



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

**MEETING DATE: 2023-02-28**  
**MEETING TIME: 6:30 PM**

**Present:** Chairperson Eliot Perkins, Commissioners Darryl Hawkins, Ann Kisling, Ralph Newell, Ryan Somma, Don Wood

**Town Staff:** Matt Whitmoyer, Management Fellow; Adam Lynn, Interim Town Manager

**1. Call to Order**

The Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman Perkins on 2023-02-28, at 6:32 p.m.

**2. Citizen Comments**

None.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**a. January 24, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

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

**4. Discussion Items**

**a. Town Council Meeting Update**

- **Poplar Lane and Commerce Street ZMA**

Mr. Whitmoyer said the Town Council passed the ordinance unanimously and the zoning map is updated.

- **Myrtle Place CPA and ZMA**

Mr. Whitmoyer said the Town Council has tabled this item until their next meeting. The Town Council will be focused on the budget this month. Dredging was completed at beginning of February. Chairperson Perkins said it had been 25 to 30 years since the last dredging.

**b. Berkley Riverwalk Planning Update**

- **Issues, Opportunities, and Vision Summary**

Mr. Whitmoyer said there was a January Vision Workshop and the group did a site visit. They put together a summary of the workshop and solicited feedback from attendees on it. They will meet with the Planning Commission sometime in April with a draft of the Master Plan.

Chairperson Perkins said the Berkley Group felt there was good attendance for the Vision Workshop. Chairperson Perkins spoke highly of the Group's performance thus far.

**c. Potential New Membership**

- **Former Councilmember Love**

Chairperson Perkins said Bob Love has a great deal of experience in Project Management and his background could benefit Commission. The Chair wants to have different backgrounds on the Commission to lead different efforts and would like to add Love to the Commission. The next step will be the Town Council appointing him.

**d. Planning Commission Priorities Update**

- **North Woodbridge Town Center**

Chairperson Perkins said there has been very little movement on this project, and it is not time yet to have a meeting with the developer.

- **Alpine X**

Chairperson Perkins said he will be meeting in March with CEO and CFO about this project.

- **Belmont Bay Expansion Project**

Chairperson Perkins said it is not an appropriate time to meet with the developers on this project.

**5. Work Session**

**a. 2024 Strategic Planning Workshop**

Chairperson Perkins said that this workshop is about the Planning Commission's next actions. He is very proud of the Planning Commission's accomplishments such as Entrances to Town, which is moving to next phase of signage, the Mill at Occoquan, and timed parking. The next big phase will include a parking garage, pressing forward with the Riverwalk, and the Riverkeepers efforts to add muscle filters in the river.

Mr. Whitmoyer gave a presentation on the goals of the workshop. The end goal is to have a list of plans and projects for the next year and beyond. The Three Guiding Lights of these projects are Goals, Rules, and Reality. For example, goals may include a Community Plan to give to Town Council and Town Staff to define where the Town should be moving in the next years. Rules would include setting a framework and standards for how to act. An example of Reality is the Town trying to implement solar power, but everything is in the shade. Mr. Whitmoyer reviewed the five themes of Comprehensive Plan.

Citing the Action Items in the Comprehensive Plan, Chairperson Perkins noted #15 Creating a Downtown in general and Mill Street specifically that's attractive and functional. Commissioner Wood suggested park benches with history lessons or local notables painted by local artists. The murals at the Mill at Occoquan currently in place are excellent. Having Occoquan-specific benches where visitors can

sit and have a unique experience would be ideal. Chairperson Perkins said it was like the Love sign in Mill Park and having artists make that unique.

Commissioner Kisling suggested self-watering planters. Chairperson Perkins agreed and said this would address the Reality aspect, since we have limited Town Staff.

Commissioner Somma said parents in Town are excited about the possibility of a playground. Chairperson Perkins said the Town Council is currently discussing how to best proceed with that. He recommended reaching out to Town Council about the playground.

Commissioner Wood suggested allowing unleashed dogs once a month in the park for a few hours. Chairperson Perkins said this is a great idea, but need to work around the reality that the Town can't close the park. He noted other citizens have reached out concerning this idea as well.

Chairperson Perkins brought up the topic of business development. Other communities are proactively pursuing the kinds of businesses they want in their municipalities. Occoquan is a trail head for hiking, biking, and kayaking. He would like to have an outfitter in Town. He noted there are too many part-time business owners currently in Town. Commissioner Kisling said visitors are surprised at how many businesses are closed on Mondays.

Commissioner Newell said that, on the mobility side of things, he would like the Town to be more bike-friendly. He does not like having to drive his bike out of Town to start a ride. Chairperson Perkins said that, despite having two bike racks, it is not obvious where to park bikes in Town. The new park on Minnieville Road has a bike pump and tool station available to visitors. He would like to see Occoquan designated as a Trail Town and promote OCQ as a Trail Head. Commissioner Newell said the Workhouse has designated trails that are connecting everywhere.

Commissioner Wood said that, with the Town located South of DC, we are available to people making long-distance trips on I-95. People who have electric vehicles need to charge. By installing charging stations, people who have range-anxiety can stop in Town, have dinner and charge. Chairperson Perkins said the parking garage is natural fit for this and the existing parking lot is a natural place for this. It puts Occoquan on the map. Commissioner Wood said there could be signs on I-95, the Town would appear in apps and visitors could reserve spots.

Chairperson Perkins said that with the muscles for filtering and water testing in the river, there is a big opportunity for education. There could be programs to bring kids from Occoquan Elementary for presentations by Riverkeepers and educate locals about cleanliness of water. The Planning Commission can put together a plan for such a program to take to Town Council.

Mr. Whitmoyer gave an overview of Regional Coordination efforts. Chairperson Perkins said Representative Spanberger invited Town Council members to an event she held at the Library of Congress on Community Funding. Having Spanberger and Connolly across the river gives us a better chance for funding on bigger projects. Riverwalks in Occoquan and across the river are Regional Coordination efforts. Commissioner Newell asked about county has economic development programs and if they were available to the Town. Chairperson Perkins said we are one of the four Towns in PWC so their economic development folks won't formally help the Town but can provide informal advice.

Chairperson Perkins asked members to continue considering this and asked Town Staff to summarize the discussion.

**6. Adjournment**

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

*Minutes Prepared by Ryan Somma, Planning Commission Secretary*