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*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](http://www.frontroyalva.com) for a limited time.*

The Planning Commission meeting of the Town of Front Royal, Virginia, was held on February 18, 2026, at 7:00 PM at the Warren County Government Center.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Marshner called the February 18, 2026 meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.

### **ROLL CALL**

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

**Absent:** Megan Marrazzo, Commissioner

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

### **ADDITION/DELETION OF ITEMS FROM THE AGENDA**

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- January 21, 2026 – Regular Meeting

*Commissioner Fedoryka moved, seconded by Commissioner Brooks to approve.*

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

VOICE VOTE



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**PUBLIC COMMENTS (NOT RELATED TO PUBLIC HEARINGS)**

There were no speakers.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

1. **2500610** – A Special Use Permit Application to allow a Short-Term Rental, as defined in Town Code §175-3, submitted by Veronica Tello, and located at 214 Lee Street, identified by Tax Map 20A7-4-93. The property is zoned R-3, Residential District and is located in the Historic Overlay District.

Mr. Ware explained the application was for a short-term rental located at 214 Lee Street. Mr. Ware gave a virtual presentation showing the location of the property noting that the parcel contains three (3) off-street parking spaces located on the left side of the property. Staff conducted a site inspection on February 10<sup>th</sup> and found the property to be in compliance. The application specifies four (4) bedrooms and ten (10) people. However there is an additional bedroom on the first floor making a total of five (5) bedrooms to accommodate ten (10) people maximum which is allowed per Town Code.

The applicant Veronica Tello stated they live in Fairfax, VA and this would be a vacation house for them as well as a short-term rental for others to enjoy. The short-term rental will be registered with Airbnb. Ms. Tello stated that she is a realtor in Virginia and she will manage the property. She explained they will keep the exterior appearance historical and not change anything structurally. They are also keeping the interior appearance of the home in keeping with the time of construction in 1909.

Chairman Marshner opened the public hearing.

Joan Harding, 218 Lee Street, Front Royal, VA. Ms. Harding explained that she lived next door to 214 Lee Street and was unhappy with this being a short-term rental. She said this was a residential street and the houses are very close together. Ms. Harding felt that additional vehicles will create parking issues and expressed concern of renters throwing parties while staying there. She is against approving the Special Use Permit.

There were no additional comments. Chairman Marshner closed the public hearing.

Applicant rebuttal. Ms. Tello explained that renters will be required to be 25 years old or older. They will mainly focus on renting to families and will keep the maximum of cars to three (3). She stated that Airbnb has very strict laws on parties and if they receive any complaints she will be contacted by Airbnb and she would address the complaints immediately.



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After some discussion the following motion was made.

***In furtherance of the purposes and objectives contained in Town Code §175-1(B), Commissioner Brooks moved, seconded by Vice Chairman Neel that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval for Special use Permit #2500610 for a short-term rental at 214 Lee Street, identified by Tax Map 20A7-4-93.***

VOTE: Yes – Marshner, Brooks, Neel, Fedoryka

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – Marrazzo

ROLL CALL

2. **2600013** - A Rezoning Application submitted by Dana Cline requesting an amendment to the zoning map to reclassify vacant lots on Grand Avenue identified by Tax Map 20A6, Section 6, Block 4, Parcels 11A and 14A, from R-1, Residential District to R-3, Residential District.

Mr. Ware explained the Rezoning Application was a request to rezone two (2) vacant lots on Grand Avenue from R-1, Residential District to R-3, Residential District. He presented virtually an aerial view of the vacant lots that are located near the intersection of Grand Avenue and Cypress Street. The property is currently zoned R-1. To the north of the vacant lots is R-3 zoning, and to the northwest is R-2. The R-3 parcels to the north of the proposed rezoning lots would abut the lots on the rear of the property.

Mr. Ware reviewed the size of the Grand Avenue lots. A conceptual drawing was shown of the potential duplexes on the lots if the rezoning is approved. The existing lots can be further subdivide into duplex lots. Mr. Ware proceeded to review lot size requirements for the R-1 and R-3 districts. He continued explaining setback requirements and noted that any new development would require the installation of sidewalks. The applicant provided a concept drawing that addressed Commissioner comments from their previous work session. Mr. Ware confirmed that the rezoning request aligns with the Visco City Planning Area Future Land Use Plan for Grand Avenue and is in agreement with the Comprehensive Plan.

Vice Chairman Neel asked if staff had looked at anything other than the Comprehensive Plan and was anything else considered.

Mr. Ware stated nothing else was considered. He asked Commissioners to keep in mind that the lots are larger with this rezoning request than the R-1 currently requires and larger for the R-3 district requirement for setbacks, lot width and depth.

