

Town of Ashland



Town of Ashland Planning Commission Work Session Minutes February 8, 2012, – 6:30 p.m.

The Planning Commission of the Town of Ashland, Virginia held a work session on Wednesday, February 8, 2012, in the Town of Ashland Council Chambers located at 101 Thompson Street, Ashland, Virginia.

Present: Bob Brown, Chairman
Alan Abbott, Vice-Chair
Lou Ann Jewell
Felix Stevens, III
Bob Flanagan

Absent: None

Others Present: Nora Amos, Director,
Planning and Community Development
Nancy Offersen, Administrative Assistant
Andrea Erard, Town Attorney

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Brown opened the Planning Commission work session at 6:30 p.m.

The Planning Commission reviewed the items for the Planning Commission meeting scheduled for 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no other items, the work session was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Town of Ashland



Town of Ashland
Planning Commission
Minutes
February 8, 2012 –7:00 p.m.

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the Town of Ashland, Virginia was held on Wednesday, February 8, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town of Ashland Council Chambers, located at 101 Thompson Street, Ashland, Virginia.

Present: Robert Brown, Chair
Alan Abbottt, Vice-Chair
Felix Stevens, III
Lou Ann Jewell
Bob Flanagan

Absent: None

Others Present: Nora Amos, Director,
Planning and Community Development
Andrea Erard, Town Attorney
Dr. George Spagna, Council Liaison
Nancy Offersen, Administrative Assistant

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Brown called the meeting of the Planning Commission of Ashland, Virginia to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Jewell	Here
Mr. Flanagan	Here
Mr. Abbottt	Here
Mr. Stevens	Here
Mr. Brown	Here

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM:

Mr. Brown stated that a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Mr. Brown asked if there were any changes to be made to the Agenda; there were none.

CITIZEN INPUT:

Mr. Brown opened the floor for public comment.

There being none, Mr. Brown closed that portion of the meeting.

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES:

A. December 14, 2011, minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Jewell to approve the minutes as presented.

ROLL CALL:

Mr. Stevens	Aye
Ms. Jewell	Aye
Mr. Flanagan	Aye
Mr. Abbott	Aye
Mr. Brown	Aye

With all Ayes, the motion passed.

Public Hearings:

A. Article V, “Residential, Limited District, R-2,” Section 21-40, “Use Regulations” to add paragraph (o) and permit limited office use as an accessory to use by a college or university with a Conditional Use Permit.

Ms. Amos reviewed the staff report as presented in the Planning Commission packet.

Ms. Amos stated that this presentation is similar to last month’s presentation with a couple of updates.

Ms. Amos stated that at the January 11, 2012, Planning Commission meeting, Randolph-Macon College requested a rezoning for 302 Caroline Street; the Applicant has since requested a deferral of that rezoning application.

Ms. Amos stated that at that meeting there were several citizens who spoke regarding concerns of the property being rezoned to HE (Higher Education) District.

Ms. Amos stated that staff worked with the College and spoke with several of the property owners regarding their concerns and how some of those concerns could be alleviated.

Ms. Amos stated that from staff's discussions with Randolph-Macon College and the neighboring citizens, this Ordinance was amended as presented in the staff report.

Mr. Brown opened the public hearing and asked if there was anyone that would like to come forward and speak for or against the public hear.

There being none, the public hearing was closed.

Mr. Brown asked for clarification on the terms "limited" and "accessory."

Ms. Erard stated that "limited office use" would be defined by the Zoning Administrator as well as "accessory by a college or university."

Mr. Brown stated that he felt that the definition was a little 'soft'.

Ms. Amos stated that the Planning Commission could put parameters in the Conditional Use Permit if they choose to do so.

Mr. Brown suggested adding a condition that stated that "limited" is defined as no more than 50 percent of the space in the house.

Mr. Abbottt asked the Applicant if they were interested in what the definition of "limited" would be.

Ms. Diane Lowder, Vice President for Advancement for Randolph-Macon College.

Ms. Lowder stated that in this case it is fairly easy to define "limited" because the donors of the property insisted that "as a limited use," "less than 50 percent of the house was to be used as an office building;" and with that said, there will be no offices on the first floor; there would be offices on half of the second floor, and the third floor will be a work space for mailings and things of that nature. Ms. Lowder stated that there will be approximately three (3) to four (4) employees.

