

Richmond Planning Commission
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FOR November 2, 2022

Members Present:	Virginia Clarke, Lisa Miller, Chris Cole, Chris Granda, Joy Reap, Alison Anand, Dan Mullen, Mark Fausel,
Members Absent:	
Others Present:	Ravi Venkataraman (Town Planner/Staff), MMCTV, Allen Knowles, Jeff Forward, Matt Parisi, Meg Freebern, Peggy Zugaro, Matt Parisi, Connie Van Eeghen, Betsy Hardy, Jacob ?, Tom Carpenter, Linda Parent, Ruth Miller, Ian Bender, Alexis Latino, Gary Bressor, Fran Thomas, Amy (?), Debbie Krug-Mangipudi

1. Welcome and troubleshooting

Virginia Clarke called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

2. Review of the agenda and adjustments to the agenda

Clarke reviewed the meeting agenda.

3. Public Comment for non-agenda items

Tom Carpenter asked which attendees are Planning Commission members. Clarke introduced the members of the Planning Commission to the public.

4. Approval of Minutes

The October 19, 2022 meeting minutes were accepted into the record as written.

5. Public Hearing: Gateway Residential/Commercial District and its tangential elements and; 6. Public Hearing: Village Residential/Commercial District and its tangential elements (Continued from October 19, 2022 meeting)

Motion by Dan Mullen, seconded by Chris Cole, to open the Gateway Residential/Commercial District and reopen the Village Residential/Commercial District public hearings. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried.

Clarke reviewed the proposed Gateway Residential/Commercial District zoning map. Clarke reviewed the purpose of the Gateway Residential/Commercial District regulations. Linda Parent asked which structures are considered historic structures in the Gateway area. Clarke identified a barn. Ravi Venkataraman reviewed the criteria for eligibility for adaptive reuse.

Clarke reviewed the list of permitted uses. Jeff Forward asked which permitted uses would be required to get an Act 250 permit. Venkataraman said that Act 250 depends on the size of the development, not the use itself, and that Act 250 may place restrictions on the use based on the context, the quality and the

intensity of the use. Matt Parisi said that the regulations could be clearer on allowances for two primary structures. Clarke added that considering that the district allows for duplexes and what constitutes a duplex can be flexible, the commission may want to consider allowances for two single-family dwellings on a lot. Gary Bressor supported Parisi's comment on allowances for multiple single-family dwellings on a lot, that in his experience in development buyers are interested in single-family dwellings, and that requiring the dwelling units to be connected on properties that can host duplexes leads to undesirable designs. Clarke said that the commission has not delved deep enough on this topic. Alison Anand said she is finding difficulty with requiring subdivisions on properties that can host multiple dwellings. Parisi said that considering the commission is changing the zoning regulations, changes to the allowances for multiple principal structures on a lot should be considered, and that on properties with two houses, the houses would have to be sold at the same time. Clarke said that the commission is looking to reduce barriers to create new housing, and that requiring subdivision or conditional use review is a regulatory barrier that impedes the development of new housing.

Clarke reviewed the list of conditional uses, including village-scale grocery stores. Bressor said the commission should reconsider allowances for hotel uses in the Gateway area because the Gateway area is small and a hotel would affect the scenic entry into the village. Anand asked if the percentage of fresh food required for grocery store uses is realistic. Venkataraman said that the requirement for fresh food came from guidance resources on regulating formula retail stores. Chris Granda said that the percentage requirement is to set a bar for business owners. Forward recommended not allowing grocery store uses in the Gateway area because he does not see the utility of allowing such uses and because he does not want additional grocery store uses to detract from the existing grocery store business. Forward asked about the definition of pharmacies. Clarke said that the commission allowed grocery store uses in the Gateway area because of the housing allowances and the benefit of having a grocery store for current and future residents in the area. Clarke said that the current zoning regulations has a definition for pharmacy, that based on this definition a chain pharmacy would be able to operate, but that the chain pharmacy would not be able to sell food. Forward said that the allowances for pharmacies is a way to allow retail establishments in the Gateway area.

Lisa Miller asked about the zoning for the Borden Street development. Clarke said that the Borden Street development is currently in the Commercial District, and that it may belong in the neighborhoods district which may require discussion at a later date.

Clarke reviewed the dimensional requirements. Forward asked for clarification on the building footprint limits under the hypothetical that a 17,000 square-foot pharmacy could be allowed. Clarke clarified that the pharmacy could be allowed if it didn't sell food. Venkataraman clarified that the building footprint is limited, not the floor area, and that theoretically, a two-story building with a 17,000 square-foot building footprint and 34,000-square-foot floor area could be allowed. Forward recommended that the definition of pharmacy be reviewed and revised. Clarke said that chain pharmacies typically sell pre-packaged food, and that the commission will review the definition and allowances for pharmacies. Cole asked Forward if he opposes chain pharmacies in the village. Forward said that he would be less opposed to it in the village, and that retail in the Gateway compete with the businesses in the village and add traffic. Cole said that if the definition for pharmacies became more restrictive in the village, then the development of a pharmacy would not be likely, but that he will reconsider the definitions and allowances for pharmacies.