The applicant, Dana Cline, stated he was the owner of the two (2) vacant lots on Grand Avenue and shared that he was born and raised in Front Royal. Mr. Cline thanked the Planning Commission for agreeing to hear his request. He noted that the Planning and Zoning staff was very helpful in explaining to him the rezoning process thoroughly. Mr. Cline expressed that he wants the



homeowners on Grand Avenue and Hoffman Heights to understand the he would never do anything to purposely ruin their neighborhood. He understands their concerns and wants them to know that no matter what is built on the lots they will be built to a high quality standard and tastefully done. There are great designs available for duplexes that look like a single-family home. Mr. Cline wanted to bring to the Planning Commissions attention that Orchard Street which is one street over from his vacant lots is zoned R-3. He noted that on Orchard Street there are duplexes on one side of the street and single-family dwellings on the opposite side of the street. No matter what decision is made on his rezoning request he reiterated that he would be a good neighbor and hold no grudge against the neighbors for their views and opinions. In turn, he hoped they would not hold a grudge against him for merely trying to make the most of his investment.

Mr. Cline answered questions from Chairman Marshner stating there will be concrete driveways in the front of the structures and staggered construction of the duplexes. He also answered that he will not be living in the new structure(s).

Chairman Marshner explained the process for speaking at the public hearing.

Chairman Marshner opened the public hearing.

Dr. Nancy Lee, 214 Grand Avenue, Front Royal, VA. Dr. Lee said she respectfully opposes rezoning the two (2) lots from R-1 to R-3. There are many areas in the community that are zoned R-3 and specifically intended for townhouses and higher density development. The builder can pursue this project in those locations rather than altering the zoning of longstanding R-1 properties on Grand Avenue. She is very concerned about the precedent it would set if the two (2) vacant lots are rezoned from R-1 to R-3. Dr. Lee stated she was not opposed to growth but was opposed to rezoning parcels in established neighborhoods.

Karissa Green, 327 Grand Avenue, Front Royal, VA. Ms. Green expressed that she did not oppose growth but asked that the Town follow their own rules and policies consistently and transparently. The staff report relies heavily on the future land use map to support the rezoning request. They understand that the Comprehensive Plan allows that map to be used as a planning tool. However the map is guidance and not an automatic determination of zoning outcomes. The Comprehensive Plan also says that infill development should match the character of existing neighborhoods. Ms. Green is opposed to approving the rezoning application.

Anne Boyd Earle, 400 Grand Avenue, Front Royal, VA. Ms. Earle thanked the Planning Commission for the opportunity to speak and shared her history in Front Royal and living on Grand Avenue. She is opposed to approving the rezoning request.

Trey Stanford, 314 Salem Avenue, Front Royal, VA. Mr. Stanford read a letter from his mother who lives at 303 Grand Avenue and lives next door to the parcels involved in the rezoning. They are opposed to the rezoning request.



Mary Stanford, 314 Salem Avenue, Front Royal, VA. Ms. Stanford asked the Planning Commission do deny the rezoning application. She expressed concern that the rezoning would create a depreciation of the homes on Grand Avenue.

Andrea Stewart, 425 Grand Avenue, Front Royal, VA. Ms. Stewart spoke against the rezoning application. She gave a brief history of her and her husband's years on Grand Avenue and referred to the appearance of Grand Avenue to include the landscaping and large trees that she did not want to change.

Collin Stewart, 425 Grand Avenue, Front Royal, VA. Mr. Stewart said he feared that a rezoning from R-1 to anything else would disrupt the integrity of their investment and those of all their neighbors. He opposed approval of the rezoning request and asked Planning Commissioners to vote no.

Donald Jansen, 301 Salem Avenue, Front Royal, VA. Mr. Jansen said he agrees with what previous speakers have said. He believes himself and others on Grand Avenue would like to see single-family homes built on the vacant lots and not duplexes. The request to rezone the lots is coming from someone who does not live on Grand Avenue. Mr. Jansen asked the Planning Commission to deny the rezoning application.

Mark-Pierre Jansen, 316 Cypress Street, Front Royal, VA. Mr. Jansen expressed that townhomes/duplexes would change the integrity of the area and asked the Planning Commission to vote to deny the rezoning request.

Pattie McHugh, 334 Grand Avenue, Front Royal, VA. Ms. McHugh thanked the Planning Commission for their labors on behalf of the Town and gave a brief history of how she came to live on Grand Avenue. She expressed concern that duplexes would alter their street and negatively impact their property values. Ms. McHugh asked Commission members to protect the integrity of their neighborhood and deny the rezoning application.

