



**TOWN OF OCCOQUAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION**  
Town Hall - 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125

**MEETING DATE: March 22, 2022**  
**MEETING TIME: 6:30 PM**

**Present:** Chairperson Eliot Perkins, Commissioners Darryl Hawkins, Ralph Newell, Ryan Somma

**Absent:** Commissioner Ann Kisling

**Town Staff:** Kirstyn Jovanovich, Town Manager; Bruce Reese, Town Engineer (remote)

**1. Call to Order**

The Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman Perkins on 2022-03-22, at 6:33 p.m.

**2. Citizen Comments**

There were no comments.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**a. February 23, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Somma motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Newell seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**4. Action**

**a. Public Hearing on Council Zoning Text Amendments to Bring the Town Code into Conformance with DEQ's Recommendations for Implementing the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act**

Mr. Reece explained that the Town of Occoquan is required by the state to implement this ordinance. The DEQ strives to review the Town's implementation every five years to ensure code, comprehensive plan, and site inspections are up to standards. It has been 10 years since DEQ last reviewed the Town. There was a review in July 2020, where they recommended Comprehensive Plan updates, which were passed last year. The DEQ reviewed sites within Occoquan and the Town passed the review. DEQ recommended minor updates to the code to refer to the state code wherever possible so the Town's code will update when state updates. Most of the review ensured code was in compliance with the state. There were no changes Mr. Reece would consider substantial.

Chairperson Perkins opened the public hearing at 6:38pm.

There were no citizen comments.

Commissioner Newell moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Somma seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

## **5. Action**

### **a. Request to make a Recommendation to Town Council on Zoning Text Amendments to Bring the Town Code into Conformance with DEQ's Recommendations for Implementing the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act**

Commissioner Newell moved to recommend approval of the attached ordinance as presented. Commissioner Somma seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

## **6. Presentation**

### **a. Presentation from John Emery, CEO, Alpine-X**

John Emery, CEO of Alpine-X and Jim Calder CFO of Alpine-X made a presentation to the Planning Commission on the Fairfax Peak indoor ski resort planned for construction in Occoquan Regional Park.

Chairperson Perkins noted there are highly substantial developments in the local area coming soon with Fairfax Peak and Woodbridge Town Center. Local concerns over the projects include environmental issues and traffic issues. It is vital to start thinking about these projects early to prepare for them.

Mayor Porta addressed the Planning Commission and welcomed the Alpine-X representatives. He noted the Planning Commission led by Chairperson Perkins was hard working and that Chairperson Perkins is an advocate for proactive positive planning for developments. He said that the future of Occoquan is toward the east, and not the West, with new Woodbridge and other developments occurring.

John Emery presented a slide show to the Planning Commission on the Fairfax Peak project. This is Alpine-X's first project. He had a role in developing Great Wolf resorts including Great Wolf Lodge. Fairfax Peak will have a hotel, with guests staying overnight and they will want to go places during their stay to eat and visit. The resort is built to be much more affordable than outdoor ski lodges and is built to be where people live for economy of time. Shorter trips to the resort mean a lower carbon footprint. The facility also provides access to underserved communities for snow sports in PWC and Fairfax and is designed to make everyone feel welcome. With no ticket required to get in, visitors may come see the facility without going skiing. Because snow sports are not for everyone, the facility is designed to provide a multitude of experiences including tubing and rock-climbing. There are over 100 snowdomes worldwide. Fairfax Peak will provide a meeting space during the week that's closer to home. The facility will provide options for beginners and Olympic-level training. Being open year-round spreads demand out, keeps the crowds down, and helps manage traffic. The facility will be more affordable than other ski resorts. The facility expects to work with Occoquan by directing people to other local attractions when their own facilities are over-booked. He noted the diversity in Alpine-X's management team, saying the hospitality business is a leader in diversity that reflects the whole community.

Mr. Emery said that because their mission is to help people have better outdoor experiences, and not replace them, environmental sustainability is important. They can create significant solar power, and their commitment to Fairfax County is that the snowdome will be carbon neutral. The anticipated total traffic is less than half of a Wegman's grocery store. They will allow visitors to check in at any time of the day rather than specific times to let them plan to avoid traffic. He provided a rough site plan and reviewed the amenities. They will have outdoor tubing on a synthetic surface for year-round availability. There will be no event center, stages, or concerts to frustrate local residents. They plan to be connected to the existing kayaking, biking, and walking trails along waterfront. The development will let people experience the area even if they don't want to experience the dome. He provided an overview of the timeline with a potential 2026 opening.

Chairperson Perkins asked about local transportation, such as biking and scooters to connect with local amenities like the Woodbridge Town Center.

Mr. Emery said that not everyone comes and goes in the same place to the resort. The idea is to spread demand out and where people ingress and egress. Their business model is to make the facility as low impact to traffic as possible. The county will also likely make improvements to industrial roads around the landfill.

Chairperson Perkins said he was hoping to connect these areas with water taxis, electric bikes, buses.

Mr. Emery said the local area currently has amtrack and the metro. He said that resorts are used to shuttling to improve access and reduce parking and traffic. He believed the connections will all come. That some venues will want to be more connected than others and that will develop.

Commissioner Newell asked about guests staying two or three days, and if the facility will it connect to the local community.

Mr. Emery said the connection to Occoquan will be via walking paths or bike paths. There are also shuttles to the golf course Laurel Hill and paths to Lorton Workhouse. Resort businesses use shuttles to take visitors everywhere.

Commissioner Somma noted there are several Title I public schools near Occoquan, where children from low-income families make up a significant portion of the enrollment. He asked about opportunities for those students to use the facility.

Mr. Emery said there will be programs for such children and that it will be at Alpine-X's cost. This will include food and beverage for the students. They are working with the Shared Winter Foundation, which provides grants to promote health and well-being of youths through winter sports. He wants to bring future Olympians from PWC and that requires allowing students to attend the facility regularly to train. They plan to provide inclusive programs for groups and family-time. They intend to make kids feel like they fit in.

Commissioner Somma said he was impressed with the way Alpine-X had addressed environmental concerns raised by the Audubon Society but had not seen anything addressing light pollution the facility might produce. Ski resorts like Liberty Lodge produce a great deal of light pollution with outdoor flood lights.

Mr. Emery said there will be zero windows in the ski dome to conserve energy. If Fairfax Peak loses power, they won't lose snow for two to three days.

Chairperson Perkins said the Alpine-X team has a good amount of local presence in the area. He said that it's good to hear that it's important for them to connect to the community. He thinks there are a whole host of areas where the Town and Alpine-X can coordinate.

Mr. Emery said that while Fairfax oversees the development's progress, we should not let the county lines divide us.

Chairperson Perkins said the public may submit questions to the Commission that we will forward to Alpine-X.

## **5. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

*Minutes Prepared by Ryan Somma, Planning Commission Secretary*