

## **REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

Wednesday, April 15, 2026 @ 7:00pm

Warren County Government Center

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

### **II. ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

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

*[Items added will be placed as the last item under Business Items. Unanimous vote is required to add/delete]*

### **IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- March 18, 2026 – Regular Meeting

### **V. PUBLIC COMMENTS NOT RELATED TO PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **VI. PUBLIC HEARING**

1. **2600056** – A Special Use Permit Application to allow a Short-Term Rental, as defined in Town Code §175-3, submitted by Robert and Melissa Mitchell, and located at 1521 N. Royal Avenue, identified by Tax Map 20A3-3-66-21A. The property is zoned R-1, Residential District.
2. **2600105** – An application for a Zoning Text Amendment to define Firearms Retail Establishment and Firearms Manufacturing in Town Code §175-3 and amend Town Code §175-39.A to permit Firearms Retail Establishments by-right in the C-1 Community Business District and to amend Town Code §175.39.B to permit Firearms Manufacturing by Special Use Permit.
3. **2600134** – A Zoning Text Amendment to Town Code §175-3 to redefine Urban Agriculture and Agricultural Pursuits; an amendment of the Performance Standards contained in Town Code §175-110.5, to clarify lot sizes and permitted animals.

### **VII. COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS**

### **VIII. PLANNING DIRECTOR REPORT**

- March Monthly Report

### **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**MARCH 18, 2026**



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 March 18, 2026, at 7:00 PM at the Warren County Government Center.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

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

### **ROLL CALL**

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

- February 18, 2026 – Regular Meeting

*Commissioner Brooks moved, seconded by Commissioner Marshner to approve the regular meeting minutes from February 18, 2026 as written.*

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

ROLL CALL



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

Ted Kane, 231 Polk Avenue, Front Royal, VA. Mr. Kane said he has an Urban Agriculture permit to have rabbits and mentioned that he raises them for food. He explained that he has five (5) rabbits and if he were to breed all four he would have up to fifty (50) which then causes him to be in violation. Mr. Kane suggested changing the Urban Agriculture ordinance to allowing six (6) “adult” rabbits with the caveat of getting rid of the babies at 14-16 weeks. There’s a problem when the Town allows only six (6) rabbits but then they multiply. When an inspection occurs for his Urban Agriculture permit he is not in compliance due to the babies.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. **2600056** – A Special Use Permit Application to allow a Short-Term Rental, as defined in Town Code §175-3, submitted by Robert and Melissa Mitchell, and located at 1521 N. Royal Avenue, identified by Tax Map 20A3-3-66-21A. The property is zoned R-1, Residential District.
2. **2600105** – An application for a Zoning Text Amendment to define Firearms Retail Establishment and Firearms Manufacturing in Town Code 175-3 and amend Town Code 175-39.A & B to permit Firearms Retail Establishments by-right in the C-1 Community Business District and permit Firearms Manufacturing by Special Use Permit.

*Vice Chairman Marrazzo 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, Marrazzo, Fedoryka

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – N/A

ROLL CALL

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. Planning Commission By-Laws.

*Commissioner Fedoryka moved, seconded by Vice Chairman Marrazzo to accept the Planning Commission By-Laws.*

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

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – N/A

VOICE VOTE



## 2. 2025 Annual Report.

Ms. Kopishke noted that the 2025 Annual Report will be presented to Town Council at their regular meeting on April 27<sup>th</sup>.

***Commissioner Brooks moved, seconded by Commissioner Fedoryka to accept the 2025 Annual Report.***

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

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – N/A

VOICE VOTE

## **COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS**

There were no comments.

## **PLANNING DIRECTOR REPORT**

Ms. Kopishke reviewed the February monthly report.

Summit will be coming in April to give an in-person presentation of the Draft Subdivision Ordinance and provide their methodology in writing the draft. Planning Commission members will be offered the opportunity to ask any questions they may have concerning the draft document. Summit will then introduce the next phase, which is staff and the Planning Commission looking at some type of form base regulations for the entrance corridor. The idea is to have the entrance corridor look attractive and not be so concerned with the interior use of the building.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – N/A

VOICE VOTE

The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Approved by Planning Commission

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **PUBLIC HEARING ITEM 1**

**2600056 – A SPECIAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION TO ALLOW A SHORT-TERM RENTAL, AS DEFINED IN TOWN CODE §175-3, SUBMITTED BY ROBERT AND MELISSA MITCHELL, AND LOCATED AT 1521 N. ROYAL AVENUE, IDENTIFIED BY TAX MAP 20A3-3-66-21A. THE PROPERTY IS ZONED R-1, RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT.**

Town of Front Royal, Virginia

**Planning Commission Monthly Meeting Agenda**

☐ Consent Action    ☐ Administrative Action    ☒ Public Hearing    ☐ Discussion

**Agenda Item:** Special Use Permit – Short-Term Rental #2600056

**MEETING DATE:** April 15, 2026

**SUMMARY:** A Special Use Permit application has been submitted for a Short-Term Rental located at 1521 N. Royal Avenue. The applicant intends to rent the house as a whole with six (6) bedrooms and no more than ten (10) occupants at a time. The home is the applicant's secondary residence.

Letters were sent to the adjoining property owners notifying them of this public hearing.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff completed an inspection on April 6, 2026 and found the interior in compliance with the Town Code. The driveway provides eight (8) off-street parking spaces meeting Town Code requirements.

Staff recommends approval with no additional conditions

**DRAFT MOTION:**

*"In furtherance of the purposes and objectives contained in Town Code §175-1(B), I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval for Special Use Permit #2600056 for a short-term rental at 1521 N. Royal Avenue, identified by tax map 20A3-3-66-21A for Robert & Melissa Mitchell."*

*"I move that the Planning Commission keep the public hearing open to allow staff time to ascertain additional information regarding \_\_\_\_\_."*

*"I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of denial for Special Use Permit #2600056 for a short-term rental at 151 N. Royal Avenue, identified by tax map 20A3-3-66-21A for the following reasons: \_\_\_\_\_"*

NOTE: These are only a draft motions. Alternative motions are also welcome.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:**

Moved \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded \_\_\_\_\_

Marshner \_\_\_\_\_ Marrazzo \_\_\_\_\_ Neel \_\_\_\_\_ Fedoryka \_\_\_\_\_ Brooks \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Approved    ☐ Approved w/ Conditions    ☐ Denied    ☐ Other



**TOWN OF FRONT ROYAL  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING**

**Planning Commission Regular Meeting  
April 15, 2026**

**APPLICATION #:**

Special Use Permit Application #2600056

**APPLICANT:**

Robert M. and Melissa A. Mitchell

**APPLICATION SUMMARY:**

A Special Use Permit application has been submitted for a Short-Term Rental located at 1521 N. Royal Avenue. The applicant intends to rent the house as a whole, with six (6) bedrooms and no more than ten (10) occupants at a time.

Staff completed an inspection on April 6, 2026 and found the interior in compliance with the Town Code. The driveway provides eight (8) off-street parking spaces.

**GENERAL INFORMATION:**

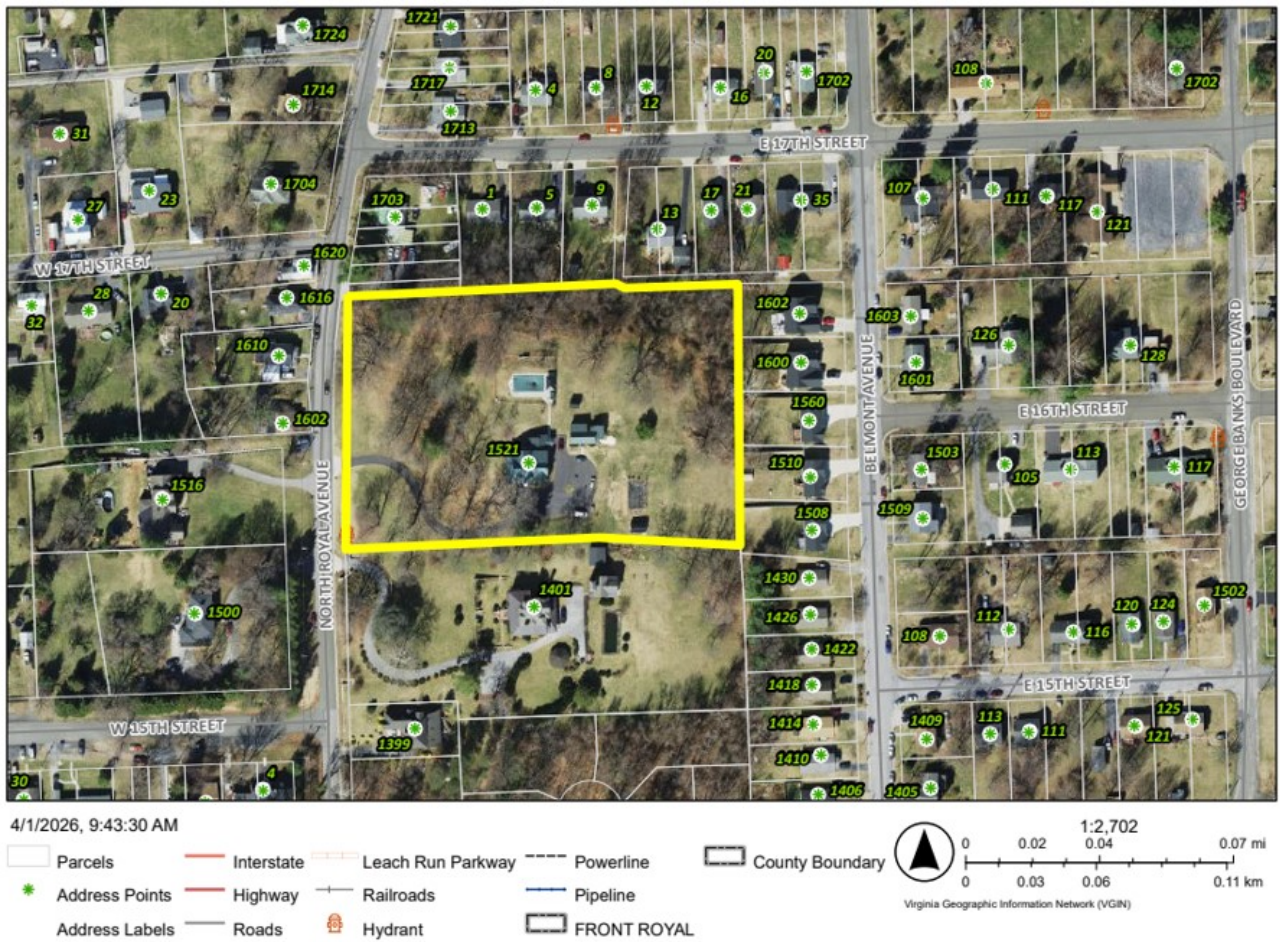
|                           |                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Site Addresses</i>     | 1521 N. Royal Avenue                                                                                |
| <i>Owner(s)</i>           | Robert M. and Melissa A. Mitchell                                                                   |
| <i>Zoning District</i>    | R-1, Residential District                                                                           |
| <i>Historic District</i>  | No                                                                                                  |
| <i>Tax Identification</i> | Tax Map #20A3-3-66-21A                                                                              |
| <i>Request</i>            | The Applicant is requesting to rent six (6) bedrooms and no more than ten (10) occupants at a time. |

*1521 N. Royal Avenue*





*Aerial Map (Warren County GIS)*



**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of this application with no conditions.

**ATTACHMENTS:** Application and supporting documents.

Town of Front Royal  
Department of Planning and Zoning  
102 East Main Street  
PO Box 1560  
Front Royal, VA 22630

Main: 540.635.4236  
Fax: 540.631.2727  
[planning@frontroyalva.com](mailto:planning@frontroyalva.com)

Permit #: 2600056  
Fee Amount: \$1200.00 Check # 2234  
Date Paid: 2-17-26  
Date Received: 2-17-26

### SPECIAL USE PERMIT REQUEST FOR SHORT TERM RENTAL

#### APPLICANT:

NAME: ROBERT + MELISSA MITCHELL PHONE: 704-267-3507  
ADDRESS 12373 SAN JOSE DR.; RESTON, VA 20191  
E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

#### PROPERTY OWNER:

NAME: SAME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

#### PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:

PROPERTY ADDRESS 1521 N. ROYAL AVE.  
TAX MAP 20A3 SECTION 3 BLOCK 66 LOT 21A  
SUBDIVISION NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ZONING DISTRICT R-1 ACREAGE 4.3  
SPECIFIC SPECIAL USE PERMIT REQUEST \_\_\_\_\_

- ☒ Whole house rental ☐ Partial rental, # of rooms rented \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Primary Residence ☒ Secondary Residence

**ATTACHMENTS:** The following must be submitted with the application. Additional information may be required depending on the nature of the request.

