



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

MEETING DATE: 2024-01-23
MEETING TIME: 6:30 PM

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

Town Staff: Matt Whitmoyer, Deputy Town Manager; Adam Linn, Town Manager

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm

2. Citizen Comments

None

3. Election of Officers

a. Nominations and the Election of Officers for Calendar Year 2024

- **Chairperson**

Commissioner Newell nominated Eliot Perkins. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

- **Vice-Chairperson**

Chairperson Perkins nominated Commissioner Newell. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

- **Secretary**

Chairperson Perkins nominated Ryan Somma. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. December 12, 2023 Meeting Minutes

b. January 4, 2024 Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

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

5. Reports

a. Town Council Report

b. Deputy Town Manager Report

c. Architectural Review Board Report

Mr. Linn provided an update on the Mill at Occoquan. The developer intends to demolish this winter and needs to coordinate with the County on permitting. Chairperson Perkins said the developer has not provided paperwork to the County. Mr. Whitmoyer said the developer has until the year 2027 to build. There was a discussion about timelines, deadlines, and what is involved in the demolition.

Commissioner Love asked who is responsible for clearing the sidewalks and maintenance of the buildings. Mr. Linn said the owner is responsible. Commissioner Love asked who is responsible for enforcing the maintenance. Mr. Linn said the sidewalk is the Town's responsibility to enforce and the building is the PWC building inspector's. Complaints can be filed through neighborhood services. The Town can't file complaints. Commissioner Love said private citizens can. Mr. Linn said that if Town complains it can be seen as showing disfavor.

Commissioner Wood asked how important the osprey nest is to the timeline. Chairperson Perkins said it is very important, and once they lay an egg no construction can happen.

Chairperson Perkins gave the Town Council report. He said the Council will be focused on the budget. There is \$520,000 left of the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLRF). Mr. Whitmoyer said the SLRF needs to be appropriated by December 2024 and expended by December 2026. Things like the Riverwalk won't fit into this timeline, so the Town is looking to move money into budget shortfalls and capital improvement.

Chairperson Perkins said the Riverwalk Committee has met twice. There will be more updates as they are currently working through the process.

Mr. Whitmoyer presented the new Town Seal. Chairperson Perkins said the new seal has the museum, the river, and Mamie Davis Park with a nautical band around it. Mr. Whitmoyer said this seal will be presented on all Town documents going forward. Chairperson Perkins said this is an administrative seal, not to be confused with the marketing seal.

6. Work Session

a. Green Infrastructure Work Group

Commissioner Newell gave an overview of the Green Infrastructure report. He said the vision is to find collaboration between citizens, the town, visitors, and government. The efforts are not focused on new construction as it doesn't apply to Occoquan, but education and engagement for existing land use. He said there is lots of overlap with other work group efforts.

Chairperson Perkins asked him to elaborate on reducing water waste and solid waste. Commissioner Newell said this applies to water use in the home, new toilets, solid waste is recycling, and incentivizing low-impact restaurant packaging. Commissioner Love said to clarify that this is not government mandated, they are talking about education. Commissioner Newell said this is correct that it is about education. Chairperson Perkins said that it is possible to incentivize, educate, and get businesses into it. The Town could even have a program to award a certificate as a marketing tool. Commissioner Love said the Town can't dictate greenspace. Chairperson Perkins said, for example, the Mill at Occoquan is required to provide a certain amount of greenspace. The Town could focus on the Riverwalk and the Occoquan Greenway. The Town doesn't have much space to turn into a park, but there is the possibility of space across the river. Commissioner Newell said accessibility to Furnace Park was a possibility. Chairperson Perkins said that in urban settings, we must be creative about creating greenspace.

Commissioner Wood continued the presentation. He said that it was important to include the river as part of our infrastructure and institute continuous water quality monitoring. He said George Mason Science center could be a collaborator, as it would be great to have a lab there to process water samples instead of driving to National Harbor. Commissioner Love asked if the river is clean, why have continuous monitoring. Commissioner Wood said the Riverkeepers reports are weekly, and result vary. Chairperson Perkins said the Riverkeepers can show the health of the river and show trends. Important for extending recreational activity involving the river. There was a discussion about the feasibility, cost, and effectiveness of continuous water monitoring.

Commissioner Wood gave a summary of the remainder of the document. Chairperson Perkins said this document is for everyone to contribute and asked members to provide feedback.

b. Strategic Planning Next Steps

Chair Perkins summarized the areas of the coming report and asked for any final comments from Commissioners on the various work groups' subject areas. Commissioner Love iterated that Occoquan does not have jurisdiction across the river concerning parking. Mr. Love and Chair Perkins then agreed that Economic Development would be included in the Planning Commission's recommendations.

Mr. Whitmoyer said the next step is to have proposals to Town Council in April. This will come from prioritized action items. Goals for the February meeting are to have final reports with action items prioritized by February 20th. He will combine these into a single product. February-March will be the final drafting, with a March meeting to finalize report.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:29pm

Minutes Prepared by Commissioner Somma, Planning Commission Secretary

Final Minutes edited by Deputy Town Manager, Matt Whitmoyer, Planning Commission Liaison, pursuant to February 6th edits by Planning Commission.