



The following minutes are a summary of items on the agenda. This meeting may be viewed in its entirety by accessing the video of the same date online via the Town's website at www.frontroyalva.com for a limited time.

The Planning Commission meeting of the Town of Front Royal, Virginia was held on March 19, 2025, at 7:00 PM at the Warren County Government Center.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Marshner called the March 19, 2025 meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Marshner welcomed the newest Planning Commissioner Teresa Fedoryka.

ROLL CALL

Present: Connie Marshner, Chairman
Allen Neel, Vice Chairman
Andrew Brooks, Commissioner
Teresa Fedoryka, Commissioner

Absent: Megan Marrazzo, Commissioner

Staff Present: Lauren Kopishke, Planning Director / Zoning Administrator
George Sonnett, Town Attorney
Connie L. Potter, Executive Assistant, Clerk of the Planning Commission

ADDITION/DELETION OF ITEMS FROM THE AGENDA

Vice Chairman Neel moved, seconded by Commissioner Brooks that the zoning text amendment #2500062 be removed from the agenda and remitted to the April 2, 2025 work session.

VOTE: Yes – Brooks, Marshner, Neel, Fedoryka
No – N/A
Abstain – N/A
Absent – Marrazzo

ROLL CALL



APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- February 19, 2025 – Regular Meeting

Commissioner Brooks moved, seconded by Commissioner Fedoryka to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2025 regular meeting as written.

VOTE: Yes – Brooks, Marshner, Neel, Fedoryka

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – Marrazzo

ROLL CALL

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Chairman Collin Waters representing the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) shared that the Board had been reviewing the Historic District Guidelines. Currently the district is zoned R-3 for multi-family dwellings such as townhomes and apartments constructed on a single lot. This conflicts with the BARs mission statement to preserve and protect the character and beauty of the historic district. With help from town staff the BAR has drafted language to amend the existing zoning ordinance for the residential portion of the historic district and will submit that language to the Planning Commission for their consideration. Chairman Waters stated he will send the language to Ms. Kopishke to forward to the Planning Commission.

CONSENT AGENDA

- **2500072** – A request for a Special Use Permit submitted by Warren County Community Health Coalition for a lodging house located at 506 N. Royal Avenue, identified by Tax Map 20A5, Section 7, Block 18, Lots 3 and 4. The property is zoned C-1, Community Business District and is located in the Entrance Corridor. (*Consent to advertise for public hearing at the April 16, 2025 regular Planning Commission meeting.*)
- **2500100** – A request for a Special Use Permit submitted by Divinum Auxilium Academy for a private school located at 16 N. Royal Avenue, identified by Tax Map 20A5, Section 11, Lot 15. The property is zoned C-2, Downtown Business District and is located in the Entrance Corridor. (*Consent to advertise for public hearing at the April 16, 2025 regular Planning Commission meeting.*)



Chairman Marshner moved, seconded by Commissioner Brooks that the Planning Commission approve the consent agenda to publicly advertise for a public hearing in April as presented.

Vote: Yes – Marshner, Brooks, Neel, Fedoryka

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – Marrazzo

ROLL CALL

PUBLIC HEARING

- **2500049** – A request for a Special Exception from Town Code Chapter 148-820.D.6 submitted by Rappahannock HC LLC for property located at 1321 Happy Creek Road, identified by Tax Map 20A21-2-4 to reduce the required minimum street pavement width from thirty-six feet (36') to twenty-nine (29').

Ms. Kopishke explained that the special exception request was to reduce the required street width for the new subdivision that was approved by Town Council in August 2024. The request is to reduce the required road width from thirty-six feet (36') curb to curb down to twenty-nine feet (29'). VDOT standards require only twenty-four feet (24') of width from curb to curb when there is parking on one (1) side of the street. When parking on both sides of the street VDOT requires twenty-nine feet (29'). This subdivision contains approximately ninety-six (96) lots. The applicant is proposing twenty-nine foot (29') road widths with parking on one side of the street and raised crosswalks which was requested by citizens at the August 2024 public hearing with Town Council. Ms. Kopishke provided a virtual presentation showing parking scenarios with a twenty-nine foot (29') street width. In addition, she reviewed portions of Town Code related to the request and the criteria with which decisions need to be made during the review process.

Planning literature and transportation studies tend to promote narrower streets as a traffic calming measure. Narrower streets tend to slow drivers down. By tying into Oden Ridge and Happy Creek Road, this development is increasing the interconnectivity of local streets which ultimately reduces volume on primary roads. With the reduction of asphalt/impervious surfaces by approximately an acre allows for larger yard area which equals less stormwater going into the Town's treatment plant.

The applicant Chris Hornung, Chief Development Officer for Rappahannock Development Group who is the owner and developer of the project said that when they were before the Planning Commission and Town Council there were numerous citizen comments raising concerns for two (2) issues. The first being runoff onsite and issues with the existing Oden Street running along the edge of their property. They determined that the cause of the runoff is that the bulk of the stormwater for the subdivision was draining down Oden Street and being discharged into a large ditch between their property and the Oden Ridge property.



This will be addressed in their site design. The second concern was regarding cut through traffic and individuals driving too fast. They agreed they would work with staff and create a traffic calming plan for the project to slow down traffic. When looking to address traffic calming measures that are available they found that typically those measures are by making 3 or 4-way stops wherever possible, raised crosswalks and the number one recommendation is the size of the roadway. He noted that extra wide streets cause drivers to believe they can drive faster. Mr. Hornung stated it was their desire to go with a higher road width than the VDOT standard, which is twenty-four feet (24') wide with parking on one side. He gave a virtual presentation of Oden Street and Imboden Drive as well as developments located in Woodbridge, VA that have twenty-nine feet (29') wide streets.