Laura Gilliam, 304 Grand Avenue, Front Royal, VA. Ms. Gilliam voiced her objection for the rezoning request. She explained that she purportedly purchased 304 Grand Avenue and the adjoining lots because of its R-1 designation in an established neighborhood. Development on Grand Avenue should remain low concentration.

Amanda Slate, 3762 Browntown Road, Front Royal, VA. Ms. Slate said she is a local real estate agent and she is not in favor of rezoning these lots to R-3. She stated that there is a big quantity of townhomes currently on the market. Affordable housing has been sitting on the market for well over a year. Most of those townhomes started on the market for over \$400,000 which would have a house payment of \$2800 a month. Many of those prices have come down and some of the local builders have had to rent those units because they are not able to sell them. Ms. Slate voiced there is more of a need for single-family dwellings for the aging community, teachers and for families. She noted that townhomes do not accommodate the growing population of people that need one levels.



Anthony D'Andrea, 213 Salem Avenue, Front Royal, VA. Mr. D'Andrea spoke against approval of the rezoning request. He reviewed pros and cons related to the rezoning request.

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

***Vice Chairman Neel moved, seconded by Commissioner Fedoryka that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of denial for Rezoning Application #2600013 requesting an amendment to the zoning map to reclassify two vacant lots on Grand Avenue, identified by Tax Map 20A6, section 6, Block 4, Parcels 11A and 14A, from R-1, Residential District to R-3, Residential District.***

Vice Chairman Neel explained his reasons for making his motion.

1. Although the Comprehensive Plan identifies this area as appropriate for higher-density residential in the longer term, the Plan is advisory and not self-implementing. The proposal represents an isolated implementation of higher-density policy that is inconsistent with the established development pattern of the immediate vicinity creating an abrupt transition in land use that adversely affects surrounding properties and is inconsistent with orderly and coordinated growth.
2. While higher density is envisioned generally in this area, the Comprehensive Plan also emphasizes compatibility and protection of established neighborhoods. The requested R-3 designation creates an abrupt density transition inconsistent with orderly and phased implementation.

Commissioner Fedoryka referred to Town Code where it states that infill development preserves the character. Though it does abut with R-3 there is a natural demarcation between the two zones and she believes that it would adversely affect a whole host of people. It appears that the cost outweighs the benefit in that respect.

Chairman Marshner applauded so many of the property owners for speaking at the public hearing and mentioned some of the words she heard when property owners were speaking such as violation of covenant, trust, serenity, and integrity. These comments reflect a very intense and very positive community feeling.

VOTE: Yes – Marshner, Fedoryka, Brooks, Neel

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – Marrazzo

ROLL CALL

3. **2600021** – A Special Exception Application submitted by Monteverde Engineering & Design Studio on behalf of Squirrel Hill 1 LLC, requesting an exception from Town Code Chapter 148-860.6.e. retaining wall height requirements of six feet (6'), and requesting



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to increase the maximum allowable wall height, for properties located on Orchard Street, identified by Tax Map 20A6, Section 5, Parcels 8-1, 8-2, 8-3, 8-11, and 8-12.

Mr. Ware explained that Special Exception Application #2600021 was a request for an exception from Town Code Chapter 148-860.6.e which limits the maximum height of retaining walls to six feet (6'). A virtual presentation ensued showing the location of the parcels on Orchard Street. The applicant is asking to increase the maximum height to ten feet (10'). Mr. Ware reviewed portions of the Subdivision Ordinance related to the request.

Because of the steepness of the slope in the rear yard retaining walls will be constructed. By increasing the height of the retaining wall to ten feet (10') it would maintain proper drainage away from the structures. The retaining walls would require an engineered design based on the soils report. Staff does not approve the engineered design but only the location of the wall. The Warren County Building Department will review the plans of the retaining wall designed by a registered design professional.

Vice Chairman Neel mentioned that the Town is responsible for reviewing slopes that are associated with the retaining wall height and drainage. When you adapt something to the wall and change the slope that would be something else the Town would be concerned about during the review and approval.

Mr. Ware said this site does have steep slopes. Under the steep slope part of the code retaining walls are encouraged. With that, there is limitations of six feet (6') which is why the applicant is asking for a Special Exception. The soils report determines what the best engineering design would be based on the soil conditions. The applicant is asking for the increase in height to facilitate water away from the retaining wall with a planned pocket in the rear of the wall to dissipate the water to the edge of the homes so the water will not cascade over the top of the retaining wall.

Vice Chairman Neel asked how staff would know if there was a substantial change to the Plan.

