



TOWN OF OCCOQUAN

Town Hall, 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125
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PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, December 19, 2018

6:30 PM

TOWN HALL - 314 MILL STREET

1. Citizen Comments
2. Approval of Minutes of November 27, 2018
3. Approval of Parking Study Recommendation Report
4. Annual Report Discussion
5. CIP Budget Discussion
6. Chair/Town Council Report

Eliot Perkins
Planning Commission Chair



TOWN OF OCCOQUAN
Town Hall – 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125
MEETING DATE: 2018-11-28

MEETING TIME: 6:30 PM

Present: Ann Kisling, Jenn Mathis, Eliot Perkins, Ryan Somma

Absent: none

1. Call to Order

The Planning Commission Public Hearing was called to order by Eliot Perkins on 2018-11-28, at 6:41 p.m.

Secretary for Meeting

Ryan Somma took minutes for the meeting.

2. Citizen Comments

There were no citizens comments.

3. Approval of Minutes of October 23, 2018

Jenn Mathis noted two grammatical errors in the minutes that needed correcting.

Ann Kisling moved to approve the Planning Commission meeting minutes of 2018-10-23 with the amendment that the errors be corrected. Jenn Mathis seconded the motion. The motion carried by poll vote, unanimously.

4. Approval of Parking Study Recommendation Report

Eliot Perkins opened the discussion by noting that the Draft Parking Study Recommendations were written before the Commission knew about the significant new residential and commercial development coming to town. As a result, he felt an update to the document to provide additional parking options, such as timed and paid parking, that will encourage parking space turnover, push commercial employees to town-owned parking, and accommodate increased future demand. He presented Commission members with a draft document that was informed by a conversation he had with John Reilly of JMT who co-authored the parking study and recommended adding the document as an addendum to the Commission's report. Jenn Mathis noted that the intention of the policy should be to encourage people to enjoy the town but not stay all day.

Chris Coon noted that per recent Town Council meetings, that there was the potential to repaint the town spaces and make them wider, which would further reduce the number of spaces. Ann Kisling noted that, additionally, with AirBnb, more people would be parking overnight.

Eliot Perkins requested that additional pros and cons be added to the document regarding making Commerce street two way, such as reducing traffic to restaurants in town. Chris Coon added that removing two stop signs for commuters cutting through town could encourage more cut-through traffic.

Chris Coon provided an update on VDOT improvements to Mill Street that were moving forward, would bring intersections up to ADA compliance, and allow for stripping in crosswalks for pedestrian safety. There was also a possibility of setting up raised crosswalks at a later point, but not with VDOT funding. Jenn Mathis requested that Chris Coon contact VDOT to determine if the town could install raised sidewalks at the same time other improvements were being made to the intersections to save money.

Ryan Somma took as action items to update the recommendations report to include JMT-specific language, additional considerations for two-way Commerce Street, and the provided addendum.

5. Annual Report Discussion / CIP Budget Discussion

Ryan Somma provided members with print outs of the Comprehensive Plan Action Item Tracking from the 2017 Annual Report. Chris Coon explained that the Annual report articulates who is on the Planning Commission, what Comprehensive Plan (CP) action items have been accomplished, and what are the main and secondary priorities for next fiscal year. Eliot Perkins requested members chime in and recommend items from the CP.

Jenn Mathis noted that #9 "Based on the parking study, the Town should work on an improved parking management and execute the plan. Courses of action should be developed to improve commercial district and nearby residential area parking rules." was already in progress with the PC Parking Study Recommendations as part of having a plan and executing a plan. Ryan Somma noted that #12 "Encourage use of business-owned vacant land for commercial parking." complimented this as part of recommendations for timed parking.

Jenn Mathis also recommended #20 "The Town will pursue designation of Tanyard Hill Road as a State scenic byway as one way of preserving its character," #21 "The Town should plan in its CIP for how to implement and finance improvements to the Town's gateways." and #36 "Encourage stewardship of the Town's natural resources through increased awareness of environmental impacts from daily activities." As part of a coordinated set of action items that would focus on town beautification. Noting that #36 could involve coordination with groups like Friends of the Occoquan and encourage in-Town grass-roots efforts like "Adopt a Road" for Tanyard Hill to get residents involved with VDOT providing safety measures. Chris Coon noted that this could involve the development of a "Community Plan," where residents could define what they think is important to Occoquan. Eliot Perkins recommended #18 "The Town should conduct a community study to improve and expand the use of brick sidewalks to the Town center. The study should also incorporate streetscaping, beautification, and woodland protection." as complimenting these community-driven efforts of improving the Town's appearance. Jenn Mathis noted that this would also include #50 "Beautification and landscaping efforts should enhance the aesthetics of the Town." Ryan Somma added #42 "Occoquan will work with PWC and LRPA in order to maintain a woodland preserve buffer and scenic bypass along Tanyard Hill Road." as falling into both beautification and town gateway improvement efforts.

