



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 May 21, 2025, at 7:00 PM at the Warren County Government Center.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Marshner called the May 21, 2025 meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:00 pm.

ROLL CALL

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

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

ADDITION/DELETION OF ITEMS FROM THE AGENDA

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- April 16, 2025 – Regular Meeting

Commissioner Marrazzo moved, seconded by Vice Chairman Neel that the minutes of the April 16, 2025 be approved with the modification of two small parts. Changing “agrees” to “does not agree” and “does” to does not, otherwise as presented.

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

VOICE VOTE



CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no speakers present.

CONSENT AGENDA

- **2500238** – A Rezoning Application submitted by Stephen C. Williams, Esq./Trustee requesting an amendment to the zoning map to reclassify vacant lots on Elsia Drive identified by Tax Map 20A6, Section 1, Parcels 5C and 6 from C-1, Community Business District to R-3, Residential District. (*Consent to advertise for public hearing at the June 18, 2025 regular Planning Commission meeting.*)

Commissioner Brooks moved, seconded by Vice Chairman Neel that the Planning Commission approve the consent agenda to publicly advertise for a public hearing in June as presented. Specifically, 2500238 Rezoning Application.

Vote: Yes – Marshner, Brooks, Neel, Marrazzo, Fedoryka

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – N/A

VOICE VOTE

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Marshner reviewed the procedures for a public hearing.

- **2500104** – A Special Use Permit Application for a Farmers Market submitted by Julie Vaught, on behalf of Happy Creek Antiques, located at 515-B N. Commerce Avenue, identified by Tax Map 20A4, Section 10, Lot 8. The property is zoned C-1, Community Business District.

Mr. Ware reviewed portions of Town Code pertinent to Special Use Permit applications. He also reviewed portions of Virginia State Code § 15.2286(A)(3) stating a governing body is authorized to grant Special Use Permits “under suitable regulations and safeguards”. Under Virginia law, the conditions imposed must bear a reasonable relationship to the legitimate land use concerns and problems generated by the use of the property. Unlike proffers that accompany a rezoning considered by the locality’s governing body, Special Use Permit conditions are not volunteered by the landowner and need not be developed through negotiations.

Special Use Permit application #2500104 is a request for a farmers market located at 515-B N. Commerce Avenue. The property is located in the C-1, Community Business District. In accordance with Town Code, farmers markets can be approved by Special Use Permit in the C-1 zoning district.



Mr. Ware read the definition of “Farmers Market” from Town Code Chapter 175-3. Currently the primary use is retail with Happy Creek Antiques in a portion of the building on N. Commerce Avenue. “Urban Agriculture” is an allowed accessory use. Should the Special Use Permit for a farmers market be granted approval the raising of crops under urban agriculture would be allowed as an accessory use at the farmers market.

According to the survey plat submitted with the application the parcel can accommodate a total of 102 parking spaces. However, not all of the spaces have been properly marked or delineated. The area defined as the farmers market can accommodate 61 parking spaces with 11 spaces being earmarked for the raised beds leaving approximately 50 spaces remaining. As the primary use is the retail shop it would require 39 spaces. The applicant does have sufficient parking for the uses. Staff recommends approval with the appropriate conditions.

Julie Vaught, 18 Meadow Brook Lane, Huntly, VA. Ms. Vaught thanked the Planning Commission for allowing her to speak regarding her application. Their goal is to use the space to offer good nutrition for the community. Local farmers would be able to set up and sell their produce and allow the community to garden when they aren’t able to have gardens of their own. The community garden could provide nutritional food at a discount rate or possibly be free.

Commissioner Marrazzo mentioned that the areas delineated on the survey plat are primarily for the gardens but also for vendors at the farmers market. She asked if those areas would be sufficient to sell not only agricultural products but also meat products.

Ms. Vaught explained there are electrical outlets outside where a freezer could be plugged into to store and sell meat.

Commissioner Marrazzo asked if those vendors were primarily fall under Debbie’s Lighthouse and Happy Creek Antiques or was it outside of that as well.

Ms. Vaught stated many vendors had already been in contact with her once she had applied with the Special Use Permit to say they were interested in participating.

Chairman Marshner asked Ms. Vaught to explain the community garden aspect of the project.

Ms. Vaught explained that when she submitted the application it was for the uses to come in stages. The area in the rear of the property is still wooded and grassy and needs to be cleaned up. The raised beds make it easier to begin the project with the goal to add the community garden by next spring.