A motion was made by Mr. Abbottt to recommend approval of **ORD2012-02 – Amendment to the Town Code Chapter 21, "Zoning" Article V, "Residential, Limited District, R-2," Section 21-40, "Use Regulations"** to add paragraph (o) and permit limited office use as an accessory to use by a college or university with a Conditional Use Permit to the Town Council as presented.

ROLL CALL:

Mr. Flanagan	Aye
Mr. Abbottt	Aye
Mr. Stevens	Abstain
Ms. Jewell	Aye
Mr. Brown	Aye

With four ayes and one Abstaining, the motion passed.

**B. CUP12-0118 – Randolph-Macon College Conditional Use Permit – 303
Caroline Street.**

Ms. Amos reviewed the Conditional Use Permit request as presented in the Planning Commission packet.

Ms. Amos reviewed the proposed conditions as follows:

- 1.) The property shall not be used for student housing (including fraternities and sororities).
- 2.) Changes to the exterior will be in keeping with the existing architecture and follow the Town's usual approval process.
- 3.) Exterior lighting will be in keeping with the normal neighborhood lighting (this includes both type and as well as how lighting will be utilized during the evening).
- 4.) In the event 303 Caroline is returned to residential use the College will ensure the house is suitable for use as a single family residence.
- 5.) Parking will be in keeping with the neighborhood character with any changes subject to the Town's usual approval process.
- 6.) The handicap ramp will be located to the rear side or rear of the house.

Ms. Amos stated that it was staff's opinion that the conditions will reduce the impact to the residential neighborhood, and staff recommends approval of this request with the above recommended conditions.

Mr. Brown opened the public hearing and asked if there was anyone that would like to come forward to speak for or against the public hearing.

Mr. Paul Davies, Vice-President of Administration and Finance for Randolph-Macon College.

Mr. Davies stated that they were pleased to hear that the surrounding neighbors were in favor of the use of the 303 Caroline Street as an alumni house.

Mr. Davies stated that the College is aware of the concerns of the neighbors for the house to be rezoned to HE (Higher Education) Zoning and therefore tried to address the neighbors' concerns and work with them.

Mr. Davies stated that improvements to the house at 303 Caroline Street will include:

- Preservation of the exterior of the house while retaining its original design.
- The interior of the house will be refreshed with energy efficient improvements.
- The first floor of the house will be available for alumni meetings, and for use by members of the community.

Mr. Davies stated that he would like to respectfully request that the Planning Commission support their request to allow the College to use 303 Caroline Street as an alumni house for Randolph-Macon College.

Ms. Rosanne Shalf – 305 College Avenue.

Ms. Shalf spoke in favor of the Conditional Use Permit request; she did however have a concern that the “limited office use” was not defined.

Ms. Amos read a statement into the record from Mr. and Mrs. Jack Douglas stating that they were in favor of the Conditional Use Permit and that a copy of the e-mail was added to the agenda/minutes book of records.

There was discussion regarding the conditions and amendments as follows:

Mr. Flanagan stated that it was his opinion that defining the phrase “limited use” as space is not a good way of defining the phrase. Putting a number on the amount of space to be used in the building has no real weight. For example, if there is a purpose for students to go to that building to obtain something on a daily basis, then the percentage of the building has nothing to do with the percentage of use. Mr. Flanagan stated that his idea of limited use has to do with the amount of foot traffic, the number of days, the time being used, and so on.

Mr. Abbott stated that the Town Attorney handed him something to read that may address the concern regarding the appropriate language for “limited use” as follows:

The office use shall not interfere with the residential character of the neighborhood and shall not be so pervasive as to negatively impact the neighborhood in any way.

It was the consensus of the Planning Commission that this wording was acceptable.

Ms. Jewell expressed concern regarding the impact that the traffic for the alumni house will have on the neighborhood.

There was discussion regarding the type of the lighting that will be used on the interior and exterior of the house so the house is not dark in the evening hours and will not look vacant.

There was discussion regarding condition number three, which was amended as follows:
Exterior lighting and interior lighting as seen from the street will be in keeping with the normal neighborhood lighting.

There was discussion regarding condition number two, which was amended as follows:

The exterior will be maintained in a manner that is consistent with the existing architecture.

There was discussion regarding adding wording related to social events and noise in the conditions. It was the consensus of the Planning Commission to amend condition number seven to read as follows:

The use of the property shall not interfere with the residential character of the neighborhood and shall not be so pervasive as to negatively impact the neighborhood in any way.

