



**OCCOQUAN TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Work Session Minutes**  
**Town Hall - 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125**  
**Tuesday, January 19, 2016**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**Present:** Mayor Liz Quist, Vice Mayor Pat Sivigny, Tyler Brown, and J. Matthew Dawson, Jim Drakes and Joe McGuire  
Staff: Kirstyn Jovanovich, Town Manager; Bruce Reese, Town Engineer; Ned Marshall, Zoning Administrator

**Absent:** None.

### **1. Call to Order**

Mayor Quist called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

### **2. Regular Items**

#### **A. 401 Mill Street (Jennings' Mill) Property Development Presentation**

Nader Abed, Partners Real Estate, stated that he has a client interested in purchasing the property known as Jennings' Mill located along Mill Street. He has been working with Harry Ervin, Ervin Engineering, regarding potential development of the site. He stated that they have evaluated using the current steel structure as part of the development, which is believed to be at 40 to 44 feet in height from the base level. He stated that the current height limitation of 35 feet does not justify the cost of the property and the construction costs. As a result, they would like to go up more floors; closer to 65' in order to make the development worth it for the investors, as well as the community.

He stated that the additional 20+ feet in height would not make a large difference in lines of sight since the property exists at the end of the street. He also stated that it would be important for them to work with the Architectural Review Board to design a project that would be consistent with the character of the community.

Mr. Abed stated that they would propose including a couple restaurants and at least three or four small businesses; would like to keep it the way it is now, focusing on bringing in small 'mom and pop' shops. The proposed development would include 100 residential units. He stated they also discussed the potential of having a restaurant on the top level overlooking the park and water. At this point, he stated that they have not placed a contract on the property as they would need something like this approved by the Council. Mr. Abed also mentioned providing parking for the living units. He stated that they want to keep as much as they can that currently exists on the property, including creating a façade of the old Lyric Theater, in order to display the Town's history and keeping in the character of the Town. He discussed including a Riverwalk along the rear of the property and expanding the front sidewalk to accommodate outside seating.

The most important aspect to them is the parking and the traffic impact. He stated that the residential units are going to be luxury condos.

Mayor Quist stated that she understood that they need to make it worth their client's while. Mr. Abed commented that they want to make it worth it for the town, as well.

Mayor Quist asked if the areas that he would like the Council to provide assistance on in the Town Code is on parking and height restrictions. Mr. Abed said yes. They are looking to include as many units as possible, while still keeping the development functional.

Mr. Dawson asked if there was room for two levels of parking below grade. Mr. Abed stated potentially; that would be something else to look at. Mr. Dawson stated that he does not want to budge on parking requirements in town; the facility needs to have adequate parking. Mr. McGuire concurred and stated he didn't want to permit something that was going to impact parking for current restaurants and businesses. Mr. Drakes stated that the size of the unit/number of units was surprising and inquired as to whether or not the market demand existed for that type of luxury unit. Mr. Abed stated that they have not completed all of the research yet as they do not currently own the property. He did say there is a strong market demand for that type of unit in the area.

Mr. Abed stated he just wanted the opportunity to discuss this prospect with Council and obtain guidance on issues or concerns that the Council might have with the potential project. He stated that with the structure that is there, anything that is placed there will bring in more traffic and impact parking and traffic within town.

Mayor Quist clarified that the 65 feet that he is suggesting as the height for the structure is from street level (6 stories from street level), not from the deck. Mayor Quist asked if the current structure was 60 feet from the deck. Mr. Ervin stated that the current structure that is on the site is 44 feet from the deck. Mayor Quist requested confirmation on the height of the current steel structure.

Mr. Drakes stated that he would have concerns about visibility of the Mill House Museum if a 65 foot structure is built next to the museum. Mr. Abed stated that if the sidewalk is wide enough, the building could be set back further to allow the Museum to be seen. He also stated that there could be a way to incorporate the Museum or connect the Museum to the property so as to highlight the Museum and history of the town. Mayor Quist encouraged incorporating the façade of the Lyric Theater into the project's design.

The Town Council requested a better display of what six floors would look like in the town's current environment. Council requested line of sight displays from Mill Street, the Occoquan River, and the hill. also stated that they would not want to approve anything that would stress the current parking situation and would actually be

interested in relieving that situation. Mr. Abed said there could be a potential for a second level of parking; however, there is concern about how many stairs would be needed to get into first level businesses. Council suggested adding a second level of parking just on the back of the lot or on the west end of the lot.

Mr. Abed said they will go back and take a look at the parking situation and see if they can address those concerns; however, he asked that Council consider providing additional height. Council requested additional displays to illustrate the heights in the town's current landscape.