- ☒ Survey plat or sketch to scale of property showing all **existing** improvements, parking and refuse area and property boundaries.  
☒ Provide a map of area attractions  
☒ Provide proof that notification to operate was sent to the HOA, if applicable.  
☒ Complete management plan.  
☒ Written consent given to the Town to inspect for compliance.  
☒ Emergency dwelling evacuation diagram (posted in each bedroom)  
☒ Application fee of \$1200.00

**RECEIVED**  
FEB 17 2026  
TOWN OF FRONT ROYAL  
PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT

## IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY

If there is an emergency, or there are questions in regard to the property, please contact (owner) ROBERT MITCHELL  
at (phone number) 704-267-3507 or (property manager) MELISSA MITCHELL  
at (phone number) 704-645-7115.

If the emergency requires immediate assistance, please call the following or 911.

**Front Royal Police Department:** 540-635-2111 or 911, 900 Monroe Ave, Front Royal, VA 22630

**Front Royal Fire Department:** 540-635-2540 or 911, 221 N Commerce Ave, Front Royal, VA 22630

**\*\*If no answer please call the Warren County Sheriff's Department:** 540-635-4128 or 911

**Front Royal Fire & Rescue:** 540-635-3830 or 911, 200 Skyline Vista Drive, Front Royal, VA 22630

**Warren Memorial Hospital:** 540-636-0300 or 911, 351 Valley Health Way, Front Royal, VA 22630

**Electrical Outage:** 540-635-3027, 1101 Manassas Avenue, Front Royal, VA 22630. Outages may be reported online at <https://www.frontroyalva.com/FormCenter/Energy-Services-6/Report-Electric-Problem-46>.

Emergency/afterhours 540-635-2111

## OCCUPANCY

The Special Use Permit limits the occupancy for this short-term rental at 10 People and 6 Bedrooms.

## NOISE

It shall be a violation of Chapter 106 of the Front Royal Town Code for any person, without compelling reason, to make noise that by reason of its volume, pitch, duration, or repetition, considering the time of day, is likely to disturb the rest of any person of ordinary sensibilities or interfere with such person's lawful and peaceful enjoyment of property owned or rented by him.

## PARKING

Minimum available parking is 8 vehicle(s) in the driveway.

## TRASH AND RECYCLING

All trash and recycling shall be placed in containers provided by the owner.

- Trash receptacles are located (Clarify location of trash bags and receptacles)

BESIDE THE REAR PORCH, OFF OF THE KITCHEN

- Trash is collected (State the day of the week trash is picked up by the Town and where the container is to be placed on trash day)

Monday

## CHECK-IN & CHECK-OUT

Provide details

check in is 4pm  
checkout is 11am  
guests will use door code

## WIFI/PHONE/ETC

Provide details for special amenities if available

WIFI provided  
password will be provided upon reservation

## SPECIFIC PROPERTY DETAILS

Provide details regarding acreage, landscape, property boundaries (no trespassing notice), unique characteristic, warnings, kitchen use, house amenities, HVAC, etc.

Property boundaries are marked by woods at the left and the edge of the driveway on right. 4.3 acres includes an ADU/cottage which serves as the owner's second home. Please do not disturb.

## AREA ATTRACTIONS

Provide a map of area attractions

- Attractions: i.e., Shenandoah National Park, Shenandoah River State Park, Skyline Caverns, Golf Courses, Canoe Companies
- Groceries & Convenience: i.e., Walmart, Target, Martins, CVS
- Restaurants
- Wineries & Breweries

## SPECIFIC PROPERTY REGULATIONS

May be dictated by approved conditions or owner preference, examples below

- No shooting of firearms
- No outdoor fire burning
- No fireworks

See the house manual in the booking agreement

- K. The owners of the rental shall provide an emergency evacuation plan for the dwelling and the neighborhood.
- L. A copy of Chapter 106 of the Town of Front Royal Code relative to noise must be provided at the short-term dwelling.
- M. All outdoor burning shall be in compliance with Chapter 78 of the Town of Front Royal Code.
- N. Failure to comply with the approved conditions and/or supplemental regulations will subject the permit to revocation by the Zoning Administrator at any time.

Property Owner's Signature: Robert M Mitchell

**CERTIFICATION:**

I certify that the information provided with this application is correct to the best of my knowledge and should the special use permit be granted, the project will comply with the conditions imposed upon it and will be implemented only as approved by Town Council.

Signature Robert M Mitchell Date 2/11/26

By submitting this application, the applicant grants permission to Town officials and employees to enter upon the property, which is the subject of this application, during reasonable hours and for purposes related to the application process.

### **As per Town Code Chapter 175-3 “Definitions”**

Short-term rental- means the provision of a room or space that is suitable for, intended for occupancy for dwelling, sleeping, or lodging purposes, for a period of fewer than 30 consecutive days, in exchange for a charge for the occupancy. Any residential use that falls within the definition of short-term rental as defined in § 15.2-983, as amended, of Virginia State Code.

Short-term rental facility – A building or accessory structure, other than a hotel, motel, or bed-and-breakfast home, where lodging is provided for compensation on a short-term basis, and open to the public or transient guests. The maximum number of occupants shall not exceed ten (10) unless determined appropriate by Town Council.

Short-term rentals shall be permitted in all Zoning Districts by Special Use Permit and shall at a minimum meet the following requirements:

- A. The short-term rental owner of a dwelling unit to be used for a short-term rental shall apply for a Special Use Permit through the Department of Planning and Zoning and receive approval from Town Council prior to utilizing the dwelling unit as a short-term rental. Town Council may impose conditions necessary to mitigate adverse effects of the use on neighboring properties.
- B. The one-time application fee shall be \$1200.00.
- C. Staff will conduct an inspection prior to the issuance of the Special Use Permit approval. Additional inspections will be conducted on a complaint basis to ensure compliance with the performance standards listed in this section, along with any additional conditions imposed by Town Council, if applicable.
- D. The maximum number of occupants in the dwelling unit shall be determined by the number of bedrooms; there shall be no more than two (2) adults per bedroom. However, the maximum number of occupants shall not exceed 10 people unless approved by Council.
- E. Parking for the use shall be located in driveways or other designated and approved parking areas.
- F. There shall be no visible evidence of the conduct of such short-term rentals on the outside appearance of the property.
- G. A fire extinguisher shall be provided and visible in all kitchen and cooking areas; smoke detectors shall be installed in all locations as identified in the current Uniform Statewide Building Code; and a carbon monoxide detector must be installed on each floor in every dwelling.
- H. The owner of the dwelling used for short-term rentals shall give the Town written consent to inspect any dwelling used for short-term rental to ascertain compliance with all the above performance standards upon a twenty-four-hour notice.
- I. A property management plan demonstrating how the short-term rental will be managed and how the impact on neighboring properties will be minimized shall be submitted for review and approval as part of the permitting process to the Planning Department. The plan shall include local points of contact available to respond immediately to complaints, clean up garbage, manage unruly tenants and utility issues, etc. It shall also be posted in a visible location in the short-term rental. The contact numbers shall be provided to Town staff, public safety officials and, if applicable, the HOA of the subdivision. The plan must be provided as part of the rental contract.
- J. If the property is located within a subdivision governed by a homeowners' association, the Planning Department must receive proof that a notification to operate the short-term rental was sent to the HOA.

**SKYLINE CABINS**  
**Property Management Plan/Guest Agreement for**  
**“Edge Hill” (1521 N. Royal Ave.; Front Royal, VA)**

Welcome to the House Manual and guest agreement for Edge Hill, a property managed by **Skyline Cabins**. We offer properties throughout the Shenandoah Valley accommodating two to ten guests. For additional information, please visit:  
[www.skylinecabins.net](http://www.skylinecabins.net)

**CONTACT / EMERGENCIES**

Most booking platforms require guest communication to occur through their messaging systems. Please use the platform messenger for non-urgent matters.

- **In case of emergency, dial 911.**
- Front Royal Police Department: 540-635-2111
- Front Royal Fire Department: 540-635-2540
- Front Royal Fire & Rescue: 540-635-3830
- Warren Memorial Hospital: 540-636-0300
- Electrical Outage: 540-635-3027, Emergency/After Hours: 540-635-2111
  
- **Owner Contact:**  
Robert & Melissa Mitchell (Owners)  
571-441-1713
- **If the owners cannot be reached or a faster response is required:**  
*Chris Morrison*  
*540-252-9282*

**PARKING**

- Because the owners use the cottage as a second home, **no more than six (6) vehicles** are permitted without prior approval. At no time will more than eight (8) vehicles be permitted, including vehicles for the second home/cottage.
- Street parking is prohibited at all times, and vehicles are subject to towing if they are left on the street or blocking access to the parking area on the property.

**WIFI ACCESS**

Network: Skyline Cabins

Password: Shenandoah! (case sensitive)

If Wi-Fi goes down, unplug the router for 30 seconds and reconnect. This resolves most issues.

**ARRIVAL / DEPARTURE**

- **Check-In:** 4:00 PM  
Instructions + door code sent 2–4 days prior.
- **Check-Out:** 11:00 AM

Please complete the following prior to departure:

- Remove all trash → outdoor receptacles (no trash on the ground)
- Load dishes & start dishwasher
- Strip used beds
- Leave towels in tubs/showers
- Return furniture to original placement

### **NO SMOKING**

- Smoking is strictly prohibited indoors.
- Violation Fee: \$500
- Dispose of cigarette butts if smoking outside.

### **TRASH & RECYCLING POLICY**

- All trash must be:
  - Bagged and tied
  - Placed in roll-out container
  - Lid fully closed
  - No exterior overflow permitted.
- Prohibited: fuel, paint, batteries, ashes, debris.
- Recycling Accepted:
  - Plastics #1, #2, #5
  - Rinsed cans
  - Paper
  - Cardboard
- Recycling Not Accepted: glass, Styrofoam, plastic bags, food waste.

Guests must place trash in outdoor receptacles by 6:00 PM on service day. The property caretakers will move the trash can to the street after 7:00 PM the night before collection and return the receptacles to the house the next day. At no time should trash be placed on the ground or in containers without lids.

