

Richlands Planning Commission

July 7, 2026

Members Present

Michelle Elswick
Brandon Hensley
Greg Horn
Chester Price

Staff and Town Officials Present

Gary Jackson
Nathan Keen
Don Marr
Billy Shelton

Guests

- I. The meeting was called to order by Greg at 5:45 pm.
- II. Invocation given by Greg
- III. Pledge of Allegiance
- IV. Approval of minutes for June 2026
 1. Motion to approve made by Brandon, seconded by Chester, all ayes.
- V. Business
 1. Zoning amendment to add Private Schools as a use in B-2 Zone.
 - i. Mr. Marr says it is important to make sure the discussion is broader than just the one applicant. Ask important questions like:
 1. How will this affect existing businesses?
 2. How will it affect future businesses?
 3. What about Flood Zones?
 4. Should a school be allowed next to a busy road. How will drop off and pickup affect traffic flow?
 - ii. Brandon asked if there could be a condition about the size of the school in the code? A school with 35 students looks very different than a school with 1000.
 - iii. Zoning should be very specific.
 - iv. Billy asked if a conditional use permit would help?
 1. Mr. Marr said there are two options. You can either add school as an acceptable use in B2 or you can require a conditional use permit in order for a school to locate in a B2 zone.
 2. Brandon stated he thinks a conditional use permit will be better for long-term.
 - v. Mr. Marr said the Planning Commission should be looking at codes every 3-5 years.
 1. He also said we need to educate the citizens on zoning.
 - vi. Greg asked if we could offer the daycare now with a conditional use permit and start working on defining school/private school and what we should do about the zoning?
 1. Mr. Marr suggests the planning commission meet and look at the current uses and if they are appropriate. Our zoning needs consistency.
 - vii. Mr. Marr suggests we also look at Residential and Business uses and see if changes are needed.
 1. In Virginia, you can no longer restrict where manufactured homes, 5 years or newer, can be placed as of July 1st.
 2. At their last meeting, the IEDA discussed the need to be able to remove old mobile homes and allow new ones to replace them.

2. As for the WOL Academy, they must have an engineer come in to evaluate the building, but they do not want to do that until they are allowed to operate in the building. They had been operating in a B2 zone under the application of a daycare, not a school.
 - i. They are wanting to open by Labor Day. The 501c3 is in the current owner's name. She is retiring.
 - ii. Since their current location is also not approved for a school, their best option to open quickly would be to open at their current location as a daycare ONLY.
3. There have been no applicants for any positions open for the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and IEDA.
 - i. Mr. Marr asks that we think about people to fill these positions that care for our town.
 - ii. Greg suggested we ask people to be a part instead of waiting on applications since that process has not been successful.

VI. Member Concerns

1. Due to prior engagements, there will not be a quorum next week at the joint hearing.
2. Officer assignments:
 - i. Chair- Greg (Brandon made motion and Chester seconded)
 - ii. Vice Chair- Brandon (Michelle made motion and Gary seconded)
 - iii. Secretary- Michelle will remain in this position
3. Meetings will remain at 5:45 pm.
4. Members were asked to

VII. Gary moved the meeting be adjourned, Greg seconded, All Aye. Meeting was adjourned.

VIII. The next regular meeting will be held Tuesday, August 4, 2026, at 5:45 pm

Submitted by Michelle Elswick, Secretary