#### **B. Floodplain Management Ordinance and Associated Subdivision Amendment**

Bruce Reese, Town Engineer, stated that DCR is working with FEMA to ensure that localities are in compliance with FEMA's regulations as it relates to the National Flood Insurance Program. The Town underwent a Community Assistance Visit this past summer, and as a result, the Town is required to revise its Floodplain Ordinance. The major changes are:

- Adding definitions that come out of the state regulations;
- Adding State Code references;
- Updating new definitions;
- Accommodating new FIRM map;
- Adding any development within the floodplain will require a special exception;
- Adding official Floodplain Administrator and duties, as well as option to bring in expertise;
- Accommodating manufactured homes;
- Adding provisions for historic structures;
- Outlined appeal process;
- Added General Standards;
- Updating subdivision ordinance, minor change.

He stated that it is a much stronger ordinance than what we currently have. A joint Planning Commission and Town Council public hearing has been scheduled for February 2, 2016. Mr. Dawson asked if the Town had new FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). Mr. Reese stated that Prince William County's maps were recently updated, but the Town's FIRMs have not been updated since 1995.

#### **C. Comprehensive Plan Update Final Report**

The Comprehensive Plan Final Report will be presented at the February work session.

#### **D. Poplar Alley Dumpster Enclosure**

Ms. Jovanovich stated that during the January Regular meeting, Town Council approved to enter into a license agreement with Stonehouse Restaurant Group, which owns the Secret Garden, to place a dumpster and enclosure within the Town's right of way on Poplar Alley. Currently, the dumpster exists in the right of way, without an agreement with the town. Since the meeting, staff received comments from the

two adjacent property owners who were not happy with the fact that the town was going to allow the dumpster to remain in the right of way. One property owner was concerned about access to two parking spaces that exist on her property and the other was concerned with being able to access his property from the rear of off of Poplar Alley. As a result, staff worked with the owner of Secret Garden to reduce the size of the dumpster and enclosure so that it did not encroach any further than what it currently does into the alley so as to continue to allow access to the two properties from Poplar Alley. The two adjacent property owners have advised staff that the dumpster was supposed to be temporary 20 years ago with the previous property owner and do not want the dumpster in that location whether or not it is smaller or enclosed. Staff has done as much as possible administratively to resolve this issue. Since this information was not provided during the last Council meeting, Ms. Jovanovich wanted to ensure Council was aware of the property owners' concerns and requested guidance from Council on whether or not to enter into the license agreement or require the owner to remove the dumpster and relocate it onto private property.

The Town Council discussed the impacts of leaving the dumpster, potential of moving it to private property and the history of the dumpster existing within that location. Ms. Jovanovich clarified that in working with the owner of the dumpster, we reduced the proposed size to just enclose the dumpster size that is currently there, so there should be little to no change in the current ability to access either of the adjacent properties. In general consensus, the Town Council is comfortable with moving forward with the license agreement with the reduced size of the dumpster and enclosure.

#### **E. Other Items**

1. Mayor Quist stated that the Town Manager and she have met with Ave Spece with the Workhouse Arts Center, and they are still interested in holding their arts event on the same weekend in September as the Town's Arts and Crafts Show, and because we have not been able to communicate our objection to this effectively in person, she has drafted a letter in response and is seeking Council support on the fact that the Town doesn't want to turn this into a joint event by sharing resources. The town is concerned that since the Workhouse is looking to grow their event, we would be pulling from the same, shrinking pool of vendors, and potentially causing confusion of the two events. Ms. Jovanovich stated that there are opportunities to partner with them on events where we are each doing something a little different, but would hesitate on partnering on the annual craft show. The town is looking to improve the quality of vendors and as a result, since they are looking to grow to a comparable size to the Town, we will be pulling from the same vendor pool. In the long run, partnering on this event, where the two organizations have similar goals and activities, will not be beneficial to the town. In the end, regardless of whether or not the Town supports them holding the event on the last weekend in September, it is up to them on when they want to hold it. There is a high likelihood that they will

still choose to hold the event during the last weekend in September, with or without the town's support and cooperation. Mayor Quist stressed the importance of protecting the show and the funding that the show generates in support of the Town's capital improvement plan. Ms. Jovanovich stated that she hopes that regardless of what choice the Workhouse makes in regards to which weekend to hold their event, that it will not impact the town's ability to work with the Workhouse on other events that wouldn't necessarily be competing events. By consensus, Town Council agreed to send the letter requesting they not hold the event on the same weekend as the Town's Craft Show.

2. Ms. Jovanovich requested to change the title of Craft Show Director to Events and Community Development Director and include the additional duties that were assigned to the position during the Fiscal Year 2016 budget process including parks programming and community outreach. By consensus, Town Council agreed to change the title of the Craft Show Director position to Events and Community Development Director.

### **3. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

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Kirstyn Jovanovich  
Town Manager/ Acting Town Clerk