## **HOUSE RULES**

### **OUTDOOR QUIET HOURS: 9:00 PM – 9:00 AM**

- Immediate neighbors may contact owners or authorities if disturbances occur. Verified complaints may result in termination without refund.
- **Front Royal's Town Code Chapter 106 states:**

“It shall be unlawful for any person to make, continue, or cause to be made or continued any loud, disturbing, and unnecessary noise within the Town of Front Royal which disturbs the peace, quiet, and comfort of any reasonable person of normal sensitivities or which injures or endangers the health, safety, or welfare of others.”
- **Violations May Include:**
  - Amplified outdoor music
  - Loud parties/gatherings

- Yelling or disorderly conduct
- Vehicle noise/revving
- Nighttime outdoor activity

## **COMPLAINT RESPONSE POLICY**

If a disturbance is reported:

1. One warning may be issued (when feasible).
2. Continued violations may result in:
  - Immediate eviction
  - No refund
  - Fines/damage claims
  - Law enforcement involvement

Severe disturbances may result in immediate removal without warning.

## **OCCUPANCY/PARTIES / EVENTS**

Parties and events are strictly prohibited.

No gatherings exceeding booked occupancy of **10 guests**.

## **SHORT-TERM RENTAL (STR) COMPLIANCE**

- This property operates as a permitted short-term rental under applicable Warren County/Town of Front Royal regulations.
- By staying at the property, guests agree to comply with:
  - Occupancy limits
  - Parking rules
  - Trash handling
  - Fire safety laws
  - Noise ordinances
  - Nuisance regulations
- Violations of house rules or conditions of the STR permit may result in:
  - Immediate termination
  - Removal without refund
  - Financial liability for fines, citations, or permit penalties

## **FIRE SAFETY**

The property is equipped with smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguishers, and code-compliant emergency egress. Tampering with or disabling safety equipment is prohibited and may result in immediate termination without refund.

## **PET POLICY**

Sorry, but because of the historic nature of this property and the quality of furnishings and finishes, no pets are permitted under any circumstances.

## **HOLIDAY RESTRICTIONS**

- No check-ins or check-outs on:

- Federal holidays
- Christmas Eve
- New Year's Eve
- Without prior approval.

## **POOL & SPA USE**

1. No lifeguard on duty — swim and use the spa at your own risk.
2. Children must be supervised by an adult at all times.
3. Please shower before using the pool or spa.
4. Hours: 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM only.
5. No diving or jumping from structures, furniture, or pool/spa edges.
6. No running, rough play, or horseplay in pool or spa areas.
7. No intoxicated swimming or spa use.
8. No glass containers in or around the pool or spa.
9. No food, animals, or foreign substances in the pool or spa.
10. Do not use oils, bath products, soaps, or bubbles in the spa.
11. The pool fence and spa cover must remain secured when not in use.
12. Registered guests only — no outside visitors or parties.
13. Do not tamper with pool or spa equipment, temperature controls, or settings.
14. Spa temperatures are preset for safety — do not adjust.
15. Pregnant individuals or persons with medical conditions should consult a physician before spa use.
16. Limit spa use to 15 minutes at a time to prevent overheating.
17. Exit the pool or spa immediately during lightning or severe weather.

By staying at the property, guests accept all risks and agree to hold harmless the owners and all affiliated parties from any liability arising from the presence or use of the pool and spa.

## **SMART TV INSTRUCTIONS**

Smart TVs are in the family room, master bedroom, and the bunk room. Guests must supply their own streaming services. If a television becomes disconnected from the network, use credentials posted by TV, not the guest Wi-Fi network. Please log out of streaming accounts before departure.

## **GRILL USE**

- Electric grills provided.
- Guests must clean before/after use.
  - Wipe grease
  - Dishwasher-safe griddles
  - Use plastic scrapers only
  - No grill brushes
- Keep grill ≥18" from exterior walls.

## **FIRE PIT USE**

Fire pit use must comply with **Front Royal Town Code Chapter 78** and Virginia burn laws.

- No open burning is permitted, only use of the provided firepit with a screen
- Firewood/approved logs only
- No trash, brush, debris
- Follow burn bans
- Fires supervised at all times
- No high-wind use
- Fully extinguish after use
- Do not move fire pit
- Must remain  $\geq 25$  ft. from structures
- Violations may result in:
  - Municipal fines
  - Fire response charges
  - Property damage liability
  - Revocation of fire pit privileges

Use constitutes agreement to these laws.

## **PUBLIC NUISANCE / DISORDERLY CONDUCT**

Any conduct deemed a nuisance — including illegal activity, repeated complaints, or unsafe behavior — may result in:

- Immediate removal
- Forfeiture of charges
- Security claims
- Law enforcement referral

## **LINENS**

- Extra bedding → closets/dressers
- Decorative shams not for use
- Extra towels → under sinks
- Non-white towels → hot tub
- Cleaning cloths → under sink

## **INVENTORY**

Report missing/damaged items promptly.

## **NEST THERMOSTAT / HVAC**

Rotate ring → adjust temperature

Press face → confirm selection

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Driveways plowed after ~2" snowfall.

AWD recommended for steep drives. Road clearing is managed by local crews.

## **FIREPLACES**

Fireplaces are **inoperable**. Use is prohibited and will result in **immediate termination without refund**.

## **PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES**

- Illegal activity of any kind is strictly prohibited and will result in immediate removal and law enforcement involvement.
- Guests may not discharge a firearm or use fireworks of any kind at the property.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF LOCAL LAW COMPLIANCE**

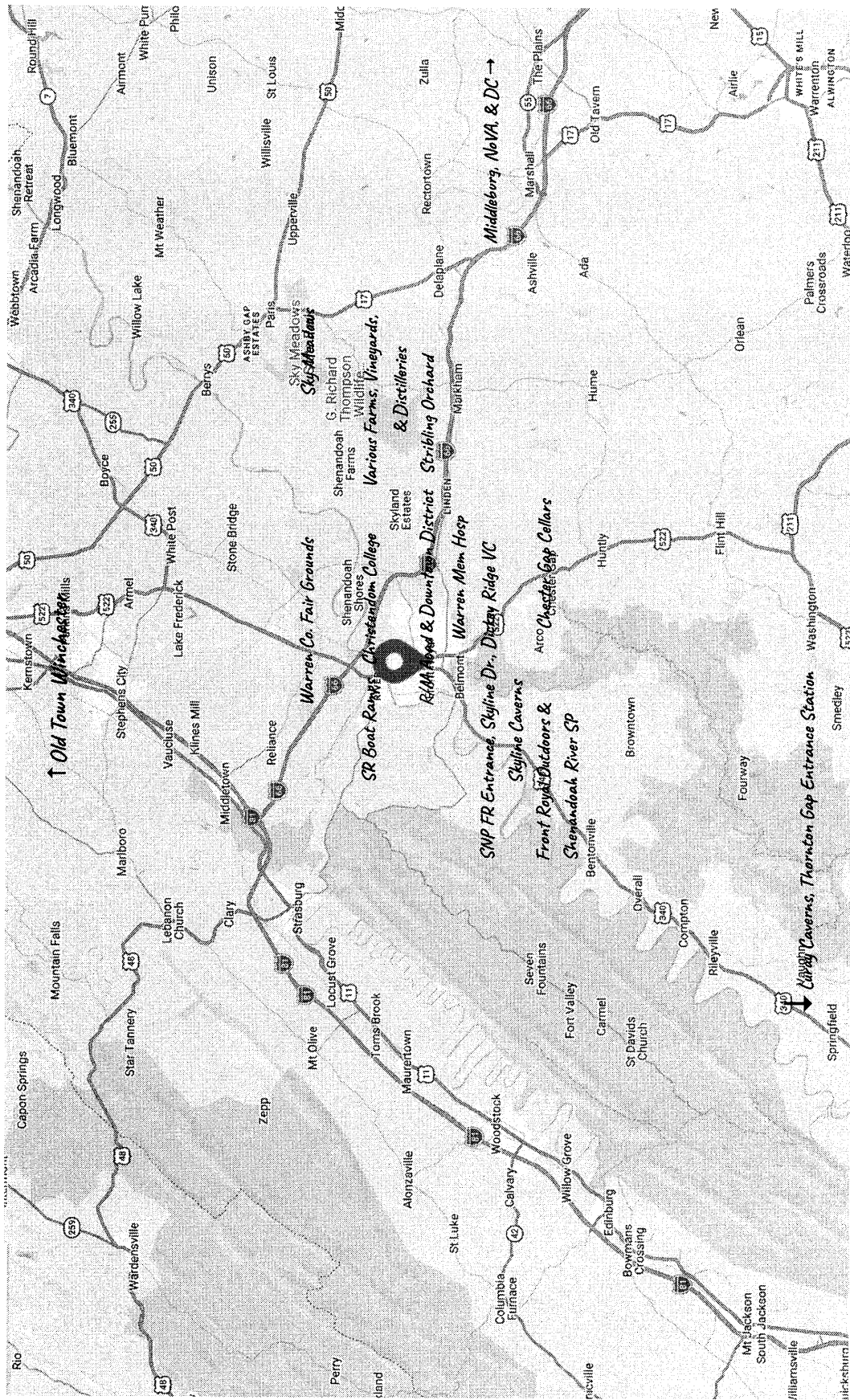
By booking or occupying the property, guests acknowledge:

- Receipt of this House Manual
- Understanding of Front Royal ordinances
- Agreement to comply with STR regulations
- Financial responsibility for violations caused by themselves or invitees

### Consent to Inspect

We, the owners of 1521 N. Royal Avenue; Front Royal, VA, do give staff of the Town of Front Royal permission to inspect our property for compliance of STR regulations.