Chairman Marshner asked what her understanding was of a community garden.

Ms. Vaught said the community garden could be used in multiple ways. Just like the raised beds where people could lease space, individuals could lease space in the community garden when they



are unable to have a garden where they live. There are needs in the community, and she explained that Debbie's Lighthouse is a non-profit that is in memory of her mother. It is to help provide for those in need in the community. In 2024 they began serving free lunches at the Salvation Army for anyone who needed food could come and pick up those lunches. They also collect can and dry goods and distribute those items at particular times. The community garden would be an extension of that outreach and allow individuals to take part in their own wellbeing by helping in the garden to provide fresh produce.

Debbie's Lighthouse will manage the community garden. There will be specific hours of operation and a locked gate during the night.

Commissioner Brooks asked what material would be used to construct the raised beds.

Ms. Vaught said wood is the easiest material to use and could be recycled and easily replaced. She mentioned using wood from pallets.

Commissioner Fedoryka asked if vendors would be selling homemade items such as jams, jellies, cheeses, etc.

Ms. Vaught explained that any items allowed according to Town Code could be sold at the farmers market. She will be vetting vendors. In the future she would like to involve children by providing a gardening workshop as well as horticultural education for both children and adults.

Chairman Marshner noted that beef could not be raised on the property but asked if Ms. Vaught planned on raising bees on the property for honey. She also asked if she would only be selling edible items.

Ms. Vaught lives on a farm where they raise beef. In addition, she has a cousin who has an apiary where he is making and selling honey. She said she does not want vendors to be making necklaces and such and selling those types of items at the farmer's market. Her focus is on selling items that are edible.

Chairman Marshner opened the public hearing.

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

Vice Chairman Neel moved, seconded by Commissioner Marrazzo that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to the Front Royal Town Council for Special Use Permit #2500104 for a farmers market at 515-B N. Commerce Avenue with the following conditions:

- 1. The Applicant shall mark directional arrows in the parking lot to guide traffic flow prior to the commencement of use.***



-
- 2. The Applicant shall restripe parking spaces to Town Standards prior to the commencement of use.***
 - 3. Produce offered must be grown or produced by one of the participating vendors.***
 - 4. Farmers market areas must be confined to the parking lot area highlighted in the undeveloped area of the northeast quadrant of the application.***
 - 5. Farmers market cannot interfere with the utilization of existing businesses of a minimum thirty-nine (39) parking spaces.***

Commissioner Brooks did not think that number 3 needed to be included as a condition. Town Code Chapter 175-3 under Farmers Market specifically outlines this.

Chairman Marshner thought Vice Chairman Neel wanted to avoid someone buying tomatoes at Cosco and then sell them at the farmers market,

Commissioner Brooks referred to the Town Code definition of Farmers Market, and it states "...which have been grown or produced by the vendor offering the same for sale". He believes this addresses condition 3 and still feels this condition is not needed.

Mr. Sonnett explained that if Commissioner Brooks was making an amendment it should be addressed at this time.

Commissioner Marrazzo said there may be additional amendments and confirmed with Mr. Sonnett they will need to be addressed one at a time.

A new motion was made by Vice Chairman Neel.

Vice Chairman Neel moved, seconded by Commissioner Marrazzo that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to the Front Royal Town Council for Special Use Permit #2500104 for a farmers market at 515-B N. Commerce Avenue with the following conditions:

- 1. The Applicant shall mark directional arrows in the parking lot to guide traffic flow prior to the commencement of use.***
- 2. The Applicant shall restripe parking spaces to Town Standards prior to the commencement of use.***
- 3. Farmers market areas must be confined to the parking lot area highlighted in the undeveloped area of the northeast quadrant of the application.***
- 4. Farmers market cannot interfere with the utilization of existing businesses minimum requirement of thirty-nine (39) parking spaces.***

Mr. Sonnett recommended that Chairman Marshner consider this as a withdrawn and resubmitted motion.

Chairman Marshner confirmed the recommendation by Mr. Sonnett.



