



## City of Buena Vista Planning Commission

### Minutes of August 8<sup>th</sup> 2017

CITY OF BUENA  
VISTA  
Office of Planning and  
Zoning  
2039 Sycamore Avenue  
Buena Vista VA 24416

Members of the Buena Vista Planning Commission met in Council Chambers, 2039 Sycamore Avenue, at 7:00 p.m. on August 8th 2017. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Hawes. Mr. Roberts called roll. A quorum was established.

#### **Members Present:**

Dennis Hawes, Chairman  
Michael Ohleger, Vice-Chairman  
Bill Braddy  
Tyson Cooper  
Lucy Ferrebee  
Wayne Flint  
Melvin Henson, City Council Representative  
Simone McKelvey

#### **Members Absent:**

Jay Scudder, Ex Officio member

#### **Staff Present:**

Tom Roberts, Director of Planning and Community Development

Mr. Hawes recommended the Commission hear the two site plans first for the convenience of applicants who had come to the meeting.

#### **New Business**

##### Northwest Hardwoods

Mr. Josh Miller from Northwest Hardwoods briefly explained NWH's operations in the City and their plan to put additions on several of their buildings at the Green Forest Avenue site, including the sewer line extension to serve a breakroom/bathroom. It was noted that currently the site is served by two porta-potties. Mr. Miller stated that there are about 15 employees at the subject site, and about 50-60 employees in all of NWH's Buena Vista operations.

Mr. Flint moved to approve the site plan, but Mr. Braddy interjected a question about the size of the existing sewer main into which NWH would be tapping. Mr. Roberts explained that the main, which extends up Green Forest Avenue to the former HDT facility, is 8" in diameter. There was then discussion about the need for a sewer extension to serve the facility, which already is served by water. There are some challenges in extending a gravity sewer main cost-effectively because of terrain, and NWH has discussed a proposal for a forced main. It was noted that sewer needs of

potential future development are an important consideration, as well as the cost to NWH for the sewer connection. Mr. Roberts explained that the site plan approval process was separate from the approval of the sewer connection design for this project, and the design would be approved by Public Works using the Augusta County standards that the City follows.

Mr. Ohleger seconded the motion to approve the site plan, and the Commission voted unanimously to approve.

#### 174 E 29<sup>th</sup> Street Certificate of Appropriateness

Mr. Roberts briefly reviewed the staff report for the project and explained that this project is to approve an extension of the existing canopy over the gas pumps at the Sheltman's gas station. There was limited discussion and agreement that it would be a beneficial improvement to the property. Mr. Richard Lowe, the property owner, spoke briefly to reiterate that it was a fairly minor project using the same colors and materials.

Mr. Ohleger made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness, and Mr. Braddy seconded. The Commission voted unanimously to approve.

#### 2806 Beech Avenue Rezoning

Mr. Roberts clarified that this is discussion of the proposal and not a public hearing. A public hearing will be required before an official vote.

Mr. Wilford "Skip" Ramsey spoke as agent for the owner, Paul Bowen. Mr. Adam Stanley, prospective purchaser of the property, was also present and spoke. Mr. Ramsey briefly stated that they wished to have the property rezoned from Residential R3 to Mixed Business MB, and that Mr. Stanley may in the future operate a hostel catering to hikers in the existing building. Mr. Ramsey noted that in the future the site could be redeveloped for some other type of commercial use.

Mr. Stanley and the Commission discussed the particulars of operating a hostel, the success he has had with his hostels in Glasgow and Waynesboro, and the importance of the Appalachian Trail to Buena Vista. Mr. Roberts noted that the rezoning, if approved, would not bind Mr. Stanley or any owner to operate a hostel, even though this use is being discussed. Mr. Roberts also noted that any subsequent development would require site plan review by the Planning Commission.

There was also discussion around the fact that this property is not included in the Seminary Hill Historic District. Mr. Hawes suggested that adding this property to the district would "fill in a hole." There was explanation of what requirements the SHHD imposed, and Mr. Ramsey and Mr. Stanley indicated they did not see a problem with the property being included in the District. This was followed by some discussion among Mr. Roberts and the Commission regarding the rationale for the SHHD, and the boundaries of the District. Mr. Roberts stated that when this part of the City is covered in a neighborhood plan, there can be further discussion of the District as a whole.

#### **Review and Adoption of Minutes**

Mr. Hawes noted that Parry McCluer was misspelled on the second page of the minutes. Mr. Ohleger made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 11th meeting as corrected and Mr.

