



OCCOQUAN TOWN COUNCIL
Work Session Meeting
Town Hall - 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125
Tuesday, June 21, 2016
7:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Liz Quist, Vice Mayor Pat Sivigny, Councilmembers Matthew Dawson, Jim Drakes, Cindy Fithian and Joe McGuire.

Staff: Kirstyn Jovanovich, Town Manager; Chris Coon, Town Clerk

Planning Commission: Ann Kisling, Baeraga Ramsey, Dan Braswell, David Irwin, Heather Ozuna and Joe McGuire

Other: R. Michael Chandler, VA Tech Land Use Education Program; Shaina Schaffer, Berkley Group

1. Call to Order

Mayor Quist called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Regular Items

A. Draft Comprehensive Plan Presentation

The Planning Commission presented the draft Comprehensive Plan to the Town Council including an overview of the plan and development process, as well as the major highlights of each chapter. Mr. Chandler discussed the plan's update process initiated in the fall of 2015 and included a diagnostic analysis of the previous plan and a survey of residents, businesses, staff and officials. The diagnostic and survey resulted in a proposed rewrite and reformatted planning document.

Mr. Ramsey stated that the Comprehensive Plan redrafting process began in the fall of 2015 and included multiple meetings, review of the current Comprehensive Plan, and the review of information gathered from the community about what the top issues were in Occoquan now and into the future. The Planning Commission used that information, as well as the diagnostic, to guide the focus of the Comprehensive Plan update.

Councilmember Joe McGuire presented "Chapter Four: Community Character & Community Life" and stated that this section focused on emphasizing and encouraging mixed-use development within the Historic District. He also stated that the Virginia Code requires Comprehensive Plans to include housing affordability and the plan covers what is necessary for maintaining diverse housing options within the community. He also stated that the chapter also focused on promotion of open space and parks, as well as community facilities, and waterfront properties.

Mr. Ramsey presented information on “Chapter 5: Circulation and Mobility” and stated that the main goal of this chapter was to create and maintain safe and efficient Town-wide mobility and transportation, including pedestrian-friendly land use patterns. These goals included four of the top five reported issues in the survey conducted as part of the plan update. The issues were traffic and cut-through traffic, parking, sidewalks, and gateways or buffer from Occoquan and surrounding areas.

Mr. Braswell presented information on “Chapter 6: Economic Vitality and Diversity” and stated that the main goal of this chapter was to promote proactive and sustainable economic development and redevelopment actions in the Occoquan Business and Historic District that respect the community’s unique character. This requires balanced residential density, and protection of its ecological setting, while encouraging a diversity of economic activities in selected target areas of Occoquan. He also stated that in this section, a focus is placed on becoming a Main Street America community. This program would assist the Town and businesses with economic opportunities through grants and other funding sources currently not available to the Town. Ms. Ozuna stated that the Main Street America program is a historic preservation and economic revitalization program geared toward small downtown areas similar to the Occoquan. Ms. Ozuna is currently working with the Town Manager the Main Street America designation for the Town.

Mr. Irwin and Ms. Shaffer presented “Chapter 7: Environmental Stewardship” and stated that the goal of this chapter is to provide the harmonious use of land that meets the needs of Occoquan, while enhancing the area’s environmental quality. The Berkley Group reviewed the current Comprehensive Plan and made recommendations as to what is required in accordance with the Chesapeake Bay Act. This section referenced relevant environmental programs and regulations to help encourage the preservation of remaining forested areas, streams and wildlife habitat corridors.

Councilmember Fithian stated that she would like the Planning Commission to consider including recycling as a priority within the plan. . She stated that she would like to encourage the use of public trash and recycling containers within the town. The Planning Commission stated that they would address the recycling issue in the Environmental Stewardship section.

Mrs. Ozuna presented information on “Chapter Eight: Regional Coordination” and stated the goal of this section was to continue to build upon and enhance partnerships with Prince William and Fairfax Counties to generate a shared border area land use planning and zoning that reflects and advances Occoquan’s vision for the future. This section specifically focuses on the regional coordination between the Town of Occoquan and other entities that can affect land use, planning, and zoning within the Town of Occoquan.

Mr. Ramsey stated that “Chapter Nine: Implementation and Accountability” consisted of 54 action items with the main goal of pursuing and accomplishing the goals outlined in the previous sections in the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Jovanovich then requested any Town Council feedback by the June 24, 2016, to allow time to incorporate the Council’s feedback into the Comprehensive Plan prior to the Planning Commission’s final community meeting on June 28, 2016. The Comprehensive Plan will be before the Town Council for a public hearing and adoption at their July 12, 2016 meeting.

B. Draft Employee Handbook/ Administrative Manual

Ms. Jovanovich stated that the Administrative Manual replaces the 2003 Personnel Manual. She stated that many of the policies in the Administrative Manual were adapted from standard policies provided by the Virginia Municipal League Insurance Program, the Town’s insurance provider. She outlined four main sections, including General, Administrative, Employment, and Communications. Ms. Jovanovich stated that she provided a draft of the document to staff and held a meeting to discuss, during which there were no major changes.