*M Mitchell 2/16/20*  
*Melissa A Mitchell 2/16/2020*

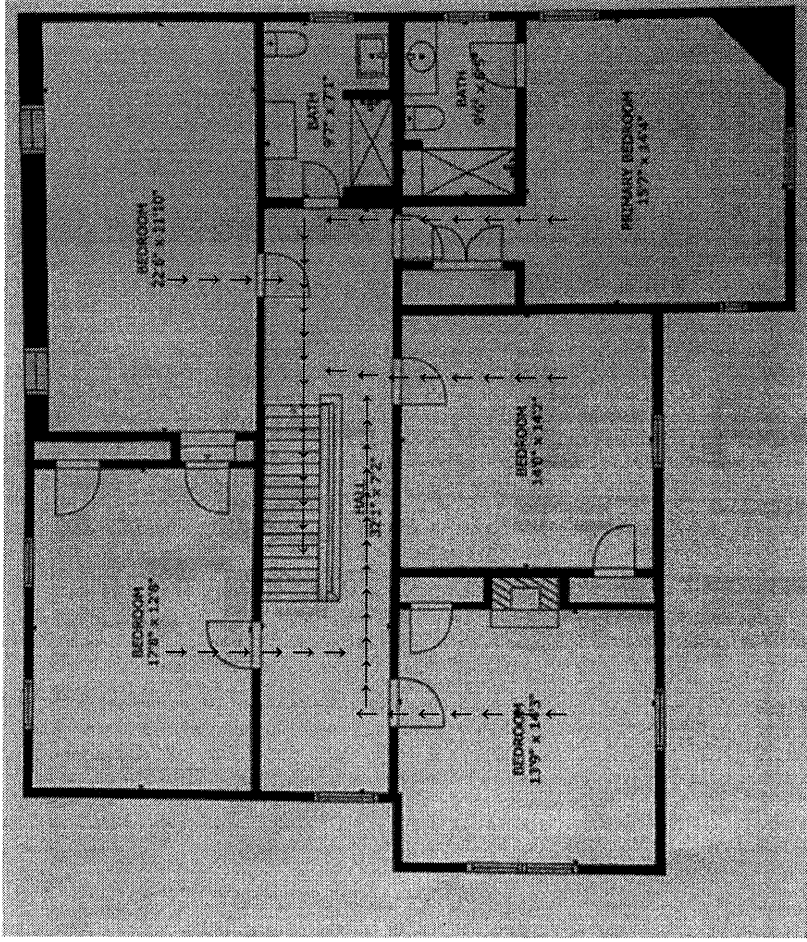
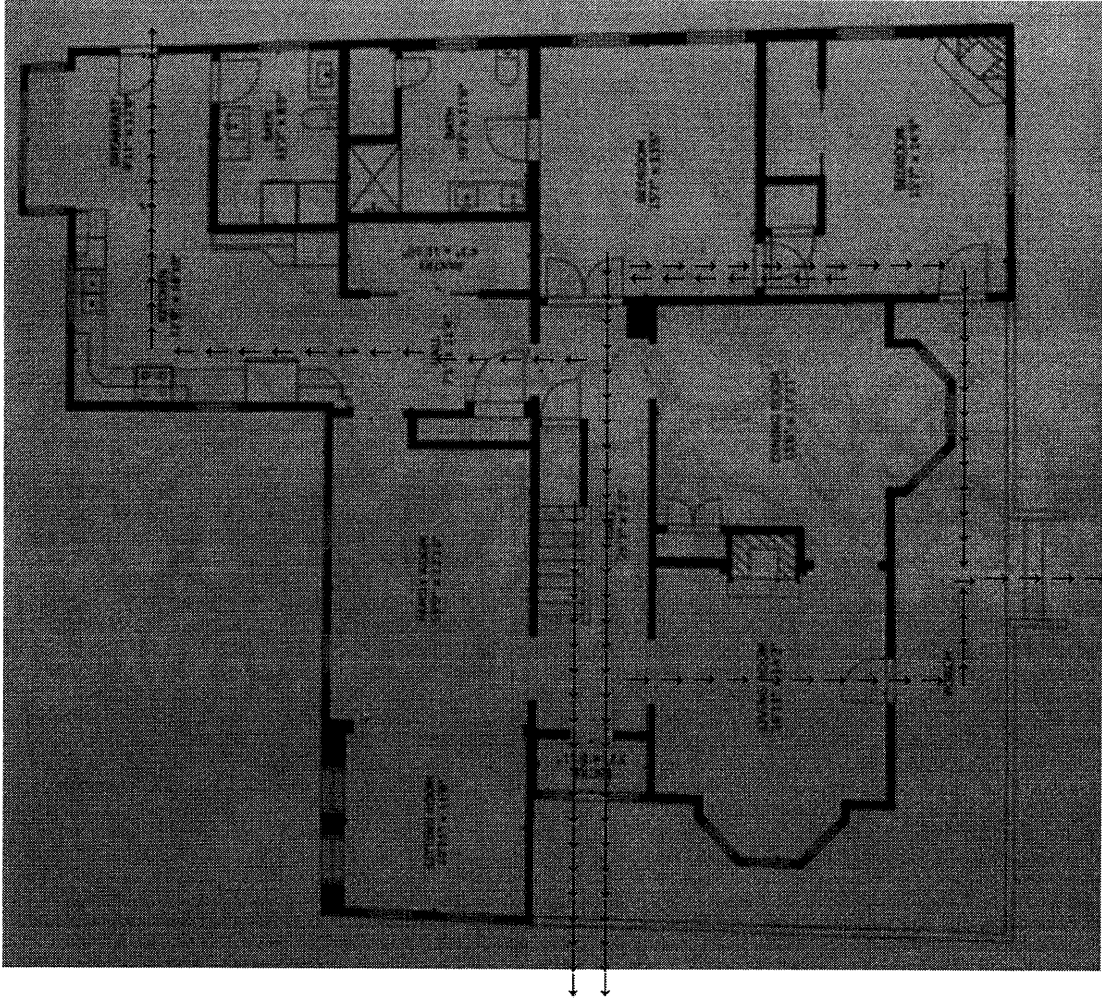


*Nearby Attractions for 1521 N. Royal Ave.*

# FIRE EVACUATION MAP

→ **FIRST FLOOR**

→ **SECOND FLOOR**





## **PUBLIC HEARING ITEM 2**

**2600105 – AN APPLICATION FOR A ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT TO DEFINE FIREARMS RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT AND FIREARMS MANUFACTURING IN TOWN CODE §175-3 AND AMEND TOWN CODE §175-39.A TO PERMIT FIREARMS RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS BY-RIGHT IN THE C-1 COMMUNITY BUSINESS DISTRICT AND TO AMEND TOWN CODE §175.39.B TO PERMIT FIREARMS MANUFACTURING BY SPECIAL USE PERMIT.**

Town of Front Royal, Virginia

**Planning Commission Regular Meeting Agenda**

☐ Consent Action    ☐ Administrative Action    ☒ Public Hearing    ☐ Discussion

**Agenda Item:** Zoning Text Amendment #2600105

**MEETING DATE:** April 15, 2026

**SUMMARY:** An application for a Zoning Text Amendment to define Firearms Retail Establishment and Firearms Manufacturing in Town Code §175-3 and amend Town Code §175-39.A to permit Firearms Retail Establishments by-right in the C-1 Community Business District and to amend Town Code §175.39.B to permit Firearms Manufacturing by Special Use Permit.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval.

**DRAFT MOTION:** “In order to promote the general welfare of the public and in accordance with Town Code §175-1(B), I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to the Town Council to approve a text amendment to define Firearms Retail Establishment and Firearms Manufacturing in Town Code §175-3 and amend Town Code §175-39.A to permit Firearms Retail Establishments by-right in the C-1 Community Business District and to amend Town Code §175.39.B to permit Firearms Manufacturing by Special Use Permit.”

“I move that the Planning Commission keep the public hearing open to allow staff time to ascertain additional information regarding \_\_\_\_\_. ”

“I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of denial to the Town Council for Zoning Text Amendment #2600105 for the following reason(s)\_\_\_\_\_: ”

NOTE: This is only a draft motion. Alternative motions are also welcome.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:**

Moved \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded \_\_\_\_\_

Marshner \_\_\_\_\_ Marrazzo \_\_\_\_\_ Neel \_\_\_\_\_ Brooks \_\_\_\_\_ Fedoryka \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Approved    ☐ Approved w/ Conditions    ☐ Denied    ☐ Other

## **Staff Report: Zoning Text Amendment 2600105**

|                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Background Information</b> | Retail firearms sales are permitted within the commercial district, but the assembly of firearms is not. Currently, the Towns code does not describe a key portion of the firearms sales business activities, i.e, gunsmithing which then relegates any assembly of firearms for sale to the industrial areas. At a certain level of assembly, an industrial designation would be appropriate. However, for a small shop owner, that can be burdensome. This text amendment will sufficiently define the retail sales and assembly of firearms and distinguish between when it can be by-right vs. a Special Use Permit. |
| <b>Code Sections Amended</b>  | §175-3 Definitions; and §175-39.A and §175.39.B.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

Town of Front Royal  
Department of Planning and Zoning  
102 East Main Street  
PO Box 1560  
Front Royal, VA 22630

Main: 540-635-4236  
Fax: 540-631-2727  
[planning@frontroyalva.com](mailto:planning@frontroyalva.com)

Permit: # 2600105  
Fee Amt: \$650.00  
Date Paid: 3/9/26  
Date Received: 3/9/26

## ORDINANCE / TEXT AMENDMENT APPLICATION

### APPLICANT:

NAME: David Cressell PHONE: 540-305-9845  
ADDRESS 275 Gary Ln Front Royal, VA 22630  
E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

### TYPE OF REQUEST – Please mark type of request and complete information.

☒ **ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT (Town Code Chapter 175)**

Code Section: 175-3 + 175-39

Description of amendments: Establishing Firearms Retail as any business engaged in the  
sale, manufacturing for sale or repair of firearms (guns/shotguns) where the assembly of firearms accounts for less  
than 35% of the retail dried inside of the commercial code instead of industrial. Also making  
firearms manufacturing and large scale assembly or making firearms for whole sale or distribution

☐ **LAND SUBDIVISION TEXT AMENDMENT (Town Code Chapter 148)**

Code Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of amendments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### REQUIRED MATERIALS LIST

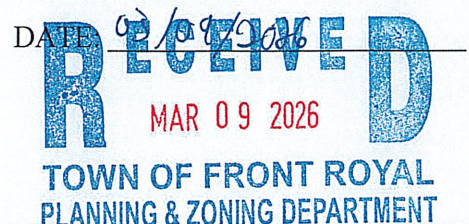
- ☒ One (1) copy of application (this form completed).  
☒ Letter explaining request and public purpose necessitating the amendment.  
☒ Application Fee – Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_\_\_ Card ✓  
☒ Copy of text amendment.

All public hearing materials must be submitted at one time by 4:30 PM on the deadline date for the next regular meeting in order to be placed on the agenda. **Only complete applications, which include all the above materials, will be accepted.**

I/we hereby certify that I/we own property within the Town of Front Royal and that the above information is complete and correct.

SIGNATURE: David Cressell  
Applicant

June 11, 2025



**AN ORDINANCE TO DEFINE FIREARMS RETAIL ESTABLISHMENT AND FIREARMS  
MANUFACTURING IN TOWN CODE §175-3 AND AMEND TOWN CODE §175-39.A  
TO PERMIT FIREARMS RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS BY-RIGHT IN THE C-1  
COMMUNITY BUSINESS DISTRICT AND TO AMEND TOWN CODE §175.39.B TO  
PERMIT FIREARMS MANUFACTURING BY SPECIAL USE PERMIT.**

**175-3 DEFINITIONS**

**Firearms Retail Establishment:** any business engaged in the sale, manufacture for sale, or repair of firearms and where the assembly of firearms accounts for less than 35% of the retail area.

**Firearms Manufacturing:** The commercial production, fabrication, assembly, or processing of firearms, including frames, receivers, and component parts, for sale, transfer, or distribution. This use does not include minor gunsmithing, repair, or customization conducted as an accessory use to a retail establishment.

**COMMUNITY BUSINESS DISTRICT (C-1)**

**175-38 STATEMENT OF INTENT (C-1)**

The Community Business C-I District is intended to accommodate general business areas, highway-oriented commercial uses, and selected retailing operations. The Community Business C-I District recognizes the demand for a variety of land uses near or adjacent to the major traffic arteries in Town.

**175-39 USE REGULATIONS (C-1)**

- A. Subject to the standards and requirements set forth in this Chapter, except as prohibited or restricted by separate restrictions of record that may pertain to property within the C-1 District, the following uses of land and buildings are permitted by-right in the C-1 District:

**RESIDENTIAL:**

Up to three (3) dwelling units of any type, but not on the ground floor.

Caretaker quarters.

**COMMERCIAL:**

Appliance stores and repair services.

Assembly Halls.

Automobile and truck sales lots and leasing agencies, in accordance with Section 175-44.E.

Automobile service stations, in accordance with Section 175-110.

Bakeries, when products are sold as retail on the premises.

Banks, branch banks, and financial institutions.

Barber and beauty shops.

Car washing.

Catering Services.

Contractor's offices, display rooms and storage.

