



TOWN OF OCCOQUAN
Town Hall – 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125
MEETING DATE: 2019-03-26

MEETING TIME: 6:30 PM

Present: Ann Kisling, Jenn Mathis, Eliot Perkins, Ryan Somma

Absent: Daryl Hawkins

1. Call to Order

The Planning Commission Public Hearing was called to order by Eliot Perkins on 2019-03-26, at 6:34 p.m.

Secretary for Meeting

Ryan Somma took minutes for the meeting.

2. Citizen Comments

There were no citizens comments.

3. Approval of Minutes of February 20, 2019 and March 5, 2019.

Ryan Somma moved to approve the Planning Commission meeting minutes of 2019-02-20 and 2019-03-05 with the correction of Chris Kiely's name. Ann Kisling seconded the motion. The motion carried.

3. Kiely Court Site Plan Revision

Chris Coon summarized that the revision was necessary after Zoning Administrator Ned Marshall had calculated the building height of being within a foot above the maximum height allowed. The site plan was revised to lower the building a foot to bring it within the code. Ryan Somma noted the new plan was recommended for approval by staff.

Jenn Mathis asked staff for confirmation that the building height was the only revision in the site plan. Chris Coon confirmed this was the case.

Ryan Somma moved to have the Kiely Court Site Plan Revision approved and presented to Town Council for approval. Jenn Mathis seconded. The motion carried by poll vote unanimously.

5. Planning Commission Priorities Update

Beautification, Town Entrances, Streetscaping

Eliot Perkins said the Town had reached out to three landscaping companies for quotes. One proposal came back at 20% of the cost of new plants to install the plants as opposed to a normal estimate of 80%. There would be an attempt to have this finalized at the next Town Council meeting, setting the 3rd or 4th week of April for planting. He had a cost for clearing the Town entrance and will get a cost to plant grass. The Mayor will be asking for volunteers to help generally at the entrance and with fence repairs. They were working with the property owner to get documented permission to work on the area. Eliot Perkins explained to citizens in attendance about efforts to beautify Town.

Eliot Perkins brought up the future direction of beautification. He said that people were not happy with the current Town entrance signs, and he was talking with the Mayor to begin the process of updating them. The VDOT-owned signs will take time, but the other side of the entrance is not VDOT-owned. He believes that Vulcan Quarry could be a great partner, having previously built the sign at Regional Park. Members of the Planning Commission expressed agreement with this plan.

Eliot Perkins said that the Mayor was working with grants to get rain barrels on Mill Street. These would be smaller barrels with flowers on top and more attractive than standard barrels. The idea would be to place them through town in strategic places. They would be working with property owners to connect them with gutters.

Ann Kisling asked if other towns were using these. Eliot Perkins said he would research this and that he was concerned about attractiveness of the barrels and their maintenance. Chris Coon said they would also need to review the barrel dimensions due to small sidewalks in Town. Jenn Mathis was also concerned about maintenance.

Eliot Perkins asked if it would be okay for the Commission to get Bonny at Heather Hill Nursery a card signed by everyone and Town Council. Jenn Mathis said we could use new card shop in Town with an illustration of Occoquan on the card. Everyone agreed.

Parking and Traffic

Eliot Perkins said the Town was in the same place as previously in the budget. There would be \$5,000 in budget if passed. The CIP also includes restriping, and there would be a need to address the width of the parking spaces to make them wider. This will cost eight spaces, and the Planning Commission would need to discuss at the next meeting. Chris Coon said he will reach out to Town Engineer for standard parking space sizes and find a happy medium size.

Jenn Mathis said she was curious to know about the possibility of angling parking on Washington Street to prevent people driving wrong way up the street.

Chris Coon said it may be possible to address signage before end of fiscal year.

Strategic Relationship Building

Jenn Mathis reported scheduling a meeting with representatives of Prince William County, Chris Price, Deputy County Executive, and Rebecca Horner, Planning Director, for May 8th, to discuss relations between Occoquan and PWC, how to be more coordinated, and what opportunities we are missing by not working more closely together. On the Fairfax County side, she noted a sports tourism task force that goes out globally to look for opportunities to bring sports to the area. Additionally, she noted a news article about the landfill in Fairfax County potentially being the future location of an

indoor ski resort that will lead into Occoquan Park. She said that we have an interest in this being in our neighborhood and that she will reach out to people mentioned in article for more information.

Eliot Perkins said such a resort would have synergy with local kayaking and a potential brewery moving in behind the workhouse.

