarke suggested revising “sight impervious” with “screened with vegetation so it cannot be seen from the road”. Cole suggested the revision to be “screened with vegetation” as this captures the intent more clearly. Lisa Miller noted that the numbering needs to be corrected also.

Clarke reviewed the proposed definitions, including the grocery store uses definitions. Granda informed the commission of the harms of formula retail stores to communities. Alison Anand asked why Courtyards have to be rectangular, and said that Courtyards could be in other shapes. Clarke and Venkataraman said that “rectangular” can be removed.

Clarke reviewed the draft parking table. Cole asked about the parking minimums for brewery uses. Clarke said that brewery uses have no maximum parking allowance, and that the property owner/proprietor will have to determine parking needs accordingly. Venkataraman said that the parking minimum for breweries is focused on the production aspect, and that for accessory uses, the applicant would have to comply with the minimum parking requirements for the primary use and the accessory use based on the type of accessory use. Anand expressed concerns about the minimum parking requirements for dwellings being too low. Granda concurred, adding concerns about basing parking allocations based on the number of employees. Venkataraman said that for industrial uses, it is difficult to capture parking needs because the amount of space versus the amount of employees is variable, and that the number of employees for industrial uses are typically listed in state water/wastewater permits.

Clarke reviewed past discussions on non-developable portions on lots, and the rationale for changes to this section. Mark Fausel expressed reservations about changing the regulations on a town-wide basis instead of only the districts currently being discussed, noting that when this regulation was initially added there was much discussion. Clarke questioned the reasoning for having the current regulation, and whether it benefits property owners. Cole expressed reservations about changing this regulation as it could alter the landscape in the outlying areas of town, and asked Venkataraman if this would increase density outside of the village. Venkataraman said no, and that striking through the first sentence would not change the minimum lot size for the Agricultural/Residential District. Mullen said that the entire section could be deleted, because most of the section is already stated in other parts of the regulations or state statute. Mullen adds that considering housing needs, having the 10,000-square-foot developable land requirement is an unnecessary hurdle. Fausel said that this regulation was introduced to curb density, and that he has concerns about making this change without public input and the lack of notice given to the public on the current work. Anand said that having the list of undevelopable areas is helpful, and that she doesn't see the harm in keeping the regulations as-is. Clarke said that the changes are direly necessary because it conflicts with the Village Downtown District, and it would prevent in many cases the creation of lots that would meet the minimum lot size requirement for the proposed Gateway Residential/Commercial District and Village Residential/Commercial District. Mullen asked Clarke about the processes going forward. Clarke overviewed the public hearing processes going forward with the Planning Commission and the Selectboard. Mullen noted that the process provides the public time and space to give feedback, and voiced support for removing the first sentence in the Section 2.5.2. Fausel said that the commission has not done enough outreach to residents within the Agricultural/Residential District, that the community has not been nearly as engaged in this work plan compared to past zoning amendment work plans, and that more outreach and input is needed.

Cole asked Venkataraman about how public hearings are warned. Venkataraman said that he follows

statutory requirements—posting the hearing notice in three locations and publishing the notice 15 days in advance of the hearing—and that for the Village Residential/Commercial District amendments, he sent out the hearing notice and an overview of the proposed changes to all the properties considered for rezoning. Cole said that the commission provides adequate notice. Cole added that he would like to remove the first sentence from the non-developable portions regulations because he does not see the benefit of the provision to the community, but also is not sure about the ramifications of removing the sentence. Granda said that he would support more input on this topic from the public. Cole asked if the proposed language to exempt districts that have minimum lot sizes of 10,000 square feet would obviate any conflicts in the regulations. Clarke said yes. Cole said that he would be more comfortable with that revision to be more transparent with the amendment process, and that he would like more input from the residents within the Agricultural/Residential District.

Clarke said that regarding outreach, if the commission would like more outreach and would like more of the public to provide input, members should reach out to the community directly to participate in the process.

Motion by Cole, seconded by Fausel, put forward the 9/29/22 version of the proposed revision to Section 2.5.2 (Revision to change the first sentence of Section 2.5.2 to “Each Lot within districts that allow for greater than a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet must contain at least one contiguous 10,000 square foot area.”) Voting: 5-2 (Yea: Cole, Fausel, Anand, Miller, and Granda; Nay: Clarke, and Mullen). Motion carried.

Motion by Miller, seconded by Cole, to hold a public hearing on November 2, 2022 on the proposed amendments to the Richmond Zoning Regulations Sections 2.5.2, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.4, 3.5.1, 3.5.2, 3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.7.1, 3.7.2, 3.8.1, 3.8.2, 3.9.1, 3.9.2, 3.10.1, 3.10.2, 5.5, 6.1.2, 6.13, 7, and Appendix A1 (Town Zoning District Map) as amended during the October 5, 2022 meeting. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried.

Clarke said that public hearings for all the proposed amendments will occur on October 19th and November 2nd, and the public will have the option of discussing both sets of amendments during both meetings. Fausel asked if the public hearings will be in person. Venkataraman said that he sent out the hearing notice for the Village Residential/Commercial District regulations as a hybrid meeting and will do the same for the Gateway Residential/Commercial District regulations.

7. Other Business, Correspondence, and Adjournment

Motion by Fausel, seconded by Granda, to adjourn the meeting. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Ravi Venkataraman, Town Planner