Commuter parking facilities.

Department Stores.

Drugstores.

**Firearms Retail.**

Florist shops/floral designers.

Funeral homes.

Furniture stores.

Grocery stores.

Hardware stores.

Laundries, Laundromats and dry cleaners.

Lumber and building supply, with storage under cover.

Machinery sales and service.

Motels, hotels, and tourist homes.

Newspaper and other printing establishments.

Personal Services.

Retail Stores, as defined in Section 175-39.C.

Pharmaceutical Center.

Professional and Business Offices.

Radio and television broadcasting stations, studios or offices.

Recreational Facility, Commercial.

Restaurants, including drive-in restaurants.

Special childcare services.

Technology business, as defined in Section 175-3, provided that such use does not involve broadcast or communications towers or manufacturing operations.

Theatres, Indoor.

Tobacco, smoke or vape shop in accordance with provisions of Section 175-152.

Veterinary hospitals.

Wearing-apparel stores.

**INDUSTRIAL:**

**ORGANIZATIONAL:**

Art galleries and museums.

Churches.

Public libraries.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Accessory uses, structures and buildings.

Home occupations.

Open Space.

Public facilities.

Public parks and playgrounds.

Public utilities.

Signs, as set forth in Section 175-106.

Special childcare services.

Such other uses as determined similar to one (1) or more enumerated uses by the Zoning Administrator.

- B. The following uses are permitted within the C-1 District only by approval of a special use permit, except as prohibited or restricted by separate restrictions of record that may pertain to property within the C-1 District:

RESIDENTIAL:

Apartments or dwelling units, with four (4) or more units or where located on the ground floor, subject to the provisions of Section 175-113.

COMMERCIAL:

Automobile garages, excluding where repairs work is only an accessory use, subject to the requirements of Section 175-110.3 where motor vehicle painting or body work services are provided.

Automobile Parking Lots, commercial.

Bed and Breakfasts, as set forth in Section 107.3.

Day Care Facilities and schools, subject to the provisions of Section 175-107.1.F, and any necessary improvements or changes to address the considerations of that section.

Farmers' markets, and flea markets, in accordance with Section 175-44.F.

Kennels.

Shopping centers as set forth in Section 175-111.

Tobacco, smoke or vape shop.

INDUSTRIAL:

Distribution facilities, subject to the standards and criteria for industrial uses provided in Section 175-70.

**Firearms Manufacturing.**

Wholesale establishments with storage and processing, subject to the standards and criteria for industrial uses provided in Section 175-70.

ORGANIZATIONAL:

Schools.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Any use permitted under Section 175-39, or specifically listed above under this subsection, that proposes to occupy a building or structure that exceeds the height requirements of Section 175-41, subject to the requirements of Section 175-136. Additional heights approved by a special use permit shall be required to increase the required setback and yard area requirements by an equivalent distance from each property line.

Conservation areas.

Communication towers, in accordance with Section 175-110.4.

Conversion of a structure originally designed and intended for occupancy as a single-family dwelling into a structure with more than one (1) dwelling.

Boarding Houses, Clubs and Lodging Houses.

Mini-warehouses, subject to the standards of Section 107-44.G.

Nursing homes, as set forth in Section 175-107.

Parking Structures.

Structures with a height between forty-five (45) feet and seventy (70) feet, and any residential structure not in conformance with the height limitation of Section 175-41.

Structures with a gross floor area of fifty thousand (50,000) square feet or more.

Townhouse-style commercial development, where the intent is to divide the property into individual lots.

- C. For the purpose of this section, "retail stores" are defined as buildings for the display and sale of merchandise at retail or for the rendering of personal services, but specifically exclusive of coal, wood and oil and lumberyards, accessory uses, adult bookstores (stores engaged in the sale of magazines and other publications of sexually-oriented nature), massage parlors and stores engaged in the sale of sexual aids, devices and merchandise.

(Ord. of 7-25-05; Ord. of 7-28-08; Ord. of 6-22-15; Ord. of 2-24-25(2))

## **175-40 AREA REGULATIONS (C-1)**

A. *Minimum Lot Size:*

1. Residential uses with four (4) or more units = six thousand (6,000) s.f. first unit; one thousand five hundred (1,500) s.f. each additional unit.
2. All other uses: Seven thousand five hundred (7,500) s.f.

- B. *Minimum Unit Size:* The minimum average unit size (floor area) per dwelling unit, where fewer than four (4) units are provided shall be three hundred (300) square feet. No dwelling unit shall have less than two hundred fifty (250) square feet of living area. This living area shall not include bathroom, closet and storage space.

- C. *Minimum District Size:* Five (5) acres.

D. *Minimum Lot Width:*

1. Interior Lot: Seventy-five (75) feet.
2. Corner Lot: Ninety (90) feet.

## **175-41 MAXIMUM HEIGHT OF BUILDINGS (C-1)**

- A. *Residential Buildings:* Thirty-five (35) feet, except as otherwise provided in this section.

- B. *Other Principal Buildings:* Forty-five (45) feet except as provided in Section 175-39.B.

- C. *Residential structures* may have a maximum overall height of forty-five (45) feet, provided that the slope of the roof exceeds thirty-five (35) percent and the required yards are increased by one (1) foot for each foot in height over thirty-five (35) feet.

- D. *Exemptions from height requirements:*

1. Church spires.
  2. Belfries.
  3. Cupolas.
  4. Municipal water towers.
  5. Chimneys.
  6. Flues.
  7. Flagpoles.
  8. Television antennas.
  9. Radio aerials.
  10. Parapet walls up to four (4) feet above the height of the building on which the wall rests.
- E. *Accessory buildings and structures:* Thirty-five (35) feet; however, in no case, shall the height of an accessory structure exceed the height of the principal structure.
- (Ord. of 6-22-15)

## **175-42 MINIMUM SETBACK AND YARD DIMENSIONS (C-1)**

- A. *Principal Structures*, when abutting properties are in a commercial or industrial district.
1. Front setback:
    - a. Where no parking is provided between the structure and the street: five (5) feet. Provided, however, that no drive aisle shall be located within five (5) feet of any structure having a setback less than fifteen (15) feet.
    - b. Where parking is provided between the structure and the street: fifty (50) feet.
  2. Side: Ten (10) feet on one (1) side only.
  3. Rear: Fifteen (15) feet.
  4. Corner side: Fifteen (15) feet.
- B. *Accessory Structures:*
1. Front setback: Twenty-five (25) feet, except that accessory structures shall not be located closer to the street than the principal structure.
  2. Side: Five (5) feet or fifty percent (50%) of building height, whichever is greater.
  3. Rear: Five (5) feet or fifty percent (50%) of building height, whichever is greater.
  4. Corner side: Twenty (20) feet, except that accessory structures shall not be located closer to the street than the principal structure.
- C. *Transitional yards*, when located adjoining a residential district.
1. Side yard: Fifteen (15) feet.
  2. Rear yard: Twenty (20) feet.
  3. No structures, storage, use or parking shall be located in a transitional yard.
  4. Transitional yards shall be landscaped in accordance with the provisions of Section 148-44.

- D. Where parking is provided in a perpendicular manner between the principal structure and the street a minimum parking setback of ten (10) feet and a minimum building setback of fifty (50) feet shall be provided. The parking setback shall be landscaped in accordance with Section 148-48(E)(2).
- E. The Town Council may waive the setback, yard and lot size requirements for townhouse style commercial project, approved by special permit, where such waiver is needed to produce a functional and desirable site layout; provided, however, that no adverse impact to adjoining property results from the waiver.

### **175-43 OPEN SPACE REGULATIONS (C-1)**

- A. Maximum building coverage for apartment structures exceeding four (4) units: Fifty percent (50%).
- B. Maximum building coverage for all other structures: Seventy-five percent (75%).
- C. Maximum impervious surface coverage: Ninety percent (90%), including off-street parking.

### **175-44 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS (C-1)**

- A. *Screening:*
  - 1. Except where otherwise specifically approved in the Town Code, permitted uses shall be conducted wholly within a completely enclosed building.
  - 2. Outdoor storage, outdoor display or outdoor sale of goods shall only be permitted when each of the following standards are met:
    - a. Outdoor storage, outdoor display, or outdoor sale of goods shall be used in direct association with the primary use or uses of the property.
    - b. Outdoor storage, outdoor display and/or outdoor sales shall be screened to obstruct view from any adjacent public street. A screen may consist of a building, solid masonry wall, uniformly painted solid board fence or landscaping. The height of the screening shall be six feet (6') unless an alternative height is approved by the Planning Commission during the review of a site plan.
  - 3. The following types of outdoor display and/or outdoor sales shall be exempt from the requirements of Section 175-44.A.2.b:
    - a. Motor vehicles.
    - b. Power operated machines designed for outdoor labor, such as farming, construction or lawn maintenance, as well as large equipment, products, and materials designed to be kept outdoors.
    - c. Plants and other landscaping products typically sold with plants.
    - d. Temporary or seasonal activities, such as but not limited to, peddlers, yard sales, and itinerant merchants that have obtained approval from the Town.
    - e. Pre-manufactured buildings.
    - f. Vending machines.
    - g. General products, goods, merchandise, and/or materials, provided that: (i) no more than two hundred (200) square feet of area is used, and (ii) outdoor display and/or sales are restricted from the evening and night hours from 8:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m., except that general products, goods, merchandise, and/or materials may be kept outdoors if located under a roofed structure.
    - h. Flea markets, subject to any conditions issued with special use permit, performance standards of the underlying zoning district, and requirements of Section 98-46 of the Town Code.
  - 4. Commercial development shall be permanently screened from adjoining and contiguous residential district by a wall, fence, evergreen hedge, and/or other suitable enclosure with a minimum height of six

- (6) feet. Any area between such enclosure and the property line shall be landscaped to form a permanent screening area. The requirement for a screening area may be waived if equivalent screening is provided by existing parks, recreational areas, or by topographic or other natural conditions.
5. The provision of subsection A.4 above, shall not apply when the (architectural) front of any commercial building faces the street across from a residential district or when strict application of the requirement relative to screening can be demonstrated as not serving the purpose for which it is intended.
- B. *Lighting:* Lighting facilities shall be arranged in a manner that will protect the public roadway and neighboring properties from direct glare, intrusion or hazardous interference. Parking lot and building lighting shall be directed so that the lighting does not extend beyond the property boundary. Lighting facilities shall be required along private and public streets and within parking areas, installed at the developer's expense.
- C. *Miscellaneous:*
1. No flammable or explosive liquids, solids or gases shall be stored in bulk above ground; provided, however, that tanks or drums of fuel directly connecting to energy devices, heating devices or appliances located on the same lot as the tanks or drums of fuel are excluded from this provision.
  2. All fuel and raw materials stored outdoors shall be enclosed by a fence adequate to conceal the facilities from any adjacent properties or roadways.
  3. No materials or wastes shall be deposited upon a lot in such form or manner that it may be transferred off the lot by natural causes or forces.
  4. All refuse containers shall be adequately sized to handle the needs of the facility or development and all material or wastes which might cause fumes or dust, constitute a fire hazard,, or may be edible or otherwise attractive to rodents or insects shall be stored only in completely closed containers.
  5. All outdoor refuse storage areas shall be located in a paved area and hidden from general public view, either from within or outside the lot, by means of fences or walls, and landscape planting. A solid wood or masonry fence at least six (6) feet in height shall be provided on three (3) sides, with a solid opaque gate on the fourth side. Landscaping shall be incorporated to improve the visual appearance.
- D. *Landscaping:* All sites and parking areas shall be landscaped in accordance with the provisions of Sections 148-46, 148-47 and 148-48.
- E. *Automobile and Truck Sales Lots and Leasing Agencies:* Vehicle repair shall only be permitted as an accessory use to automobile and truck sales lots and leasing agencies, except where a special use permit is issued for automobile repair. All incidental repair of vehicles shall be conducted within a building enclosed on all sides.
- F. *Farmer's Markets and Flea Markets:* Where farmer's markets are permitted under the provisions of this Chapter, the following standards shall be required:
1. Adequate water and sanitary facilities shall be provided if found necessary based on the size, frequency and duration of the market.
  2. A minimum twenty-five-foot setback shall be maintained from all property lines, excluding structures and uses in existence prior to July 1, 2001.
  3. No adverse effect on adjoining properties, including, but not limited to, excessive or untimely noise or lighting, overflow parking, or visual problems potentially affecting property values or marketability, is found.
  4. All tables, facilities and structures shall be maintained in a well-kept and attractive manner.
  5. No manufactured buildings shall be permitted.
  6. Unless otherwise approved as part of a special use permit, all temporary structures or facilities shall be removed during the days that the market is not in operation.