Cooper seconded. All voted to approve except Ms. McKelvey, who abstained because she was not present.

## **Report of Secretary**

### Ownership and Maintenance of Streams

Mr. Roberts explained that he had prepared this memo for City Council to answer some questions about ownership and responsibility for maintenance of streams. Generally, if a visible infrastructure project was done to improve the stream, then the City is responsible to maintain it; and if it is in a more “natural” state then it is the property owner’s responsibility.

### Housing Study

Mr. Roberts explained that he needs better data on the housing market in the City to guide policy decisions.

### Planning Commission Officer Elections

The September meeting should include nomination and voting on officers of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Commission.

### Date of September Planning Commission Meeting

Mr. Roberts related that he had a conflict with the Tuesday 9/12 date for the regular meeting and wished to reschedule. Mr. Ohleger stated that the bylaws do not provide for the absence of the Secretary, and that the Secretary did not need to be present at the meeting. Mr. Hawes chimed in that the Commission has conducted meetings in the past without the Planner present. The Commission indicated that it wished to have the meeting on Tuesday 9/12 as scheduled.

### Update on Staff Restructuring and New Title

Mr. Roberts stated that the City departments are currently being reorganized, and planning and zoning are now separated into a separate department. Previously, planning and zoning were handled by the City Planner and fell under Brian Brown, Director of Community & Economic Development. Mr. Roberts’s new title is Director of Planning & Community Development. The Building Inspector will report to Mr. Roberts.

## **Report of Standing Committees**

None.

## **Report of Special Committees**

### Comprehensive Plan Update Committee

Mr. Roberts stated that the next meeting would cover transportation and the economy. There was some discussion of whether there were minutes to these meetings, which there are not, but there are detailed presentation slides.

## **New Business**

### Amendments to Article 10, Schedule of Fees

Mr. Roberts noted that this proposal is just “cleaning up” the code. This proposal would eliminate the statutory fees listed in Article 10 and clarify that the City Council may adopt a fee schedule by ordinance, which it already did. Mr. Hawes emphasized that the Planning Commission does not control, and does not want to control, setting the fees for permits. The Commission agreed with this proposal to amend Article 10 to clarify the Council may adopt fee schedules from time to time.

### Repeal Section 702, Additional Buildings on a Separate Lot

Mr. Hawes commented that he did not recall ever using this section and that it may date from the original code, and that he agreed with repealing this. Mr. Roberts again noted that this is “clean up.”

There was some discussion of whether to include this amendment as well as the Article 10 amendment at the same joint public hearing as the rezoning for 2806 Beech, but it was agreed that adding these items may delay the hearing and confuse the applicants for 2806 Beech or confuse the public.

### Amendments to definition of two-, three-, and four-family dwellings

Mr. Hawes stated that he could see the value of making the definitions more clear, though he was happy with what was already in the code. Mr. Hawes stated that if there were already a public hearing on other amendments this could be added to that meeting, and Mr. Cooper and Mr. Henson agreed that he preferred clarify in the code.

### Amendments to by-right and conditional uses in R2 and R3 zones

Mr. Roberts explained the building permit process for remodels of houses and that it is very difficult to catch the creation of new dwelling units, and that current process cannot track that creation. The Conditional Use Permit process will be an additional tool to catch and oversee creation of new dwelling unit. There was some additional discussion of the building permit process and what information is collected, and what the legal requirements of building permits are.

There was discussion of a several specific houses that do or may have multiple dwelling units.

Mr. Braddy stated that he is in favor of enhancing this proposed regulation to improve order and streetscape controls, even though he is usually not in favor of “big brother.”

## **Old Business**

The Commission agreed with Mr. Roberts’s recommendation to table the zoning text amendments to address the maximum occupancy of dwelling units in order to conduct more research on the housing market.

## **Additional Items**

There was a brief discussion on short term rental regulation. It was noted that Lexington is revising their entire zoning code, which includes a section addressing STR. Mr. Roberts stated that he acknowledges that the Commission wants to see regulation of this use, but he had not had time to prepare anything for this meeting, and that he is hesitant to push forward too quickly because this is uncertain legal ground. Mr. Roberts hopes to have a staff report to distill what particular issues STR regulations need to address.

### **Adjournment**

Chairman Hawes adjourned the meeting at 9:05 PM.

### **Approval**

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Chairman

Date