

Richlands Planning Commission

September 1, 2020

**Members Present**

Richard Smith

Rod Cury

Michelle Elswick

Virginia Hart

Randy Smith

**Staff and Town Officials Present**

Tim Taylor

Nathan Keen

Connie Allen

Guests:

Shea Cook

Rick Chitwood

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Richard Smith.
2. Virginia Hart gave the invocation; Rod Cury led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. The agenda was presented. There were no additions/deletions; Randy Smith made the motion to accept the agenda; Virginia Hart seconded the motion. All members voted “aye” and the agenda was accepted.
4. Minutes from the August 4, 2020 public hearing and the August 4, 2020 regular meeting were presented. Rod Cury made the motion to approve both sets of minutes; Randy Smith seconded the motion. All members voted “aye” and the minutes were approved.
5. New Business:
  - Connie Allen came to the Commission with a request to rezone property located at 430 Virginia Avenue from an existing R-2 (General Residential) classification to a B2/R2 (General Business/General Residential) mixed classification. (copy of the request attached). A round table discussion was held about the property and its previous uses as a church and as a surveying business. Chairman Smith added that the Commission had tried to stay away from mixed zoning; but the property has a history of being just that. Discussion also included details about the adjoining properties, one of which is currently being used as a business. Randy Smith made the motion to proceed with a Joint Public Hearing with Council at their October meeting regarding the request; Virginia Hart seconded the motion and all members voted “aye”. The motion carried.
  - Rick Chitwood from Thompson & Litton came to the Commission to formally extend an offer of consulting assistance from Thompson & Litton with the Flood Remediation Task Force. (The Council gave their approval for formulation of the task force at their August meeting.) He said the Town and their firm have a long history of cooperation, and that several employees of the firm are Richlands natives. This makes the project very personal to them. He shared some initial

insight into forming the task force and vital resources that should be tapped into, specifically the Army Corps of Engineers.

- Shea Cook then addressed the Commission regarding the Flood Remediation Task Force. He shared information he had received from Patricia Coffey from the Army Corps of Engineers. A round table discussion of the information took place with input from commission members and Mr. Chitwood. Mr. Cook shared that vital to get the process started is sending a letter of intent to Ms. Coffey's office, and he shared a sample she had sent. Virginia Hart made the motion to have Tim Taylor and Mayor Crawford send such a letter; Rod Cury seconded the motion. All members voted "aye" and the motion carried. Tim Taylor will get with Mayor Crawford and draft the letter.

Discussion then focused on finding citizens to serve on the Flood Remediation Task Force. After a round table discussion, it was decided to begin with a small core of 5 or 6 members and then expand as needed. It is anticipated that outside agencies, such as Thompson & Litton and the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, will be used as consultants. The task force will also hopefully include representatives from the county and Cedar Bluff which have a vested interest in the Clinch River.

Randy Smith made the motion to appoint Shea Cook, Rod Cury, and Virginia Hart to the Flood Remediation Task Force; Michelle Elswick seconded the motion. All members voted "aye" and the motion carried. Tim Taylor and Richard Smith will begin reaching out to several other people mentioned to ask them to serve.

#### 6. Old Business:

- The Commission held a brief discussion revisiting the zoning in the area around Chestnut Street. The consensus was reached to address issues there as they may or may not arise.
- The Commission held a brief discussion regarding "conditional use". Since this is a prerogative of Council, the Commission will continue making recommendations (as they have in the past) should Council ask for input.

#### 7. Miscellaneous/Members' Concerns:

- Tim Taylor reminded the members of the Joint Public Hearing scheduled with Council on Tuesday, September 8 at 5:45 in regard to adding the VDOT Route 460 Corridor Improvement Study of the STARS Project to the Richlands Comprehensive Plan. It's imperative that the Commission have a quorum present at the meeting.
- Two letters of support for VDOT Smart Scale projects were presented. Randy Smith made the motion to approve the letter of support for the US 460 Intersection Improvement Project; Virginia Hart seconded the motion. All members voted "aye" and the motion carried.  
Virginia Hart made the motion to approve the letter of support for the Realignment of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Approach Project; Randy Smith seconded the motion. All members voted "aye" and the motion carried.

8. With no other business, Rod Cury made the motion to adjourn; it was seconded by Michelle Elswick and all members voted "aye". Meeting was adjourned.

9. The meeting for the Planning Commission is a scheduled Joint Public Hearing with Council on Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at 5:45.

Submitted by: Virginia Hart, Secretary