Mr. Ware explained that the applicant is awaiting final approval from Town Council for the Special Exception before they submit the final plan with the design of the retaining wall included in the plan. This will then be reviewed by staff.

Vice Chairman Neel asked if the applicant changes something substantially in the design of the slopes or retaining wall would it come back to the Planning Commission for review.

Mr. Ware explained that effective July 1, 2025 the State of Virginia revised state code to say plans will not go before the Planning Commission or Town Council for approval or denial and will be reviewed and approved or denied administratively.

Ms. Kopishke shared that the Special Exception is giving the applicant a buffer and some latitude to design the wall as they need to as they move through this administratively.



The applicant Donald McCarty, Clifton, VA shared reasons for requesting the higher wall.

Chairman Marshner expressed that the issue was the safety of the houses that will be located on the other side of the retaining wall.

There was some additional comments from Mr. McCarty.

Ms. Kopishke reiterated that staff and Warren County Building Inspections will be reviewing the plan for the retaining wall. She noted that the applicant will not build a retaining wall that will fall down.

After some brief comments Chairman Marshner opened the public hearing.

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

***In furtherance of the purposes and objective contained in Town Code §175(B), Commissioner Brooks moved, seconded by Vice Chairman Neel that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval for Special Exception #2600021 submitted by Monteverde Engineering & Design on behalf of Squirrel Hill 1 LLC requesting a Special Exception from Town Code Chapter 148-860-A.6.e which limits the maximum height of a retaining wall to six feet (6') and increase the maximum allowable wall height to ten feet (10'), for undeveloped properties located on Orchard Street, identified by Tax Map 20A6, Section 5, parcels 8-1, 8-2, 8-3, 8-11, and 8-12.***

VOTE: Yes – Fedoryka, Marshner, Neel, Brooks

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – Marrazzo

ROLL CALL

4. **2500319** – A Zoning Text Amendment to Town Code sections §175-3 – Definitions, to define the use of an “Auxiliary Dwelling Unit”; §175-11, §175-12(A), §175-18.2(A), §175-20, §175-29(A), and §175-37.3(A) to add ADU’s as a by-right use; and to establish §175-115 “Auxiliary Dwelling Unit” performance standards within the Supplementary provisions of Town Code.

Mr. Ware explained this is a text amendment for auxiliary dwelling units as a by-right use and to establish sections 175-115 for Auxiliary Dwelling performance standards with the Supplementary Provisions of Town Code. The Planning Commission has worked numerous months on this amendment. Mr. Ware reviewed the proposed changes in the text amendment.

## **175-3 - DEFINITIONS**

**ACCESSORY USE** - A use of a building, lot or portion there of which is customarily incidental and subordinate to the principal permitted use of the main building or lot. ~~Accessory uses shall include the use of accessory buildings as a separate accessory dwelling unit, provided that the lot~~



~~is at least 12,000 square feet in size, The accessory building ~~complies with~~ shall comply with the minimum setback and yard area requirements that are required for main buildings within the applicable zoning district. no more than one accessory dwelling is located on the property, and the accessory dwelling unit does not utilize more than 500 square feet.~~ Urban agriculture is considered an accessory use when the requirements of Section 175-110.5 are complied with.

*Auxiliary Dwelling Unit (ADU) also known as in-law units, backyard cottage, or granny flat - A secondary, self-contained residential unit located on the same lot as a primary single-family dwelling. It includes independent living facilities such as a kitchen, bathroom, sleeping area, and separate entrance.*

Below are the proposed Performance Standards:

*175-115 – Auxiliary Dwelling Unit (ADU)*

*The ADU ordinance permits one (1) Auxiliary Dwelling Unit in the selected zoning districts of R1, R1A, R2, R3 and PND with residential housing, subject to the following:*

- A. The Auxiliary dwelling unit must be located on the same lot as a single-family detached dwelling (existing or proposed) and only one (1) ADU is permitted per residential lot.*
- B. The property must be owner occupied. The applicant shall submit a notarized statement attesting that they are residing on the property, in either the primary or auxiliary unit.*
- C. Detached ADUs cannot exceed 1000 square feet or 80% of the gross floor area of the principal dwelling, whichever is less.*
- D. Detached ADUs shall be a minimum of 600 square feet.*
- E. The Auxiliary dwelling unit must follow the underlying zoning district requirements (setbacks, lot coverage, appearance, height, etc.). Detached ADUs shall not exceed the maximum lot square foot coverage allowed in the zoning district where the ADU is located.*
- F. As part of the application process, Town staff will conduct an inspection prior to final approval.*
  - 1. Staff will reach out to the property owner to schedule an annual inspection to recertify the ADU is compliant with code.*
  - 2. The Zoning Administrator or designee may inspect a property if there is a complaint registered with the Town or if the official has other reason to believe that the owner or occupants are in violation of the ADU approval.*