Carpenter asked if the schools would be able to handle the planned increases to housing. Venkataraman said yes. Clarke added that the water and wastewater systems have the capacity for additional housing

units.

Clarke reviewed the district-specific development standards. Debbie Krug-Mangipudi asked about pedestrian connectivity between the village and the park and ride. Clarke said that those plans are in the works currently. Forward recommended requirements for level 2 EV charging and universal design. Clarke said that EV charging requirements are in the multi-family housing standards. Clarke said that universal design requirements are building code, and that zoning does not include building code-based requirements.

Clarke reviewed the multi-family housing standards. Krug-Mangipudi asked if these standards will be applicable in the Village. Clarke said yes, and that it will be applied town-wide.

Clarke reviewed the proposed definitions. Forward asked in the chat about retail cannabis. Clarke said that the town had voted down retail cannabis, but that the commission will need to discuss regulations for cannabis cultivation, warehousing and distribution. Cole asked about permitting for cannabis. Clarke said that the state permits cannabis-related activities and that municipalities are deciding on whether to create allowances. Venkataraman said that municipalities will have to create allowances, that currently cannabis activities other than retail falls under whatever uses best fit the cannabis activity, and that cannabis production in Richmond would fall under light manufacturing by definition.

Clarke reviewed proposed changes to multiple uses on lots. Clarke reviewed the proposed changes to site plan review applicability. Clarke reviewed proposed changes to the parking table.

Clarke opened the floor to general comments. Ruth Miller overviewed the Borden Street neighborhood, its demographics, and affordable housing, and called for the development of affordable housing in Richmond. Forward recommended that the commission consider the Borden Street neighborhood and allowances to increase housing within the Borden Street neighborhood. Venkataraman explained that when Borden Street was initially developed, the regulations allowed for a higher density than the current regulations, and that even if the property were to be rezoned right now, additional units would not be possible. Clarke said based on past conversations on the village neighborhoods and development of affordable housing in general, the development of Borden Street is exceptional, and that more discussions on the neighborhood is needed. Forward asked if the area at the end of Railroad Street were to be rezoned, could the new grocery store be developed and could more housing units be added. Clarke said that the new grocery store would not be allowed. Venkataraman said that additional units would not be allowed because Borden Street currently has 16 units on about two acres.

Krug-Mangipudi asked about the height limit. Venkataraman said that the height limit town-wide is 35 feet. Krug-Mangipudi asked about accessory dwelling unit allowances for multifamily dwellings. Venkataraman said that currently state statute only allows for accessory dwelling units for single-family dwellings.

Parisi discussed form-based code.

Cole asked Venkataraman to research regulations allowing multiple buildings hosting dwellings on a lot. Venkataraman said that allowing multiple structures on a lot is recommended by the state per the Enabling Better Places guide, but that he does not know if other towns allow this. Cole asked Venkataraman reasons why the Town wouldn't allow this. Venkataraman said in the current context, no; and that as long as the plans depict the location of the buildings, utilities, and right-of-way, it would be similar to permitting an

accessory structure or an accessory dwelling by the Zoning Administrator. Cole asked if the permitting requirements and review process would be similar to the requirements and process for duplexes. Venkataraman said that it would be the same as the review process for duplexes and for single-family houses with accessory dwelling units. Cole questioned size limitations on accessory dwelling units. Venkataraman said that the best practice has been to follow statutory language for accessory dwelling units. Venkataraman said that regarding owner-occupancy requirements for accessory dwelling units, Clarke has found nearby towns that do not have an owner-occupancy requirement and that the housing consultant said that owner-occupancy requirements may not be in line with fair-housing laws.

Parisi overviewed detached cottage allowances in Winooski, and suggested creating options for developers to develop accessory dwelling units and detached cottages. Parisi said that from his understanding both houses would have to be sold simultaneously for the property to sell.

Betsy Hardy asked about accessory dwelling unit allowances. Venkataraman reviewed the regulations for accessory dwelling units.

Motion by Granda, seconded by Fausel, to continue the public hearings for the Gateway Residential/Commercial and Village Residential/Commercial Districts to the November 16, 2022 meeting. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried.

7. Other Business, Correspondence, and Adjournment

Venkataraman said that Williston has adopted their form-based code, and the code is viewable on <https://mytaftcorners.com/>.

Motion by Fausel, seconded by Granda, to adjourn the meeting. Voting: unanimous. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Ravi Venkataraman, Town Planner