

Richlands Planning Commission
May 4, 2021

Members Present

Michelle Elswick
Jeff Hurst
Elliot Joyce
Randy Smith
Richard Smith
Gaynelle Thompson

Staff and Town Officials Present

Nathan Keen
John O'Daniel

Guests

Rod Cury

- I. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Richard Smith at 7:30 pm.
- II. Randy Smith gave the invocation.
- III. Jeff Hurst led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- IV. The agenda was presented. There were no additions/deletions.
- V. The Minutes from the April 6, 2021 regular meeting were presented. Randy Smith made the motion to approve the minutes as written and Gaynelle Thompson seconded the motion. All members voted "aye", and the minutes were approved.
- VI. New Business:
 - i. Welcome Jeff Hurst as the new Council Representative to the Planning Commission.
 1. Richard updated Jeff on our current projects we are working on.
 - a. Spot zoning- working on a plan to clean this up for the future- first area of focus in the Brickyard Addition.
 2. Flood Remediation Task Force
 - a. They have identified the areas that need to be addressed.
 - b. It will be approximately two years before the Army Corp of Engineers can be involved.
 - c. There is a national grant we can apply for. However, it requires a 25% match on \$200,000. For this grant, with every \$1 spent, they want to see a \$4 return in repairs. It is a lengthy process, and you will be competing for this grant. Council will discuss whether to go forward with applying for this grant or to hold off on Army Corp of Engineers.
 - d. Clinch River Walking Trail- We are working with Thompson & Litton Engineering. There are three phases. We are ready to begin seeking funding for Phase 1. The town attorney is looking into what needs to be done as far as gifting land or right of way.
 - i. Jeff talked about Land and Water Conservation and how they have not released Project Grants in 2 years.
 - ii. Richard said the railroad is our biggest challenge for Phase 1. Rick Barton is working on that.
 - iii. John says we need something in writing, but we do not want to obtain the land before we see what the grant needs.
- VII. Old Business:
 1. Zoning- Richard suggests we need to look at the areas and decide on what zoning we need the area to be in.
 - i. Review maps before the next meeting and discuss the zoning needs.

- ii. Rod suggested that we seek out professional help. There is money in the proposed budget for Council studies.
 - iii. John says by hiring professional help, it will separate the personal aspect from the job.
 - iv. Rod explained that if someone is not happy with the decisions on the zoning, they can take it to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Ordinances for mobile homes were created years ago but are being overwritten frequently.
2. Richard asked what can be done about rundown properties.
 - i. Randy said it must be brought to council and then the police handle it.
 - ii. Jeff told the commission the council is developing a nuisance ordinance. They are currently discussing the cost versus the outcome.

VIII. Miscellaneous and/or Member Concerns:

1. Michelle
 - i. Very appreciative of the new microphone system for the town council meeting. It is much easier to hear and understand what they are talking about.
2. Jeff
 - i. Appreciates the opportunity to be part of the Planning Commission.
 - ii. Expressed concern about the number of store fronts being used for churches. He wants to see business come back to town as part of our Downtown Revitalization.
 1. Rod said currently R2/B2 is permitted. He thinks getting a professional group to help with the zoning will take care of some of these concerns.
 2. Randy thinks if our town would get more inviting for businesses, more will start moving in and churches will start moving out of the store fronts.
3. Rod thinks all zoning issues should come before Planning Commission before going to Town Council. This will stop rush decisions where research is not done prior.

IX. With no other business, Elliot made the motion to adjourn; it was seconded by Randy and all members voted "aye". Meeting was adjourned.

X. The next meeting for the Planning Commission is scheduled for Tuesday, June 1, 2021 at 7:30 pm.

Submitted by: Michelle Elswick, Secretary