Eliot Perkins noted that all recommendations would need to be framed in terms of budgetary priorities.

As part of efforts to promote the town, Jenn Mathis proposed #37 "Planning Commission will meet with representatives from both Prince William County and Fairfax County Planning Commissions in order to agree on a mutually beneficial and cooperative growth plan for the town and its shared surrounding areas." and #38 "Create a dialogue with LRPRA and the Lorton Work House Arts Center in order to enhance town goals that promote the coordination of our surrounding residential areas and neighboring artistic commercial enterprises." Ryan Somma noted that complimenting this was a Planning Commission item #58 "Pursue designation as Main Street America community." which former PC member Heather Ozuna had previously pursued but had not been completed.

Additional items raised for consideration were #55 "Develop a Green Business Recognition Program to highlight and encourage eco-friendly business practices and initiatives. Businesses to be recognized that have received a Green Certificate from a third-party organization." and #57 "Participate in VML's Green Government Challenge. Obtain at least 100 'Green points' to obtain 'Green Government' certification."

6. Chair/Town Council Report

Eliot Perkins provided an update on the Jennings Mills development that the next step will be for the developer to provide an initial site plan that the Town Staff will review.

7. Adjournment

With the December holidays, the Commission scheduled to meet next on Monday, December 17, 2018.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Eliot Perkins
Chair, Planning Commission

Submitted by Ryan Somma, Planning Commission Secretary



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Planning Commission

Draft Annual Report 2018

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Meet the Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is a board of town residents appointed by the Town Council to advise the Council in all planning and land use matters; to review and make recommendations regarding the Comprehensive Plan, subdivision and zoning ordinances, and other land use regulations; and to conduct public hearings related to planning matters in the town. Sections 2-241 through 2-249 of the Town Code address the activities of the Planning Commission.

Elliott Perkins	Chairman	Appointment: 5/2/2017 - 6/30/2020
Ann Kisling	Vice Chair	Appointment: 5/4/2016 - 5/2/2020
Ryan Somma	Secretary	Appointment: 5/2/2017 - 2/2/2019
Jenn Mathis		Appointment: 7/24/2018- 8/7/2020

Meeting Dates and Time

The Occoquan Planning Commission meets at 6:30 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Occoquan Town Hall when it has business to conduct. Notices of meetings are posed in advance at the Occoquan Town Hall and the Occoquan Post Office. To reach the Planning commission, contact the Town Clerk by telephone at (703) 491-1918, or at info@occoquanva.gov.



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Bylaws Update

At the start of the year, the Planning Commission's bylaws had not been updated since 1981. After attending Commissioner training in 2017, members of the Commission felt it was important to update the bylaws based on what they had learned in that training. The new bylaws defined the purpose of the Commission, its duties, expectations for members and officers, and procedures. A section was also added for onboarding new members, which included a copy of the Commission By-Laws, Town Comprehensive Plan, and the book *Zoning 101: A Practical Introduction: Third Edition* by Carl Stephani and Marilyn Stephani to become familiarized with the role of the Commission, zoning terminology, and Town priorities

Also of note, the bylaws update included moving meeting times to the fourth Thursday of each month to more immediately precede Town Council meetings and reduce the amount of time between residents having site plans approved between the two governmental bodies. Additionally, meetings have been moved from 7:00pm to 6:30pm in order to allow for more agenda items and more substantial discussions.

JMT Parking Study Recommendations Report

In 2018, the Planning Commission conducted a thorough review and discussion of *The Town of Occoquan, Virginia Parking Study* submitted by JMT in November 2017. This review included a meeting where members took a walk around Town in order review signage, private and public parking, and traffic conditions quantified in the report. Based on the JMT analysis and thoughtful consideration of the needs of Town residents, the Commission collaborated on a report recommending what action items from the JMT report should be prioritized, the pros and cons of these recommendations, and which recommendations the Commission felt would not immediately benefit the Town's parking and cut-through traffic situation.