Each lot will have a 2-car garage, and some will contain a 3-car garage. Each lot can accommodate six (6) parking spaces. Twenty-nine feet (29') road width will allow for two (2) emergency services vehicles to pass each other and still allow for parking on one side of the street.

Vice Chairman Neel asked if stop signs, raised crosswalks and narrow streets were a hard commitment.

Mr. Hornung answered yes that it was included in their current site plan draft. It is not a proffered condition however when the site plan is approved it would be a requirement of the plan.

Chairman Marshner opened the public hearing.

She explained the process for public hearing speakers.

Kristine Dawson, 1212 Oden Street, Front Royal, VA. Ms. Dawson explained she would be directly impacted by the proposed construction and noted she has been actively communicating with the Town Manager, the Mayor and VDOT. She's not opposed to smaller streets because she knows how fast people go. She expressed concern of the additional 580 cars coming down her street where her children play. Ms. Dawson also expressed concern about the 3 to 4-ways stops because they currently have some 2-way stops and people do not always stop at them. Recently there has been numerous accidents at these stops. She believes protecting the children now will prevent issues later.

Martin Wyne, 1210 Oden Street, Front Royal, VA. Mr. Wyne requested that the developer give them three (3) speed bumps. He expressed concern for the safety of children.

There were no additional speakers.

Chairman Marshner closed the public hearing.



Commissioner Brooks moved, seconded by Vice Chairman Neel that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to the Town Council for a request for a Special Exception #2500049 from Town Code Chapter 148-820.D.6 submitted by Rappahannock HC, LLC for property located at 1321 Happy Creek Road, identified by Tax Map 20A21-2-4 to reduce the required minimum street pavement width from thirty-six feet (36') to twenty-nine (29').

Vice Chairman Neel stated that he believes what the applicant is proposing will address traffic concerns. The concerns related to traffic on Ewell Street, Oden Street and Imboden Drive would need to be look into by the Town.

Commissioner Brooks said that he agrees with much of what Vice Chairman Neel stated. The issues on Oden Street are beyond the scope of this project and is something the Town needs to look at in the future. Commissioner Brooks stated he supports the Special Exception application request.

Vote: Yes – Fedoryka, Marshner, Neel, Brooks
No – N/A
Abstain – N/A
Absent – Marrazzo

ROLL CALL

- **2500051** – An Ordinance Amendment to amend Front Royal Town Code Chapter 175-137 pertaining to fees.

Chairman Marshner moved, seconded by Vice Chairman Neel to postpone consideration of item 2500051 the ordinance amendment to amend Front Royal Town Code fees, charges and expenses to the next regular meeting on April 16, 2025.

Vote: Yes – Marshner, Neel, Brooks, Fedoryka
No – N/A
Abstain – N/A
Absent – Marrazzo

ROLL CALL

- **2500054** – A request for a Special Use Permit submitted by Heritage Hall XIII, LLC for the expansion of the existing skilled nursing facility building with a new building addition for twenty (20) beds and associated facilities located at 400 W. Strasburg Road, identified by Tax Map 20A11, Section 4, Lot 23. The property is zoned R-2, Residential District.

Ms. Kopishke explained this was a Special Use Permit request for an addition at 400 W. Strasburg Road. Nursing homes are allowed in the R-2 zoning district by Special Use Permit. When the application for an addition was submitted it was determined that a Special Use Permit had not been previously obtained. Therefore the use was nonconforming. This Special Use Permit will bring



them into conformance and allow them to expand the use which is a new twenty (20) bed wing. Ms. Kopishke gave a virtual presentation showing the existing lot and the location of the proposed addition and stormwater management pond.

Ken Griffin from Charles P Johnson stated they were the engineers for the project. Also present was the architect for the project. Mr. Griffin explained that with the aging communities it was of vital importance to take the older buildings and expand them as much as possible. This is being done in other jurisdictions and is well received. They are roughly one-hundred feet (100') from Strasburg Road. The existing pond on the site handles the existing structure however with the addition of the new building which will create more impervious water they will install an additional feature to take care of that as required. It may not be a pond but possibly a rain garden, some sort of a Best Management Practices (BMP) facility which will work in tandem with the existing pond.

Chairman Marshner opened the public hearing.

Robert Canby, 274 Bass Lane, Winchester, VA. stated he was the administrator for Heritage Hall and explained that the addition was incredibly important to this community. They currently have a waiting list of over one hundred (100) people needing their care. This is the first step to making that happen.

There were no speakers. Chairman Marshner closed the public hearing.

Vice Chairman Neel moved, seconded by Commissioner Brooks that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to the Town Council for Special Use Permit #2500054 for a building addition at 400 W. Strasburg Road.

Vote: Yes – Marshner, Fedoryka, Neel, Brooks

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – Marrazzo

ROLL CALL

COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS

There were no comments from Commission members.

PLANNING DIRECTOR REPORT

Ms. Kopishke reviewed the February monthly report.

At the next Planning Commission work session they will be discussing alternative housing/shelter definitions.



Staff will be bringing to the Planning Commission a proposed text amendment from the Board of Architectural Review (BAR). At the BARs last work session along with talking about the Historic District Guidelines they also discussed code enforcement within the historic district and what changes were needed to the Zoning Ordinance. Ms. Kopishke believes that this portion of the Zoning Ordinance needs to be changed now and not wait for the entire Zoning Ordinance rewrite.

Ms. Kopishke reviewed the 2024 Annual Report and noted that the Annual Report is a state code requirement. This will be published on the website once accepted by the Planning Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairman Neel moved, seconded by Commissioner Brooks to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: Yes – Marshner, Brooks, Neel, Fedoryka
No – N/A
Abstain – N/A
Absent – Marrazzo

VOICE VOTE

The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Approved by Planning Commission

Date: 4/16/2025