Ms. Jovanovich discussed the proposed organizational mission and core values, which include transparency, integrity, accountability, innovation, respect and inclusiveness. This section also includes a Code of Ethics and covers Conflict of Interest and receipt of gifts. These standards apply to all officials and employees. Mayor Quist stated that she approved of the outlines created and that now there is a document that can be reviewed to ensure that staff and Council are all in mutual understanding.

Ms. Jovanovich stated that the Administrative section includes standard employment policies to include FLSA, ADA and equal employment opportunities. She noted a new policy regarding town vehicle usage that requires the Town to regularly obtain and review driving records for individuals that operate a Town vehicle. This section also covers proper documentation and disposition of gifts to town employees and officials.

Councilmember McGuire stated that he did not see anything about the Police reporting use of force. Ms. Jovanovich stated that is addressed in the Police Department’s General Orders, which is a separate document and is currently under review.

Ms. Jovanovich stated that the Administrative section also cover covers political activities by employees. The policy states that Town staff is not able to participate in any way with political activity as a representative of the town. Staff is also not permitted to use any Town equipment, resources or facilities for any political activities.

Ms. Jovanovich discussed the Employment section, which covers standard employment policies including recruitment, position categories, employee conduct, initial employment period, flex schedules, dress code, employee performance evaluations and employee development. Ms. Jovanovich stated that the flex schedule allows employees to adjust their work hours within a pay period and does not refer to telecommuting. Approval of flex schedules is granted by the Town Manager and will only be permitted when service delivery is not negatively impacted. Ms. Jovanovich also stated that a business casual dress code is included in the revised manual.

Ms. Jovanovich stated that Performance Evaluations will be implemented in August with employee goal setting to establish employee expectations. An annual review will be completed annually in January. This will allow for merit-based salary increases, dependent upon availability of funds during the annual budgeting process. She further noted that the manual includes an emphasis on employee training that directly influence or improve their job performance.

Councilmember Drakes inquired about if the continuing studies or training is required for employment or if it was recommended. Ms. Jovanovich stated that the training was recommended.

Mrs. Jovanovich discussed the proposed revised employee benefit plan. She stated that under the current Personnel Manual the only employees who accrue annual leave and sick leave are full time employees. The new Administrative Manual treats all employees equally. She stated that the proposed leave structure that provides annual leave and sick leave accrual for all employees (a prorated accrual rate for part-time employees) based on a survey of benefit and leave plans for ten area localities. The sick leave policy is in line with what all ten of those localities provided their employees (4 hours per pay period, prorated for part-time, no payout) and the annual leave policy is in line with the average leave accrual policies of those municipalities. She further noted the revised manual removes the six-month delay on leave accrual that is in the current personnel manual. Ms. Jovanovich stated that the revised leave policies will allow Occoquan to be more comparable to other localities in the area and assist with attracting and retaining qualified employees. She noted that since Occoquan does not offer health insurance or retirement benefits at this time, this update in the leave policies will assist with retention and employee morale.

Mrs. Jovanovich noted that the compensatory time policy will change to limit accrual. She stated that it will be permitted under preapproved circumstances by the Town Manager with a maximum carry over of 40 hours per year. She stated that under the new leave policies, employees will earn more annual leave but it will be controlled with limits placed on accrual. Annual and compensatory leave will be paid out upon the employee's separation from the town. The goal will be

to ensure leave accrual is limited and employees take appropriate leave throughout the year. This will aid in employee productivity and morale.

Councilmember Drakes inquired about the definition of the pay period and if the 240 hours of annual leave carry over is common. Ms. Jovanovich stated that the 240 hours is the Town's current cap, as well as normal when compared to the other localities in the area. Councilmember McGuire also stated that realistically employees are not going to stay more than five years so the leave cap is not really an issue. Councilmember Dawson inquired about a cap of sick leave. Ms. Jovanovich stated that of the ten localities surveyed; only one locality had a cap on sick leave at 960 hours. She further noted that sick leave can only be used in specific circumstances and when employees separate from the Town, the Town does not pay out for that time.

Ms. Jovanovich requested direction from Council regarding providing leave hours up front to employees who have been employed with the Town for many years and have not received vacation or sick leave during that time. She stated that suggested providing those employees some annual leave time to start this process or have every employee start at the same level. Council then discussed the amount of time that would be appropriate for those employees. Council asked Ms. Jovanovich to provide a recommendation at the July 12, 2016 meeting.

The final section of the Administrative Manual is the Communications section and includes Freedom of Information Act requirements. There is also a social media policy to allow the Town to participate more fully in social media, become more involved online, and allow more electronic engagement outside of the Craft Show Facebook account. This section also includes the current technology use policy.

Councilmember Drakes asked if the Administrative Manual was a guide or a contract. Ms. Jovanovich stated that each employee will receive the manual and sign a document stating that they have received and understand the contents of the manual. This will allow the Town to hold staff accountable for abiding by the regulations set forth in the manual. She further noted that a grievance process still needs to be developed.

C. River Mill Park Signage Review

Ms. Jovanovich requested concurrence from the Town Council on the design of the new River Mill Park signage. At its last regular meeting, the Council approved funding for the purchase of signage and related equipment for the new park. By consensus, the Town Council agreed with the purchase of the sign designs as presented.

3. Adjournment

Mayor Quist adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Christopher Coon
Town Clerk