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Comprehensive Plan Action Item Tracking

The Planning Commission reviewed the action items that are still open in the Comprehensive Plan and are recommending the following priorities for 2019 for the Planning Commission, Town Council, and Town Staff.

1. Parking and Cut-Through Traffic

Action Items: 9, 10, 11, 12

With Comprehensive Plan action items #1 and #8 "A new Town parking study should be conducted based on current and future expected growth." completed, it follows that action item #9 "Based on the parking study, the Town should work on an improved parking management and execute the plan. Courses of action should be developed to improve commercial district and nearby residential area parking rules." The Planning Commission will provide their analysis and recommendations based on the study, which the Town Council may factor into their prioritizations.

Some of the Planning Commission's recommendations are intended to further other action items in the Comprehensive Plan. For example, signage and map recommendations will further action item #10 "Continue to look for suitable close in sites and develop Town-owned parking lots." While timed or metered parking will further #12 "Encourage use of business-owned vacant land for commercial parking." Action item #11 "Continue to require developers to provide appropriate off-street parking" will be an ongoing consideration in the approval of new developments.

2. Occoquan Beautification

Action Items: 18, 21, 36, 42, 50

Keeping Occoquan beautiful and inviting is a high priority for Planning Commission members. To further this goal, prioritizing #21 "The Town should plan in its CIP for how to implement and finance improvements to the Town's gateways" will create a welcoming façade for the Town, draw attention to it from outside county roads, and promote the Town.

In the interest of promoting community involvement and grassroots stewardship in Town, #18 "The Town should conduct a community study to improve and expand the use of brick sidewalks to the Town center. The study should also incorporate streetscaping, beautification, and woodland protection." compliments #36 "Encourage stewardship of the Town's natural resources through increased awareness of environmental impacts from daily activities." and #42 "Occoquan will work with PWC and LRPA in order to maintain a woodland preserve buffer and scenic bypass along Tanyard Hill Road." These efforts could involve coordination with additional groups like Friends of the Occoquan and encourage in-Town grass-roots efforts like "Adopt a Road" for Tanyard Hill to get residents involved with VDOT



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providing safety measures. For Town budgeting priorities, #50 *“Beautification and landscaping efforts should enhance the aesthetics of the Town,”* contributes to the above efforts.

Action item #20 *“The Town will pursue designation of Tanyard Hill Road as a State scenic byway as one way of preserving its character.”* was researched by the Planning Commission in 2018, and it was found that the road would need to be 10 miles long or connect to other scenic byway roads adding up to 10 miles in order to qualify for this status. The Commission will continue to consider options on this item.

3. Promoting the Town

Action Items: 37, 38, 58

In the interests of promoting the town, better understanding the Town’s place in the larger surrounding communities, and forging mutually beneficial partnerships the Planning Commission will take on #37 *“Planning Commission will meet with representatives from both Prince William County and Fairfax County Planning Commissions in order to agree on a mutually beneficial and cooperative growth plan for the town and its shared surrounding areas.”* and 38 *“Create a dialogue with LRPRA and the Lorton Work House Arts Center in order to enhance town goals that promote the coordination of our surrounding residential areas and neighboring artistic commercial enterprises.”*

The Planning Commission will also resume research on #58 *“Pursue designation as Main Street America community,”* which was started but progress was stalled due to Commission member turnover.

4. Green Government

Action Items: 55, 57

Finally, in coinciding with stewardship of the Town and its natural resources, #55 *“Develop a Green Business Recognition Program to highlight and encourage eco-friendly business practices and initiatives. Businesses to be recognized that have received a Green Certificate from a third-party organization.”* and #57 *“Participate in VML’s Green Government Challenge. Obtain at least 100 ‘Green points’ to obtain ‘Green Government’ certification.”* will compliment both beautification efforts in Town and promotion efforts.



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Other Planning Commission Operations

Date	Description
2018-01-01	Kiely Court Final Subdivision Plat Revision
2018-07-24	Site Plan, 113 Poplar Lane (Pool) Approval
2018-09-25	Kiely Court Site Plan Revision