7. Operation of a Flea Market shall be confined to Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays, unless other dates are specifically approved by the Town Council in conjunction with the Special Permit. The hours of operation shall be posted on the property.
  8. If a Flea Market or Farmers' Market elects to close during part of the year, or is required to close during part of the year by a condition of a special use permit, all tables and other temporary fixtures shall be removed within two (2) weeks of such closure. Such fixtures may be stored on the site, provided they are located within a completely enclosed building or otherwise screened from public view, in accordance with Section 175-44.A.
  9. All Flea Markets and Farmers' Markets shall be swept clean, hosed down and/or picked clean daily. No food products or debris shall be permitted to remain upon the site overnight. All food products sold at the market must be displayed under sanitary conditions and sold in compliance with all requirements of the Virginia Department of Health or Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
  10. Any expansion, including, but not limited to, new construction, an increase in the days of operation, or other significant changes to the use of the property, shall only be authorized with a special use permit.
  11. Landscaping shall be provided where feasible and desirable for purposes of improvement aesthetics, screening, shade and the natural environment.
  12. Fencing may be required for purposes of improvement aesthetics, screening or public safety.
  13. The sale of live animals is prohibited.
  14. The sale of new merchandise or serving of food, other than farm and domestic products, shall only be authorized if the vendor obtains an itinerant merchant or peddler license, in accordance with the Town Code regulations for such uses.
  15. Farmers' Markets and Flea Markets on public property shall be classified as a public event.
- G. *Mini-warehouses:* Where mini-warehouses are permitted, the following standards shall be required:
1. No exterior storage shall be permitted.
  2. No business activities other than rental of storage units and office use shall be conducted on the premises or within the building, except as specifically approved with the special permit approval. The servicing or repair of motor vehicles, trucks, mobile homes, boats, trailers, lawn mowers, or other similar equipment shall not be conducted on the premises. The operation of a mini-warehouse shall in no way be deemed to include a transfer and storage business where the use of vehicles is part of such business.
  3. When a mini-warehouse is built adjacent to or within one hundred (100) feet of a lot in a residential district without an intervening street, a solid wall or fence at least six (6) feet in height with a finished side facing the residential lot shall be erected between the mini-warehouse and the residential lot. However, the wall or fence shall not be required to extend into the front yard required on the lot on which it is located.
  4. The minimum landscaped open space for a mini-warehouse building shall not be less than .20 times the gross acreage of the lot. Such landscaped open space shall not be open to vehicular traffic, and shall be used to buffer and shield adjacent uses from the mini-warehouse operation. The required amount of open space may be reduced with the special permit approval for the reuse of an existing building/developed property.
  5. The maximum height of the storage section of a mini-warehouse building shall be twenty-five (25) feet.
  6. The maximum total storage area in a mini-warehouse building shall be seven thousand five hundred (7,500) square feet.
  7. The maximum size of an individual storage unit shall be five hundred (500) square feet.

8. Buildings used in association with mini-warehousing shall be setback at least one hundred fifty (150) feet from the public road.

(Ord. of 1-28-13; Ord. of 6-22-15; Ord. of 10-10-17)

## **PUBLIC HEARING ITEM 3**

**2600134 – A ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT TO TOWN CODE §175-3 TO REDEFINE URBAN AGRICULTURE AND AGRICULTURAL PURSUITS; AN AMENDMENT OF THE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS CONTAINED IN TOWN CODE §175-110.5, TO CLARIFY LOT SIZES AND PERMITTED ANIMALS.**

Town of Front Royal, Virginia

**Planning Commission Regular Meeting Agenda**

☐ Consent Action    ☐ Administrative Action    ☒ Public Hearing    ☐ Discussion

**Agenda Item:** Zoning Text Amendment #2600134

**MEETING DATE:** April 15, 2026

**SUMMARY:** A Zoning Text Amendment to Town Code §175-3 to redefine Urban Agriculture and Agricultural Pursuits; an amendment of the Performance Standards contained in Town Code §175-110.5, to clarify lot sizes and permitted animals.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval.

**DRAFT MOTION:** “In order to promote the general welfare of the public and in accordance with Town Code §175-1(B), I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of approval to the Town Council for a Zoning Text Amendment to Town Code §175-3 to redefine Urban Agriculture and Agricultural Pursuits; an amendment of the Performance Standards contained in Town Code §175-110.5, to clarify lot sizes and permitted animals.”

“I move that the Planning Commission keep the public hearing open to allow staff time to ascertain additional information regarding \_\_\_\_\_. “

“I move that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation of denial to the Town Council for Zoning Text Amendment #2600134 for the following reason(s)\_\_\_\_\_: ”

NOTE: This is only a draft motion. Alternative motions are also welcome.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:**

Moved \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded \_\_\_\_\_

Marshner \_\_\_\_\_ Marrazzo \_\_\_\_\_ Neel \_\_\_\_\_ Brooks \_\_\_\_\_ Fedoryka \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Approved    ☐ Approved w/ Conditions    ☐ Denied    ☐ Other

## Staff Report: Zoning Text Amendment 2600134

### Background Information

The current iteration of the Towns Urban Agriculture standards conflict with language contained in Town Code Chapter 66 and have presented significant administrative challenges related to interpretation and enforcement. The current code does not clearly indicate standards based on lot size or sufficiently distinguish between urban agriculture vs. agricultural pursuits and operations.

This new code seeks to clearly establish limits on chickens, bees, and rabbits based on lot size and outlines enclosure standards to ensure the animals and humans are safe. Urban agriculture will only be permitted as an accessory use on single-family residential lots and will not be permitted in other districts.

### SUMMARY TABLE

| Category                             | Tier 1(<1 acre)                                | Tier 2 (≥1 acre but < 5 acres)                 | Tier 3 (≥ 5 acres)                                                                     | Notes/Exceptions                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chickens (hens only)                 | Up to six (6) Hens                             | Up to twelve (12) Hens                         | Up to eighteen (18) hens (one (1) Rooster allowed)                                     | Roosters must have at least ten (10) hens if hens are present. A rooster counts as part of the total number of chickens.                                                         |
| Rabbits (outdoor, for meat purposes) | Up to six (6) Rabbits                          | Up to twelve (12) Rabbits                      | Up to eighteen (18) Rabbits                                                            | Indoor pet rabbits not counted/ temporary exceedance for breeding allowed ≤12 weeks; max 2 x allowed number.                                                                     |
| Bee Hives                            | Up to six (6) Hives                            | Up to six (6) Hives                            | Up to twelve (12) Hives                                                                | At least a two (2) square foot in size warning sign and solid fence at least four (4) feet high. Twelve (12) hives require additional setbacks.                                  |
| Setbacks                             | Ten (10) feet from side/rear property lines.   | Ten (10) feet from side/rear property lines.   | Ten (10) to fifty (50) feet depending on number of hives or the presence or a rooster. | Additional restriction for proximity to water sources and drainage. Zoning Administrator may impose additional setbacks based on management plan.                                |
| Housing and Care                     | Chickens: coop/run. Rabbits; hutch. Bee hives. | Chickens: coop/run. Rabbits; hutch. Bee hives. | Chickens: coop/run. Rabbits; hutch. Bee hives.                                         | Min. four (4) sq ft/ chicken or eight (8) sq ft/ rabbit. Runs: four (4) sq ft/ chicken, sixteen (16) sq ft/rabbit; clean, ventilated, sanitary; feed in rodent-proof containers. |
| Zoning Permit                        | Required                                       | Required                                       | Required                                                                               | Includes management plan (waste, odor, noise, biosecurity, maintenance); 1-year term, renewable; may be revoked for violations.                                                  |
| Temporary Breeding Exception         | Up to twelve (12) weeks                        | Up to twelve (12) weeks                        | Up to twelve (12) weeks                                                                | Chickens and rabbits must be reduced to allowed number afterward; absolute cap = two (2) x allowed number. Lots must be maintained and provided for inspection.                  |
| Sale of Agricultural Products        | Not Permitted.                                 | Not Permitted.                                 | Not Permitted.                                                                         | Incidental sharing/trading allowed; commercial sales require zoning approval.                                                                                                    |
| Commercial / Industrial Uses         | Not Permitted.                                 | Not Permitted.                                 | Not Permitted.                                                                         | School properties are exempt from the population requirements of the Tier System.                                                                                                |

### Code Sections Amended

§175-3 Definitions; §175-110.5.

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND TOWN CODE §175-3 TO REDEFINE URBAN  
AGRICULTURE AND AGRICULTURAL PURSUITS; AN AMENDMENT OF THE  
PERFORMANCE STANDARDS CONTAINED IN TOWN CODE §175-110.5,  
TO CLARIFY LOT SIZES AND PERMITTED ANIMALS.**

**175-3 DEFINITIONS**

**AGRICULTURE, URBAN (Urban Agriculture)** – activities conducted as an accessory use on residentially zoned lots, including crop production, gardening, horticulture, hydroponics, aquaculture, apiculture, and keeping chickens and rabbits, subject to tiered acreage regulations and compliance with the regulations of Section 175-110.5.

**AGRICULTURE/AGRICULTURAL PURSUITS** – The tilling of soil, the raising of crops, horticulture, aquaculture, hydroponics, forestry, gardening, apiculture, livestock and fowl keeping and breeding, farm wineries, roadside stands, tenant houses necessary for the operation of a farm, and the production of natural products with resources primarily derived from the land upon which it is produced. Yard maintenance, landscaping, noncommercial gardening and other customary incidental accessory uses shall not be deemed as "agriculture." Where agricultural uses are permitted under [Chapter 175](#) of the Town Code, the provisions of Section [66-5](#) pertaining to slaughtering of stock shall not apply, provided that this exemption only applies to small scale slaughtering activities on a farm, and does not apply to slaughterhouses.

## Section 175-110.5. Urban Agriculture Standards

Urban agriculture involving bees, chickens, and rabbits shall be permitted only on lots occupied by a single-family dwelling. It is restricted and categorized to form a compromise between urban residential character and small-scale Urban Agriculture. It provides for a three-tier system.