Commissioner Marrazzo referred to condition #3 related to confining to the areas highlighted in the northeast quadrant. With that area in the northeast quadrant being under more of a community garden aspect and not as much as a farmers market, would that not be qualified under urban agriculture and not farmers market. Do we need to consider any restrictions on that side because it is an accessory use if they are using that part of the property in an urban agriculture way. She said she was looking at this from the perspective of the restrictions being on things that need to be restricted as something that could impact traffic and the use of the space where people will be walking around and the dangers that could potentially pose. It is separate from the gated closed off area and she wondered if that is considered urban agriculture use and potentially wouldn't need condition #3.

Mr. Ware said to keep in mind that under urban agriculture if you restrict the area it could not be used by vendors. If you limit the area to community garden then the community garden members could not be vendors.

At the request of Chairman Marshner, Mr. Neel repeated the motion.

Vice Chairman Neel moved, seconded by Commissioner Marrazzo that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to the Front Royal Town Council for Special Use Permit #2500104 for a farmers market at 515-B N. Commerce Avenue with the following conditions:

- 1. The Applicant shall mark directional arrows in the parking lot to guide traffic flow prior to the commencement of use.*
- 2. The Applicant shall restripe parking spaces to Town Standards prior to the commencement of use.*
- 3. Farmers market areas must be confined to the parking lot area highlighted in the undeveloped area of the northeast quadrant of the application.*
- 4. Farmers market cannot interfere with the utilization of existing businesses minimum requirement of thirty-nine (39) parking spaces.*

VOTE: Yes – Marrazzo, Marshner, Fedoryka, Brooks, Neel

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – N/A

ROLL CALL

- **2500108** – A Special Use Permit Application to allow a short-term rental, submitted by Home Base Holdings LLC, located at 66 W. Strasburg Road, identified by Tax Map 2012, Section 3, Lot 31B. The property is zoned C-1, Community Business District.

Mr. Ware explained that application 2500108 was a Special Use Permit for a short-term rental at 66 W. Strasburg Road. This will be a whole house rental with one (1) bedroom and no more than two (2) occupants. Staff conducted an inspection on May 13, 2025 in which the home passed



inspection however it does not meet the parking requirements requiring two (2) off-street parking spaces.

Vice Chairman Neel asked if there was access to create parking on the lot.

Mr. Ware said in staff's opinion, yes.

Amber Martin, 519 Totten Lane, Front Royal, VA spoke representing the owners/applicants Stephen and Vanessa Talbott. They use this property as a second home and enjoy coming to Front Royal to hike in the national and state parks. Ms. Martin said the owners would be happy to build the required driveway spaces that would meet the Town Code short-term rental regulations once the neighboring property townhome construction is completed. She said currently there is sufficient street parking and noted that this is a dead end street with only two (2) occupied homes. It is the applicants' understanding that it will be months before there will be any additional occupants on W. Strasburg Road. Waiting for the new homes to be complete would allow them to design the spaces that would better fit the new look and match with the townhomes.

Vice Chairman Neel confirmed with Ms. Martin that they do not intend to construct the new parking spaces until the townhomes are complete.

Ms. Martin said that would be the wish of the applicants because the existing driveway entrance is shared by the adjacent property owners. She stated the applicants would be happy to install the parking spaces but did not want to have to do it twice.

Ms. Kopishke explained the applicants could wait until the townhomes are developed if this is placed as a condition, however if the townhomes are not developed they would then not be able to provide parking. They would not receive the Special Use Permit until the parking is installed.

Chairman Marshner opened the public hearing.

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

Commissioner Marrazzo moved, seconded by Commissioner Fedoryka that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to the Front Royal Town Council for Special Use Permit #2500108 for a short-term rental located at 66 W. Strasburg Road with the following conditions, one of which must be met:

- 1. Either the applicant must secure a Special Exception to the current parking requirements for the two off-street parking spaces.***
- OR***
- 2. The current plan goes through of the adjoining property being developed and they are able to create those two (2) off-street parking spaces prior to the commencement of use.***



After some discussion among Commission members with regard to the two (2) conditions, Chairman Marshner asked Commissioner Marrazzo to repeat the motion.

Commissioner Marrazzo moved, seconded by Commissioner Fedoryka that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to the Front Royal Town Council for Special Use Permit #2500108 for a short-term rental located at 66 W. Strasburg Road with the following conditions, one of which must be met before the permit is issued:

- 1. The applicant is able to secure a Special Exception to the two (2) required off-street parking spaces; or***
- 2. They are able to develop and maintain two (2) off-street parking spaces.***

VOTE: Yes – Fedoryka, Marshner, Neel, Marrazzo, Brooks

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – N/A

ROLL CALL

NEW BUSINESS

- **2500050** – An Application for Preliminary Plat Approval for a major subdivision submitted by Chris Hornung, Rappahannock HC, LLC for a subdivision containing ninety-seven (97) dwelling units located at 1321 Happy Creek Road, identified on Tax Map 20A21, Section 2, Lot 4. The property is zoned R-1, Residential District.