A motion was made by Mr. Abbott to recommend approval to the Town Council of **CUP12-0118 – Randolph-Macon College Conditional Use Permit – 303 Caroline Street** with the following conditions:

- 1.) *The property shall not be used for student housing (including fraternities and sororities).*
- 2) *The exterior will be maintained in a manner that is in keeping with the existing architecture and follow the Town's usual approval process.*
- 3) *Exterior lighting, and interior lighting seen from the street, will be in keeping with the normal neighborhood lighting (this includes both type and as well as how lighting will be utilized during the evening).*
- 4) *In the event 303 Caroline is returned to residential use the College will ensure the house is suitable for use as a single family residence.*
- 5) *Parking will be in keeping with the neighborhood character with any changes subject to the Town's usual approval process.*
- 6) *The handicap ramp will be located to the rear side or rear of the house.*
- 7) *The use of the property shall not interfere with the residential character of the neighborhood and shall not be so pervasive as to negatively impact the neighborhood in any way.*

ROLL CALL:

Ms. Jewell	Aye
Mr. Flanagan	Aye
Mr. Abbott	Aye
Mr. Stevens	Abstain
Mr. Brown	Aye

With four ayes and one Abstaining, the motion passed.

Mr. Brown thanked everyone for coming and stated how pleasant it was to see how the College and the neighbors were civil and pleasantly working together and it is a good model on how to do things.

Mr. Bob Carson – 301 College Avenue.

Mr. Carson stated that he wanted to commend the Planning Commission and the College stating that it gives a person a really good feeling about living in the Town of Ashland and the fact that things can be worked out without going through legal ramifications.

Mr. Davies stated that the College feels this is a critical project for the College as they try to bring funding back into the College, and Mr. Davies wanted to thank everyone involved for working with them so well.

ACTION ITEMS:

A. None.

REPORT OF COMMITTEES:

Town Council – George Spagna

Dr. Spagna stated that the recent Town Council Actions are listed in the Planning Commission packet.

Dr. Spagna stated that a couple of actions were not in the Planning Commission packet because they had just taken place at last night's Town Council meeting, and they are as follows:

The Town Council voted to recommend to the Circuit Court the appointment of Lou Ann Jewell to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

The pet waste stations have been replaced with new receptacles to minimize the rain water impact on the waste bags. The previous pet waste stations were causing waste contamination to staff when then tried to empty them. Dr. Spagna encouraged the responsible pedestrians who do pick up the doggie waste to please tie the bags to avoid the waste getting on the staff when they empty the containers; and if there is not a container nearby then please take it home and discard the waste appropriately.

Ashland Main Street Association - Nora Amos

Ms. Amos stated that the Ashland Main Street Association (AMSA) will hold a business round table for the arts organizations and businesses later this month.

Ms. Amos stated that the AMSA is also working on the Cross Brothers 100th anniversary celebration, which will be held in May of this year.

Ms. Amos stated that AMSA has agreed to take over the Train Day event and that CSX has donated funds for that event as well; in the past this event has been organized by Mr. Donlon with the assistance of the Town staff.

Ms. Amos stated that AMSA co-hosted an event with Gallery Flux along with Hugh Joyce on January 26th and a portion of all of the art sales went to the AMSA organization.

Ms. Amos stated that if the Planning Commission has any questions regarding AMSA or would like to get involved with the organization to please contact Mr. Tom Wulf.

Economic Development Authority – Nora Amos

Ms. Amos stated that the Economic Development Authority has voted to extend their Revitalization Grant Program to be an open ended program, and that Mrs. Thompson is working with some property owners who are getting applications in for that grant.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ms. Amos stated that the Pufferbelly Park has not had playground equipment for quite some time, and that the Parks and Recreational Committee have been reviewing several different plans for replacement of the equipment that was removed. The new equipment will be ordered soon and should be set up by the middle of April. Ms. Amos stated that the Parks and Recreational Committee are also working on upgrades to the skateboard park area.

UP COMING ITEMS:

Sign Ordinance – Ms. Amos stated that staff has been working on the Sign Ordinance and that they will be getting that out to the Planning Commission to review for the March meeting.

The Planning Commission took a recess at 8:05 p.m.

The Planning Commission reconvened at 8:10 p.m.

Ms. Erard reviewed with the Planning Commissioners down zoning as two categories, as a piecemeal and as a comprehensive down zoning with handouts provided.

Planning Commission Minutes - Draft
February 8, 2012

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.