**Summary Table**

| Category                             | Tier 1(<1 acre)                                | Tier 2 ( $\geq 1$ acre but < 5 acres)          | Tier 3 ( $\geq 5$ acres)                                                               | Notes/Exceptions                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chickens (hens only)                 | Up to six (6) Hens                             | Up to twelve (12) Hens                         | Up to eighteen (18) hens (one (1) Rooster allowed)                                     | Roosters must have at least ten (10) hens if hens are present. A rooster counts as part of the total number of chickens.                                                         |
| Rabbits (outdoor, for meat purposes) | Up to six (6) Rabbits                          | Up to twelve (12) Rabbits                      | Up to eighteen (18) Rabbits                                                            | Indoor pet rabbits not counted/ temporary exceedance for breeding allowed $\leq 12$ weeks; max 2 x allowed number.                                                               |
| Bee Hives                            | Up to six (6) Hives                            | Up to six (6) Hives                            | Up to twelve (12) Hives                                                                | At least a two (2) square foot in size warning sign and solid fence at least four (4) feet high. Twelve (12) hives require additional setbacks.                                  |
| Setbacks                             | Ten (10) feet from side/rear property lines.   | Ten (10) feet from side/rear property lines.   | Ten (10) to fifty (50) feet depending on number of hives or the presence or a rooster. | Additional restriction for proximity to water sources and drainage. Zoning Administrator may impose additional setbacks based on management plan.                                |
| Housing and Care                     | Chickens: coop/run. Rabbits; hutch. Bee hives. | Chickens: coop/run. Rabbits; hutch. Bee hives. | Chickens: coop/run. Rabbits; hutch. Bee hives.                                         | Min. four (4) sq ft/ chicken or eight (8) sq ft/ rabbit. Runs: four (4) sq ft/ chicken, sixteen (16) sq ft/rabbit; clean, ventilated, sanitary; feed in rodent-proof containers. |
| Zoning Permit                        | Required                                       | Required                                       | Required                                                                               | Includes management plan (waste, odor, noise, biosecurity, maintenance); 1-year term, renewable; may be revoked for violations.                                                  |
| Temporary Breeding Exception         | Up to twelve (12) weeks                        | Up to twelve (12) weeks                        | Up to twelve (12) weeks                                                                | Chickens and rabbits must be reduced to allowed number afterward; absolute cap = two (2) x allowed number. Lots must be maintained and provided for inspection.                  |
| Sale of Agricultural Products        | Not Permitted.                                 | Not Permitted.                                 | Not Permitted.                                                                         | Incidental sharing/trading allowed; commercial sales require zoning approval.                                                                                                    |
| Commercial / Industrial Uses         | Not Permitted.                                 | Not Permitted.                                 | Not Permitted.                                                                         | School properties are exempt from the population requirements of the Tier System.                                                                                                |

## **A. AGRICULTURE – TIERED CLASSIFICATION**

### **1. Tier 1 Agriculture (Lots less than 1 Acre).**

- a. Gardening and horticulture (not subject to an Urban Agriculture permit).
- b. Crop production (not subject to an Urban Agriculture permit).
- c. Hydroponics or aquaculture (not subject to an Urban Agriculture permit).
- d. Apiculture (beekeeping) of 6 hives or less.
- e. Keeping of 6 chickens (hens) with no roosters allowed.
- f. Keeping of up to 6 domestic rabbits.
1. Domesticated rabbits kept indoors as household pets are not required to obtain an Urban Agriculture Permit.
- g. All Tier 1 urban agriculture shall comply with Section 175-110.5 Performance Standards.

Yard maintenance, landscaping, and customary residential gardening shall not be considered urban agriculture.

### **2. Tier 2 Agriculture (Lots at least 1 acre and less than 5 Acres).**

- a. Tier 2 lots include:
  1. Crop production and horticulture (not subject to an Urban Agriculture permit)
  2. Aquaculture and hydroponics (not subject to an Urban Agriculture permit).
  3. Apiculture.
  4. Domestic Chickens as per standards in Section 175-110.5, Performance Standards.
  5. Domestic Rabbits as per standards in Section 175-110.5, Performance Standards.
  6. Small-scale agricultural production.

Yard maintenance, landscaping, and customary residential gardening shall not be considered agriculture.

### **3. Tier 3 Agriculture (Lots at least 5 acres).**

- a. Tier 3 lots include:
  1. Crop production and horticulture (not subject to an Urban Agriculture permit).
  2. Aquaculture and hydroponics (not subject to an Urban Agriculture permit).
  3. Apiculture.
  4. Domestic Chickens including Roosters as per standards in Section 175-110.5, Performance Standards.
  5. Domestic Rabbits as per standards in Section 175-110.5, Performance Standards.
  6. Small-scale agricultural production.

Yard maintenance, landscaping, and customary residential gardening shall not be considered agriculture.

## **175-110.5 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE**

Urban Agricultural uses shall comply with the following standards according to acreage tier and definitions.

### **A. General Requirements.**

1. An urban agriculture permit shall be required for the keeping of chickens, bees, and rabbits. Such a permit application shall include a management plan that adequately addresses waste disposal, site suitability, setbacks, animal density, biosecurity and health measures, odor control, noise control, appearance, and maintenance.
2. The management plan shall be reviewed by the Virginia Cooperative Extension Office, or other qualified expert, nonprofit organization or government entity. Conditions of approval or recommendations may be required as part of the permit.
3. The permit shall only be valid for one (1) year and may be renewed annually provided that the use remains in compliance with the management plan and otherwise remains lawful. The Zoning Administrator, or designee, may impose conditions of approval based on the review.
4. Bees, Chickens and rabbits shall only be kept in rear and/or side yards.
5. Any permit may be revoked by the Zoning Administrator if the use:
  - a. Deviates from the approved management plan.
  - b. Violates the Town Code.
  - c. Creates noise or nuisance violations.
  - d. Expands without authorization.
  - e. Vermin infestation, or signs thereof.

### **B. Tier 1 Standards.**

1. Single-family dwellings may keep:
  - a. Up to six (6) female chickens (hens only, no roosters).
  - b. Up to six (6) bee hives.
  - c. Up to six (6) rabbits kept outdoors for meat purposes.
2. Setbacks:

- a. Coops, hutches and hives must be at least 10 feet from side and rear property lines.
- b. All coops and hutches shall be located at least twenty (20) feet from streams, tributaries, ditches, swales, stormwater management facilities, drop-inlets, or other storm drainage areas that might allow fecal matter to enter any Town storm drainage system or stream.
- c. Additional setbacks may be required by the Zoning Administrator if recommended as part of the submitted management plan or review agency recommendation.

### **C. Tier 2 Standards.**

- 1. Single-family dwellings may keep:
  - a. Up to twelve (12) female chickens (hens only, no roosters).
  - b. Up to six (6) bee hives.
  - c. Up to twelve (12) rabbits kept outdoors for meat purposes.
- 2. Setbacks:
  - a. Coops, hutches and hives must be at least 10 feet from side and rear property lines.
  - b. All coops and hutches shall be located at least twenty (20) feet from streams, tributaries, ditches, swales, stormwater management facilities, drop-inlets, or other storm drainage areas that might allow fecal matter to enter any Town storm drainage system or stream.
  - c. Additional setbacks may be required by the Zoning Administrator if recommended as part of the submitted management plan or review agency recommendation.

### **D. Tier 3 Standards.**

- 1. Single-family dwellings may keep:
  - a. Up to eighteen (18) chickens, including one (1) rooster.
  - b. Up to twelve (12) bee hives.
  - c. Up to eighteen (18) rabbits kept outdoors for meat purposes.
- 2. Setbacks:
  - a. Coops, hutches and hives must be at least ten (10) feet from side and rear property lines.
    - i. If a rooster is present, the coop setback requirement increases to fifty (50) feet from side and rear property lines.
    - ii. If there are more than 6 hives, the setback requirement increases to fifty (50) feet from side and rear property lines.
  - b. All coops and hutches shall be located at least twenty (20) feet from streams, tributaries, ditches, swales, stormwater management facilities, drop-inlets, or other storm drainage areas that might allow fecal matter to enter any Town storm drainage system or stream.

- c. Additional setbacks may be required by the Zoning Administrator if recommended as part of the submitted management plan or review agency recommendation.

#### **E. Chicken and Rabbit Housing Requirements.**

1. Chickens must be confined to a coop and/or run, and rabbits confined to a hutch and/or run at all times. Neither shall be permitted to run at large.
2. The coop must be used for chickens only and the hutch for rabbits only, and both must be well ventilated.
3. Coops and hutches must be at least eighteen (18) inches in height.
4. Coops must have a minimum of four (4) square feet of floor area per chicken and hutches must have a minimum of eight (8) square feet per rabbit.
5. Runs must provide four (4) square feet per chicken and sixteen (16) square feet per rabbit.
6. Runs must be well drained with no accumulation of water.
7. The coop or hutch shall be kept clean, sanitary, and free from accumulation of animal excrement and objectionable odors. The floor and walls of the coop must be kept in a clean, sanitary and healthful condition, with all dropping and organic waste material removed and disposed of in a proper manner. Chicken and rabbit litter waste shall not be deposited in any trash container that is collected by any public or private waste collector and shall be disposed of by composting on site, collected by a bona fide poultry or rabbit litter service, or bagged and taken to the county landfill. Any dead bird or rabbit shall not be deposited in any trash container that is collected by any public or private waste collector but shall be either composted or buried on site or taken to the county landfill. Further, all unexplained bird and rabbit deaths shall be reported to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services prior to composting burial, or transport to the county landfill.
8. Notwithstanding the maximum number of rabbits or chickens otherwise permitted, the number of rabbits or chickens (where roosters are allowed) may be temporarily exceeded as a result of breeding. Any such increase shall not exceed twelve (12) weeks from the date of birth of the litter or chicks, after which the total number of animals on the premises must be reduced to comply with the maximum permitted. In no case shall the number of animals exceed twice the number otherwise allowed based on acreage.
9. Any owner or keeper of chickens or rabbits who intends to breed animals under this section shall maintain accurate records, including: (i) breeding logs indicating the dates of birth of litters or chicks, (ii) animal counts, including any temporary increases permitted in this performance standard. Such records shall be made available for inspection by the Zoning Administrator or other authorized official upon request and shall be used to verify compliance with the limits and standards of this ordinance.
10. All feed or other material intended for consumption by chickens or rabbits shall be kept in containers impenetrable by rats or other rodents, and such containers shall be equipped with tightly fitting caps or lids. The presence of rats in an area used for the keeping of fowl shall be prima facie evidence that such area is maintained in violation of this section.

#### **F. Beekeeping Standards.**

1. Only the Western honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) – the primary species for U.S. honey production and common subspecies are allowed:
  - a. Italian honeybee (*Apis mellifera ligustica*).
  - b. Carniolan honeybee (*Apis mellifera carnica*).
  - c. Buckfast hybrid bees.
  - d. Russian honeybee (*Apis mellifera caucasica* hybrid).
2. Hives shall be enclosed by a solid fence at least four (4) feet in height, either around the hive or around the yard.
  - a. A sign at least two (2) square feet in size shall be posted indicating bees are present.
  - b. Honey harvesting must occur within an enclosed building.

#### **G. Sale of Agricultural Products.**

The sale of goods or services related to agricultural activity is not permitted on site.

This restriction does not prohibit:

1. Incidental sharing or trading with neighbors, family, or friends.
2. Selling produce off-site at markets or similar venues.

#### **H. Commercial and industrial Uses.**

1. Commercial and industrial use shall not keep livestock, fowl, rabbits, or bees as part of any agricultural pursuit.
2. School properties are exempt from the population requirements of the Tier system.

#### **I. Applicability.**

These requirements are in addition to all other provisions of the Town Code.

