

Richlands Planning Commission

August 4, 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 July 2026
 1. Motion to approve made by Gary, seconded by Brandon, all ayes.
- V. Business
 1. Zoning amendment to add Private Schools as a use in B-2 Zone.
 - i. Greg asked Mr. Marr for his advice on this topic. Mr. Marr said you would typically allow private schools in B2.
 1. He is concerned about our definition of "school" and how broad it is.
 - a. Do we define elementary differently than middle and high?
 2. Gary asked if we would need to define a school located in a church separately?
 3. Mr. Marr says we can break it down however we want to make it fit our town.
 4. Greg thinks the term private school is too broad and there needs to be rules added.
 5. Mr. Marr says your code should match what you allow.
 - ii. As previously discussed, we can do conditional use permits for schools to go into locations they are not zoned for.
 1. What conditions should we set?
 - a. Drop off location
 - b. Number of Students, etc.
 2. The concern about doing conditional use permits but not setting conditions (as has happened in the past) was brought up. Mr. Marr states that can be a normal practice.
 - a. In this case, any condition set must comply with the State of Virginia Educational Rules.
 - iii. Brandon made a motion that the Planning Commission recommends Council to allow private schools, as defined, to be located in a B2 zone with a conditional use permit. Gary seconded. All ayes.
 2. Mr. Marr would like to see the Planning Commission go through code zone and look at it section by section.
 3. Richlands created a 10 year Comprehensive Plan in 2015-2016. We, as a Planning Commission, need to look at this plan and see where changes need to be made. If the changes are manageable, it is something we as a commission can work on with public

input. If major changes are needed, we will need to start looking for available grants for this purpose.

- i. The plan needs to be for our community, not for the benefit of any individuals.
- ii. Mr. Marr asks that members read the plan for next month's meeting and return with feedback concerning changes/updates.
- iii. Look for things to update such as the Behind the Meter Project and the VA Tech Walking Trail Study.
- iv. We have the amenities but how do we develop them?
 1. Brandon suggested consulting with the Adventure Tourism Department at SWCC.

VI. Member Concerns

1. We still need a candidate for our open position.

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

VIII. The next regular meeting will be held Tuesday, September 1, 2026, at 5:45 pm

Submitted by Michelle Elswick, Secretary

Gary D/Human
Approved 9/1/26