



Planning Commission

Regular Session

March 6, 2007

7:30 p.m.

At approximately 7:30 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers, Chairman Bonadeo called to order the Regular Session of the Planning Commission. In addition to Chairman Bonadeo, present were Bruce Evans, Eileen Cobb, Karen Davis, Cela Burge, and Joan Natali. Ken Kuttler was absent. Also present were two members of the public and Town Planner Jason Pruitt.

All observed a moment of silence to reflect on the troubles in Iraq, and then all recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No one chose to speak.

Motion made by Bruce Evans seconded by Cela Burge to amend the agenda by hearing New Business prior to hearing Old Business.

Motion to approve the minutes of February 12, 2007 as amended made by Cela Burge, seconded by Eileen Cobb and unanimously approved.

Motion to approve the minutes of February 06, 2007 as amended made by Cela Burge, seconded by Bruce Evans and unanimously approved.

REPORT PRESENTATIONS

A. Town Council

Jason Pruitt presented the agenda for the last Town Council meeting and asked if anyone had questions related to the items. He also mentioned an item was added to the agenda to address design controls for the Harbor area. Staff was directed to draft an RFP for the design controls.

Chairman Bonadeo also pointed out the Public Hearing date for Water/Sewer connection charges. He indicated the Hearing would have a bearing on cash proffers the Commissioners had discussed in the past. Chairman Bonadeo pointed out the Council is considering increasing rates to cover expenses and described and explained the formula proposed to determine rates. The Hearing was scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 13, 2007.

B. Northampton County Joint Local Planning Commission

Bruce Evans commented on the public input the County has received on the Comprehensive Plan and the draft zoning ordinance amendments. He mentioned the letters coming in addressed many different areas. The County Joint Local Planning Commission had only identified the individual topics and

would be addressing them in priority order. Commissioner Evans touched on the confusion over the zoning to agriculture as many subdivisions were able to be built upon, but there were some that would be affected by the set back requirements.

Chairman Bonadeo asked how the economic impact study would affect the matter. He asked if someone would be hired to complete the study. Mr. Evans indicated the Board of Supervisors would address that issue and that the Board of Supervisors had asked the Chamber of Commerce to be involved.

Commissioner Evans also mentioned a group of studies which outlined the agricultural aspects and the growth of aquaculture which supports the two counties of the Eastern Shore.

An additional discussion over the County's desire to direct people into the Towns, Villages and Hamlets led to tax incentives that would induce this move away from the agriculture lines.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Planning Commission Meeting Schedule

Cela Burge opened this topic by remarking on the subjects the Planning Commission had been dealing with in the recent past and the items that needed to be addressed made for a long monthly meeting. She reiterated a suggestion that perhaps a second meeting would be beneficial to the Commission. Ms. Burge offered the idea that there would be a standing agreement that the meeting would go to a certain hour and be recessed. If that occurred the agreement would be to follow with a second meeting on a specified day.

The third Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. was designated as the convenient day with the ending time targeted for 9:00 p.m.

The Regular Session would be targeted to end at 10:00 p.m.

B. Election of Officers

Chairman Bonadeo alerted the Commissioners the rumors circulating that he was leaving the area were false and that he was determined to stay with the Planning Commission to work through the Comprehensive Plan and other items of importance.

He then opened the floor for nominations of Chairman and Vice-Chairman to serve for one year as required by the By-Laws.

Motion made by Eileen Cobb, seconded by Cela Burge and unanimously approved to reappoint Tom Bonadeo as Chairman of the Planning Commission.

Motion made by Bruce Evans, seconded by Eileen Cobb and unanimously approved to reappoint Joan Natali as Vice-Chairman of the Planning Commission.

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Master Tree Plan and Tree Conservation and Preservation Ordinance
Joan Natali indicated Steve Bennett made a good observation of the ties between the Historic District and the Bay Creek District and asked for further discussion of how the item should be handled.

Cela Burge stated the Tree Group had written the plan to apply to the entire Town, not just one district. The intention of the plan was for consistency and general guidance. She referenced both section 4 of the Zoning Ordinance and the PUD document then stated her interpretation was that the plan applied to the entire Town. She then stated it might be difficult to have the ordinance to apply to every district, so perhaps the PUD documents should be submitted as part of the ordinance.

Chairman Bonadeo pointed out the PUD documents were more restrictive than the proposed tree ordinance. He implied different areas of Town required different guidelines, specifically berms which conceal structures.

Commissioner Natali broached the matter of statutory authority to cut down trees on private property that may be endangering a neighbor's property. It was determined the Town had no such authority.

Chairman Bonadeo stated the tree inventory was already changing, and that someone should be directed to keep it up to date.

Eileen Cobb suggested a committee be formed to go street by street to begin implementation of the Master Plan. Cela Burge stated some communities actually had a Tree Commission.

Motion made by Joan Natali, seconded by Eileen Cobb to forward the Master Tree Plan to the Town Council with the recommendation to pass and note that it is a first phase of a living plan that must be updated on an ongoing basis and that the Ordinance be forwarded to Town Council with the recommendation they adopt.

Karen Davis asked that the recommendation be made that the Tree Plan be an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan.

Joan Natali moved the previous motion be amended to add the recommendation that the Tree Plan be an addendum to the current and future Comprehensive Plan. Eileen Cobb seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.

Joan Natali moved to amend the previous motion as follows: forward the Master Tree Plan to the Town Council with the recommendation to pass and note that it is a first phase of a living plan that must be updated on an ongoing basis; that the Ordinance be forwarded to Town Council with the recommendation they adopt; that the Tree Plan be an addendum to the current and future Comprehensive Plan; and recommend to Town Council the I-Tree US Forestry Services software package be used to populate and maintain the tree inventory. The motion was seconded by Bruce Evans and unanimously approved.

B. Comprehensive Plan/Population Study Status Report

Chairman Bonadeo indicated the Building Department gathered some of the needed information as they worked on the Block Grant study and suggested the Commissioners co-ordinate with them to get the preferred data for the Population Study. Strategies to complete the study were discussed.

Karen Davis remarked on the implementation strategy of the Comprehensive Plan. The priorities were discussed.

Chairman Bonadeo asked for this item to be moved to another session to allow the Commissioners time to reflect on the priorities and bring ideas back to the table.

Chairman Bonadeo also asked that items C & D be moved to the next session.

C. Harbor District and Historic Harbor Overlay District

D. Historic Town Entrance Corridor Overlay District

E. Time Periods for Application Review

Karen Davis stated her understanding was the conflict between two different requirements of the State: 1) The Planning Commissioners' deliberations must be completed within 100 days; 2) VDOT giving themselves 120 days to deliberate.

Mr. Pruitt replied saying he had contacted others around the State who would be in a similar position but no one felt there would be an issue as their deliberations are generally completed within 30 days. He also stated that VDOT representatives also completed their processes within 30 days. Further discussion concluded the recommendation the Planning Commissioners made could be contingent on the VDOT response.

Ms. Davis opened discussion on having public input sessions early in the process of Conditional Use Permits. It was debated that deliberation should not take place prior to a Public Hearing. Cela Burge pointed out care needed to be taken not to be giving reactions to an incomplete application.

Motion made to recess the meeting made by Cela Burge, seconded by Eileen Cobb and unanimously approved.

Chairman Bonadeo

Town Clerk