Mr. Ware explained that application #2500050 was for preliminary plat approval for a major subdivision containing ninety-seven (97) dwelling units located at 1321 Happy Creek Road. The property was rezoned in 2024, and a special exception was granted in April 2025 for the reduction of street width. Mr. Ware reviewed portions of Town Code pertinent to the application.

This approval is not for the subdivision or construction. The application meets all requirements of the checklist in Town Code and was reviewed by the Department of Transportation, Public Works and Energy Services. All comments by the review agencies have been addressed by the applicant. After approval of the preliminary plat the applicant has thirty-six (36) months to submit the plan/plat and have it approved.

Part of the project does contain steep slopes. Town Code encourages innovative development in Front Royal providing the flexibility necessary to produce environmentally sensitive subdivisions with direct building, parking and street locations to terrain more suitable for development. The lots have been reduced from 104 to 97 with some open space lots. Open space will be in the rear of the lots. The applicant took into account the steep slopes. Mr. Ware gave a virtual presentation showing the concept plan on how the applicant will utilize terracing with open spaces to mitigate the steep slopes.



The applicant Chris Hornung, Vice President of the Rappahannock Development Group was present to answer questions.

Vice Chairman Neel thanked Mr. Hornung for submitting a very professional plan.

Chairman Marshner commended Mr. Hornung on the very creative terracing.

Commissioner Brooks moved, seconded by Vice Chairman Neel that the Planning Commission approve Application #2500050, Preliminary Plan Approval Major Subdivision submitted by Rappahannock HC, LLC located at 1321 Happy Creek Road with no conditions.

VOTE: Yes – Marshner, Marrazzo, Neel, Brooks, Fedoryka

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – N/A

ROLL CALL

COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS

Chairman Marshner read the following statement into the record:

“I want to take a moment to remind the Planning Commission that we are appointed by the Town Council to advise the Council and to make recommendations to them. We are not elected officials in our own right. Because we serve in an advisory capacity, we must be objective and dispassionate with regard to matters as they come before the Commission which we are currently or may in the foreseeable future be called upon to advise.

We continue to be private citizens with rights of free speech, and as such are entitled to express our own personal views and opinions – however, they are exactly that: our private views and opinions, which we are free to express separately from matters and evidence as presented to the Commission for evaluation on the merits.

No single member of the Planning Commission is authorized to speak on behalf of the Commission or in its name without the consent of the Commission.”

Commissioner Marrazzo shared that on May 10th she attended an informational forum on data centers and how they affect the land and community. She shared some things for the Planning Commission to consider if and/or when they look at the potential zoning requirements for data centers. There is the possibility of obsolescence for them in the next 5-10 years as technology continues to move forward at an incredibly rapid rate. She believes it to be important for the Commission to consider what is done with the leftover “box”. Commissioner Marrazzo said she would hate to see land and so much of it be taken up by a data center only to have it become an eyesore that is also an abandoned location. There are also some aspects of environmental risks depending on the type of fueling systems they use, and the power drawn. Infrastructure available



in the area is something the Commission should be heavily considering. Not directly related to the land use aspect but one of the appealing things about data centers is the incredible potential for tax revenue they produce. However you cannot ever really know who the end user is of any given data center as it happens. For example, if a data center decides to have certain federal contracts then there is no personal property taxes that can be assessed by the community.

Chairman Marshner stated the Planning Commission is not currently considering any such matters.

Commissioner Marrazzo noted there are no applicants for data centers in this area right now.

PLANNING DIRECTOR REPORT

Ms. Kopishke reviewed the April monthly report.

Ms. Kopishke noted it had been a while since looking at the Draft Zoning Ordinance and said she would like to bring it back for review in July. She is working on a use table that shows the uses with the corresponding definitions.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Fedoryka moved, seconded by Commissioner Brooks to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: Yes – Brooks, Marshner, Neel, Fedoryka, Marrazzo

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – N/A

VOICE VOTE

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Approved by Planning Commission

Date: 6/18/2025