



**Radford Planning Commission
Monday, April 19, 2021
Municipal Building**

Members Present: Mr. Collier
Mr. Gillespie
Ms. Hamden
Mrs. Huntington
Dr. Pearce
Mr. Watson, Vice-Chairperson
Mr. Howard, Chairperson

Absent
Staff/Visitors: Melissa Skelton, City Staff

Chairperson Howard called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm in the Radford City Council Chambers at 10 Robertson Street, Radford Virginia, a quorum was present.

Approval of Agenda

Chairperson Howard made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Collier, subject to correction of the date to April 19.

Voting Yes: Mr. Collier, Mr. Gillespie, Ms. Hamden, Mrs. Huntington, Dr. Pearce, Mr. Howard

Approval of Minutes for March 15, 2021

Minutes were recommended for approval by Commissioner Huntington, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie.

Voting Yes: Mr. Collier, Dr. Pearce, Mr. Gillespie, Ms. Hamden, Mrs. Huntington, Mr. Howard
Abstain:

Public Address: No public comments provided.

NEW BUSINESS:

SUBJECT: Special Use Permit request from Ellet Valley Investments

SUMMARY: SP-21-001 – (1129 East Main Street) Ellet Valley Investments has submitted an application seeking approval of a Special Use Permit (SUP) for Tax Map #5-(1)-62T, 1129 East Main Street. The SUP application request is to allow residential use on the second floor of the existing building within the B-3 Business District.

Mr. Joe Fortier attended to answer any questions the commission had. Mrs. Huntington asked about residential trash collection. Mr. Fortier answered that planning is being undertaken to find an appropriate space at present. There is some possible space behind the building as well as some other space nearby being considered for other buildings also owned by this developer. Mrs. Huntington remarked that it would be a shame to give up a parking spot for this purpose, but Mr. Fortier stated that would be done if necessary.

Mr. Watson joined the meeting during this part of the meeting. Mr. Fortier remarked that his firm understands this is consistent with the planned future uses of downtown and increasing density. The commission agrees wholeheartedly. Parking is always a concern in spots like this, but demand is consistently strong for units like these. The commission is also pleased with Mr. Fortier's efforts to maintain historical character in properties like this.

This recommendation will go forward to council on April 26. Mr. Gillespie made the motion, seconded by Ms. Hamden. Mr. Watson disclosed that he had done work for Mr. Fortier in the past but is not involved in this project at all. Therefore he is not obligated to stand down with a conflict.

An individual role call was held:

Mr. Collier - yes
Mr. Gillespie - yes
Ms. Hamden - yes
Mrs. Huntington - yes
Dr. Pearce - yes
Mr. Watson - yes
Mr. Howard – yes

Mr. Howard asked about what had been found behind the façade on the second floor. Mr. Fortier stated that while the first floor was lovely Art Deco, the second floor was not. The developer is investigating possible options for coming up with aesthetically pleasing, authentic options.

Mr. Watson also asked whether the Planning Commission was doing anything to hinder development in the City that could be improved. Mr. Fortier responded that right now, there aren't places to build the kind of development that needs to be built, like affordable housing for working folks. The zoning isn't suitable for it. Taylor Hollow does historical redevelopment as well as very nice, energy efficient residential developments. They would be happy to build the kind of housing Radford presently lacks.

In Mr. Fortier's opinion, the problem is that people won't let go of properties and it's difficult to find properties that can be put into play for redevelopment. There is no incentive for owners to move on their properties. The city needs to either expand its limits or convert more area to residential development.

STAFF REPORT-

Ms. Skelton has put out an ad for a community outreach survey for east downtown. Please look for it and contribute to it. It is being coordinated by the NRVRC. She has also asked the NRVRC to put out a bid for reworking the zoning ordinance. The ETA would be 12-18 months to put it together. The process would include community engagement as well as planning commission involvement.

Mr. Howard asked about the housing study. Ms. Skelton said that she had received a draft and is expecting the final version any day.

Mr. Howard also encouraged us to consider mixed use revisions around the west end and Grove Avenue. The challenge is to get people to move on their property. By changing the zoning and making these properties developable, it may provide a reasonable path for people to part with their properties.

The cost to the city of changing zoning is advertising and contacting affected property owners. It would be more efficient to do this as part of changing the zoning ordinance and do it all at once.

COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Hamden – Appreciated Mr. Watson’s question and the possibility to brainstorm together. It’s important to create a city we all want to live in, where we can engage together. Pleased that there weren’t any really unexpected surprises – we’ve started to work on all of these things.

Mr. Collier – No comment

Mr. Gillespie – Agrees with Ms. Hamden. It was good to hear from Mr. Fortier and looking forward to seeing plan for trash. Mixed use will definitely help things open on the West End.

Mrs. Huntington – No comment

Dr. Pearce – No comment

Mr. Watson – No comment

Mr. Howard – Expresses condolences to Ms. Skelton for the loss of her mother this week. We are here to support her and her family.

A motion was made by Commissioner Watson to adjourn the meeting at 6:05 pm, seconded by Commissioner Collier.

Voting Yes: Mr. Collier, Mr. Gillespie, Ms. Hamden, Mrs. Huntington, Dr. Pearce, Mr. Howard, Mr. Watson

Voting No:

Abstain:

Submitted by: Annie R. Pearce, Secretary

Date: April 19, 2021