



**City of Buena Vista
Planning Commission
Minutes of March 13th 2018
Regular Meeting**

**CITY OF
BUENA VISTA**
Planning and Zoning
2039 Sycamore Avenue
Buena Vista VA 24416
troberts@bvcity.org
(540) 261-8607

Members of the Buena Vista Planning Commission met in Council Chambers, 2039 Sycamore Avenue, at 7:00 p.m. on March 13th 2018. All members were present and a quorum was established.

Members Present:

Dennis Hawes, Chairman
Michael Ohleger, Vice-Chairman
Sandy Burke
Lucy Ferrebee
Melvin Henson, City Council Representative
Guy Holstein
Simone McKelvey
Bradyn Tuttle

Members Absent:

Jay Scudder, Ex Officio member

Staff Present:

Tom Roberts, Director of Planning & Community Development

New Business

Discuss Zoning Map Amendment to rezone Blocks 8 and 21 of Section 6, between Catalpa Avenue and Rockbridge Avenue; Skip Ramsey, applicant

Mr. Hawes initiated discussion of the rezoning request. Mr. Roberts then highlighted some of the points he made in the staff report, including the availability of infrastructure and accessibility of the site and the low likelihood of development as single-family residential because of road construction costs. The Commission raised the idea of amending the comprehensive plan for this rezoning. Mr. Ohleger suggested considering rezoning to R4 the blocks to the north of the site, all the way to 34th Street/Rockbridge Avenue, to facilitate future development. Mr. Roberts said that he would evaluate this idea and analyze the benefits and risks. The Commission also raised the question of whether the streets and alleys would be vacated, and Mr. Roberts replied that he would recommend that the streets and alleys be vacated and the entire site, including driveways, parking lots, and infrastructure, be private.

Mr. Ramsey spoke briefly about the project and explained he or a business partner wished to build attractive new apartment homes in Buena Vista, and that they would probably be visible on the hillside.

Mrs. Burke asked about “manufactured homes” as a permitted use in R4, and the Commission discussed the difference between “manufactured,” “mobile,” and “modular” homes and their

respective construction standards. The Commission and staff agreed that they did not want to allow trailers on this site. Mr. Roberts said that he would investigate the meaning of this language and where trailers or HUD-standard homes are allowed in the City.

Mr. Roberts pointed out that the rezoning process was the point at which the Commission could impose conditions on the use or design of the project if they had any concerns, or if there were any permitted uses or configurations that they wanted to avoid. The Commission discussed non-residential uses on the site and whether they were desirable and their potential impact. Mr. Ramsey affirmed that he only has plans for multifamily residential on the site, not commercial. The Commission decided that they did not wish to impose any conditions on use or configuration. They noted that an apartment complex may appropriately include a small office or convenience store.

Public Comment

None.

Review and Adoption of Minutes

Mr. Hawes called a vote to approve the minutes of the February 13th regular meeting. Mr. Henson moved first, Mr. Ohleger seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Ms. McKelvey and Mr. Hawes abstained because they had been absent.

Report of Secretary

Mr. Roberts reported on several items.

- Agenda for the Planning Commission Public Hearing at the next regular meeting, April 10th 2018:
 - Zoning Map Amendment to rezone Blocks 8 & 21, Section 6 (Ramsey)
 - Zoning Text Amendment to reorganize certain sections of the Land Development Regulations
 - Zoning Text Amendment to amend definitions of “basement” and “cellar”
 - Zoning Text Amendment to amend definition of “family”
 - Zoning Text Amendment to amend §711 Homes Used as Rental Property; Conditional Use Permit Required
 - Zoning Text Amendment to amend §703 Off-Street Parking
- The new Director of Economic Development, Rachel Moore, started last week on 3/7
- Due to health issues of Fred Fix, the building inspector, Tom is taking a larger role in coordinating building permits and property maintenance activities

Committee Updates

None

New Business

Zoning Text Amendment to update definition of family and to update §711 Homes Used as Rental Property

The Commission agreed with the new definition of family and had no suggested changes. The Commission reviewed and discussed the implications of the proposed changes to §711 on several scenarios, including residents who have guests stay for an extended period of time, considering the new definitions for occupancy. There was concern about going “too far” with the CUP requirement and triggering it when residents have guests that exceed the number of unrelated adults. The Commission stated they believed that rent should be the main criterion, and that CUPs should only be needed when there were rental occupants. Mr. Roberts stated that he would modify the text to reflect this for the public hearing.

Old Business

Discuss amendments to Mixed Use zone

Mr. Roberts began by explaining his desire for a downtown master plan to precede an overhaul of the MU zone. The Commission discussed different ideas for open and unregulated versus tighter control over development, touching on the idea of a historic district like the Seminary Hill district, requiring a certificate of appropriateness. Mr. Roberts stated that historic districts with case-by-case review and few explicit standards are unattractive to developers because of their uncertainty. The other mechanism for achieving a very specific vision for the downtown is having carefully-written specific form-based codes, he said, but this would require a master plan.

Mr. Roberts raised the question of flexible zoning in reference to live/work units and first-floor residential. The Commission was still very concerned about apartments occupying storefronts in the downtown and taking away space from businesses. They stated that they wanted first-floor spaces downtown to have open doors and lights on during the day (as opposed to evenings/weekends as an apartment might) to engage pedestrian shoppers. The Commission also was very concerned with the City’s economic developer building relationships with all of the local businesses, which they said was not done well in the past.

Adjournment

Mr. Hawes adjourned the meeting at 9:00 PM.

Approval

Chairman

Date