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- 3. The owner shall make provisions to allow inspections of the property by town personnel during reasonable hours with prior notice.*
- G. The ADU shall meet the applicable regulations for safety, health and sanitation through the appropriate County agencies.*
- H. Upon transfer of ownership of the subject property, the new owner shall be required to certify in writing to the Zoning Administrator that either:*
- 1. Continued use of the ADU will comply with the conditions of the previous approval for the ADU use or;*
  - 2. The ADU will no longer be used as a separate dwelling unit.*

Commissioner Fedoryka asked how staff would know about what is stated in “H”.

Mr. Ware explained this is in the approval process of the application and per the Town Code property owners will be contacted to set up annual inspections.

Chairman Marshner opened the public hearing.

Laura Gilliam, 304 Grand Avenue, Front Royal, VA. Ms. Gilliam voiced she did not believe this was a good plan. She expressed concern that when somebody goes to sell their property and has an ADU, how would this be disclosed to a buyer. Ms. Gilliam also expressed concern for ongoing issues with parking. She noted that she holds a lot of rentals and some of the primary problems are always with parking and trash.

Rhonda North, 1019 Goodview Drive, Front Royal, VA. Ms. North shared that she has forty (40) years of experience as a local government employee with almost twenty (20) of those years being an employee with the Town of Front Royal. She stated that she is a lifelong resident of Front Royal. She respectfully requests that the Planning Commission recommend denial of the proposed ordinance for the following reasons: 1) cost of ADUs; 2) nothing in the ordinance that would restrict them to family use; 3) owner occupied of the primary unit (courts in Virginia have held that such zoning requirements are illegal); 4) water supply issues; 5) adding housing units to backyards will mean less trees and less vegetation which exacerbates water supply issues; and 6) she does not believe there is enough staff to enforce the ordinance. Ms. North referred to the agenda packet containing a staff support paper referencing House Bill 2293 as the justification for staffs recommendation of approval. She stated that House Bill 2293 was killed in 2025 and not adopted by the General Assembly and a similar bill, House Bill 611 in 2026 also did not pass and was continued to 2027. Ms. North does not understand how House Bill 2293 supports the adoption of this ordinance.

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



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***For the public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice, Commissioner Fedoryka moved, seconded by Vice Chairman Neel that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to the Town Council to approve a text amendment to Town Code sections §175-3 - Definitions, to define the use of an “Auxiliary Dwelling Unit”; §175-11, §175-12(A), §175-18.2(A), §175-20, §175-29(A), and §175-37.3(A) to add ADU’S as a by-right use; and to establish §175-115 “Auxiliary Dwelling Unit” performance standards within the Supplementary Provisions of Town Code.***

Vice Chairman Neel explained the text amendment has gone back and forth several times between the Planning Commission and Town Council and has gone through legal scrutiny when going through the process. He does not believe illegality is an issue. The text amendment is intended for granny flats and for auxiliary housing for family members. It envisions ADUs to be used as rental income for people to be able to stay in their homes as long as one of the residence remains owner occupied.

Chairman Marshner believes the proposed ordinance would be conducive to multigenerational living which is a good thing on any level as well as good land use in times of housing shortages. Families can stay together and age in place.

VOTE: Yes – Marshner, Neel, Brooks, Fedoryka

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – Marrazzo

ROLL CALL

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

- Chairman

***Commissioner Fedoryka moved, seconded by Commissioner Brooks to nominate Commissioner Neel as Chairman.***

VOTE: Yes – Marshner, Fedoryka, Neel, Brooks

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – Marrazzo

ROLL CALL

- Vice Chairman

***Commissioner Brooks moved, seconded by Vice Chairman Neel to nominate Ms. Marrazzo as Vice Chairman.***



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

ROLL CALL

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- 2025 Annual Report.

Chairman Marshner asked staff to comment on the annual report.

Ms. Kopishke explained that the annual report is a state requirement and the Planning Commission would need to formally accept the report.

### **COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS**

There were no comments.

### **PLANNING DIRECTOR REPORT**

Ms. Kopishke reviewed the January monthly report.

Staff continues to work with Summit Engineering to provide a Draft Subdivision Ordinance for review by the Planning Commission. This will be reviewed in conjunction with the Zoning Ordinance.

By the end of 2026 it will be time to begin reviewing the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan will need to be recertified.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

VOICE VOTE

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Approved by Planning Commission  
Date: 3/18/2026