CIP

Eliot Perkins said there was \$5,000 for the Community Planning Project. Street and Curb Striping was proposed in FY2020. There was \$10,000 for stormwater management that could possibly increase to \$15,000. The Town pulled out of PWC stormwater management in mid 1990s, and it would cost millions to get back into the program. This was a goal in the CIP, but not affordable.

Jenn Mathis said she was surprised to see in the discussion of maintenance that the Town is not consciously putting maintenance into the Town Dock this year. She expressed concern that the Town is making a big problem bigger by not addressing it. She suggested there were interim steps the Town could take, such as to stop the feeding of birds on the docks to partially mitigate the issue.

Eliot Perkins said the Town is proposing adding a part-time maintenance person who could help with additional maintenance items. Chris Coon noted the budget had now condensed everything into parks & facilities maintenance as opposed to separate funds for each which allows for more flexibility. The dock is included in that.

Jenn Mathis asked about the process for brainstorming things the Town could be doing. Chris Coon answered to bring it up as residents at Town Council meetings or to bring it up as a Planning Commission issue for Eliot Perkins to bring up to Town Council. Eliot Perkins noted that everything the Planning Commission has set as a priority is getting done. Jenn Mathis noted that this falls back to beautification efforts, and asked if there is an opportunity for a spring spruce-up with Town volunteers. Eliot Perkins said there was an email going out on Thursday that could be used to get volunteers as a base. Ann Kisling suggested the Town could start a "Fund a Board" program like previous "Fund a Brick" programs or offer newspaper mentions for donations. Chris Coon suggested a possible plaque with names on it. Eliot Perkins said the Commission could talk about fund-raising and volunteers at the next meeting.

Ann Kisling requested an update on loose bricks in Town. Chris Coon said they would start marking them this week or next so Bucky would know which ones to fix.

Eliot Perkins brought up that Jenn Mathis had previously talked about finding an easy way for residents to report maintenance issues. Chris Coon recommended the contact information on the website. Eliot Perkins asked if the Town could put this information in the newsletter.

Jenn Mathis asked about the process for sign enforcement, and how residents could get updates on items they report and know if things are progressing. Chris Coon said the staff brings the Zoning Administrator in for code enforcement, but staff do not reach out to update the person reporting. Jenn Mathis asked if it was possible to get an acknowledgement to submission. She did not get a response, so she doesn't know if things are progressing on items reported. Chris Coon said staff didn't have bandwidth to give detailed updates due to the extensive nature of the process. Jenn Mathis asked if were possible to get an FAQ form response. Eliot Perkins asked if staff could at least respond with

explanation of the process and set expectations. Chris Coon said he would rather reply personally instead of sending a standard FAQ.

Jenn Mathis expressed concern that residents don't know that things are complaint-driven, and that people want a closer touch with their local government. There are ways technology can create a better experience for residents while also taking work off staff.

Chris Coon said he will work on this when the budget settles down.

6. Chair/Town Council Report

Eliot Perkins said there were good discussions in the Town Council about what the budget priorities should be. Planning Commission recommendations are not among controversial topics. The proposed budget \$7,000 increase in landscaping is non-controversial.

At the next Planning Commission meeting, Eliot Perkins said there should be discussion about changes in the code with regards to height. There was a need for legal language as barriers to prevent sub-optimal development, and a need to tighten up the language to have clear reasons to deny variances. This initiative needs to come from Planning Commission.

Eliot Perkins said there would be a meeting in the near-term to discuss the Survey on Stormwater management in Town. PWC did thorough evaluation on stormwater to inform planning.

Concerning the budget, Eliot Perkins said there were four main items. First an increase in maintenance. Second, an increase in staff, such as more police officers, providing staff health insurance, and additional maintenance help. Third, CIP dollars have been tied to craft show dollars in the past, meaning if there was a year where both shows get rained out then there would be no money for the CIP; therefore, the CIP needs to be part of the general fund. Finally, the last three budgets have resulted in deficits and the Town has pulled money from the craft show to pay the deficit. These are the core drivers of increases in budget. He recommend Commission members advocate for things they feel strongly about at Town Council meeting.

Jenn Mathis asked when the March 5th changes to Home Occupancy Certificate would be reflected online. Chris Coon said the website would be updated as soon as he had time to do it and added that Town needed to coordinate with current businesses to have them reapply, and this would happen as soon as possible.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Eliot Perkins
Chair, Planning Commission

Submitted by Ryan Somma, Planning Commission Secretary