# Urban Agriculture Background Information and Standards



# Forward

- The proposed approach to urban agriculture in Section 175-110.5 establishes a balanced and well-structured framework that supports small-scale food production while protecting the character and livability of residential neighborhoods. By clearly distinguishing urban agriculture from larger-scale agricultural pursuits based on a 10-acre threshold, the ordinance ensures that more intensive farming activities remain appropriately located, while still allowing residents on smaller lots to engage in productive and sustainable practices. The tiered system is particularly effective, as it scales allowable activities such as the number of chickens, rabbits, and beehives according to land capacity, thereby mitigating overuse and potential nuisances to adjacent neighbors. Additionally, the requirement for a zoning permit and a professionally reviewed management plan introduces accountability and promotes best practices in areas like waste management, animal welfare, and odor and noise control. Performance standards, including setbacks, enclosure requirements, and limits on animal types, further mitigate conflicts between agricultural uses and neighboring properties. Overall, this approach thoughtfully integrates urban agriculture into residential settings by encouraging local food production, sustainability, and community resilience, while maintaining clear safeguards to ensure compatibility with existing neighborhood conditions.

# Standards and Justifications

- The following bullets provide background information and standards used to develop each of the proposed regulation in the Urban Agriculture regulation
  - Numbers of Chickens
    - Limiting Tier 1 properties to a small number of chickens such as six hens and no roosters is a practical, evidence-based approach that supports urban agriculture while minimizing neighborhood impacts. Guidance from the Virginia Cooperative Extension and the United States Department of Agriculture shows that a flock of this size can reliably meet a household's egg needs without generating excessive waste. At the same time, organizations like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention note that larger flocks increase risks related to odor, pests, and disease exposure, while roosters introduce significant noise concerns. By capping flock size at a manageable level, the ordinance allows residents to participate in food production while maintaining sanitation, reducing nuisances, and preserving compatibility with residential neighborhood conditions.
    - For Tiers 2 and 3, additional chickens and the possibility of a rooster on lots of five acres or more are justified because larger parcels provide the space and buffering capacity needed to responsibly manage increased flock sizes and associated impacts. Guidance from the Virginia Cooperative Extension and the United States Department of Agriculture indicates that stocking density, waste distribution, and flock health are directly tied to available land area; larger properties allow manure to be more effectively dispersed or composted, reduce odor concentration, and support healthier birds through lower crowding. Increased setbacks and acreage also mitigate noise concerns associated with roosters, whose crowing is less likely to affect neighboring properties when greater distances are maintained. Additionally, planning guidance from the American Planning Association supports scaling agricultural intensity with lot size as a best practice to balance productivity with neighborhood compatibility. Allowing a rooster on lots of 5 acres or more is also functionally important for breeding and flock sustainability, which aligns with small-scale agricultural production goals. Overall, the expanded allowances for larger properties reflect a proportional approach that enables more productive urban agriculture while maintaining appropriate safeguards for surrounding residential uses.

# Chicken Coop Size

- Setting minimum coop and run sizes for backyard chickens ensures animal welfare, reduces stress, and helps prevent disease, while also limiting potential nuisances to neighbors.
  - Adequate floor space and outdoor run area allow chickens to express natural behaviors such as scratching, perching, and dust bathing, which are essential for physical and psychological health.
  - As per Virginia Cooperative Extension, Both Chicken Coops and Chicken runs must provide 4 square feet per chicken
  - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that adequate space and proper housing are critical to minimizing exposure to pathogens such as Salmonella. Setting these standards ensures that backyard flocks remain healthy, manageable, and compatible with surrounding residential areas.

# Standards and Justifications

## • References for Chicken Standards

- United States Department of Agriculture – “Backyard Poultry Management and Health Guide” (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Agricultural Research Service)
- Location: USDA website ([www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)) → search “backyard poultry management” or “small flock poultry guide.” This guide emphasizes optimal flock sizes, housing, and sanitation to prevent disease and minimize odor and noise.
- Virginia Cooperative Extension – “Backyard Chickens: Management and Health” (Publication 424-032)
- Location: Virginia Cooperative Extension website ([ext.vt.edu](http://ext.vt.edu)) → Publications → search “backyard chickens” or publication 424-032. It provides recommendations for flock size, coop design, spacing, and handling of roosters in small residential areas.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – “Salmonella and Backyard Poultry”
- Location: CDC website ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) → Healthy Pets / Backyard Animals → Poultry. The document highlights the health risks of improper flock management, supporting limited flock sizes and proper housing to reduce exposure to pathogens.
- American Planning Association – “Zoning for Urban Agriculture” (PAS Report 563)
- Virginia Cooperative Extension Warren County advice 31 March 2026

# Standards and Justifications

- Number of Bees Hives Allowed
  - Limiting beekeeping on Tier 1 and 2 properties to a small number of hives is justified as a means of supporting pollination and small-scale honey production while minimizing potential conflicts in denser residential areas. Guidance from the United States Department of Agriculture and Virginia Cooperative Extension emphasizes that even a few well-managed hives can provide substantial pollination benefits and modest honey yields, making additional hives unnecessary for typical household-scale urban agriculture. Limiting hive numbers also helps reduce risks associated with concentrated bee activity, such as increased human-bee interactions, swarming, and competition for limited forage in smaller areas. Public health considerations noted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention further support managing hive density to reduce potential exposure concerns in close residential settings. By capping hive numbers at a low, manageable level, the ordinance enables residents to engage in beekeeping while maintaining safety, reducing nuisance potential, and ensuring compatibility with nearby homes.
  - Allowing a greater number of beehives on lots of five acres or more (Tier 3) is justified because larger properties provide sufficient space to manage hive density, flight paths, and foraging activity while minimizing impacts on neighboring properties. Guidance from the United States Department of Agriculture and Virginia Cooperative Extension indicates that hive spacing and access to diverse forage are critical to colony health and productivity; larger parcels are more capable of supporting multiple hives without over competition for nectar and pollen. Increased setbacks and the ability to establish buffers (such as fencing or vegetation) also reduce potential conflicts related to bee flight patterns and human interaction. Additionally, best practices supported by the American Planning Association emphasize scaling agricultural intensity with lot size to maintain compatibility with surrounding uses. Expanding hive allowances on larger lots therefore promotes pollination benefits, local honey production, and ecological health, while ensuring that potential nuisances are mitigated through adequate space and management.

# Standards and Justifications

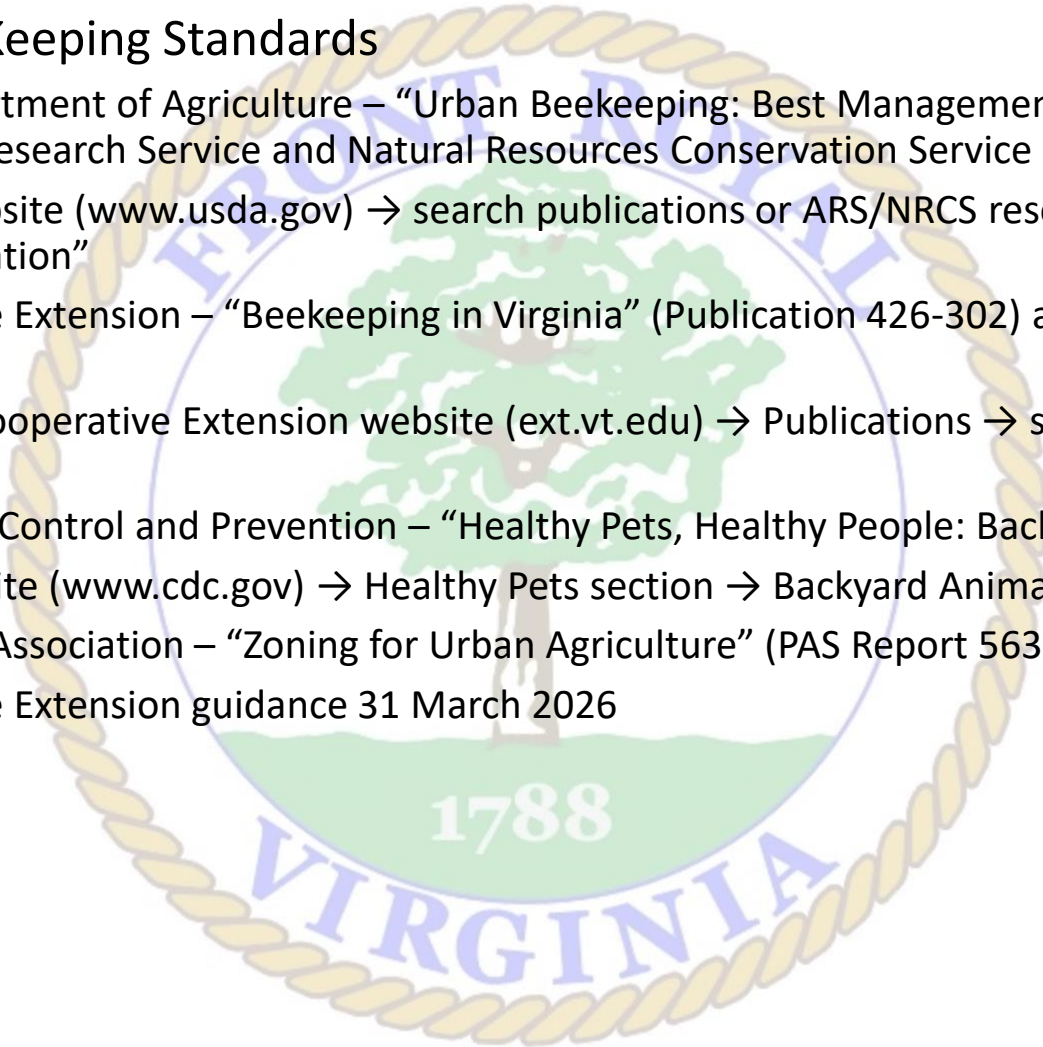
- Limits to Type of Bees Allowed

- Limiting urban beekeeping to Western honeybees and common subspecies such as Italian (*A. m. ligustica*), Carniolan (*A. m. carnica*), Buckfast hybrids, or Russian (*A. m. caucasica* hybrid) ensures predictability, safety, and ecological compatibility in residential areas. These subspecies are widely managed for honey production, pollination, and disease resistance, and their behavior is well-understood by urban beekeepers. In contrast, non-native or exotic bees may be more aggressive, prone to swarming, or carry pathogens and parasites that threaten both domestic colonies and native pollinators. The United States Department of Agriculture and Virginia Cooperative Extension note that Western honeybees are the primary species used in U.S. apiculture because they are manageable in hive settings and compatible with human-inhabited areas. Restricting to these species also facilitates proper oversight, education, and disease control, minimizing public safety risks and supporting sustainable urban pollination. It is unlawful to import, keep, or breed dangerous or non-approved bee species, including Africanized honeybees (*Apis mellifera scutellata* hybrid) and other aggressive or exotic bees.
  - United States Department of Agriculture – “Honey Bee Health and Management in the United States”, USDA Agricultural Research Service.
  - Location: [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov) → search “honey bee health” or “Apis mellifera management.”
  - Virginia Cooperative Extension – “Beekeeping in Virginia” (Publication 426-302)
  - Location: [ext.vt.edu](http://ext.vt.edu) → Publications → search “beekeeping” or publication 426-302.
  - American Beekeeping Federation – “Best Management Practices for Honey Bees”
  - Location: [www.abfnet.org](http://www.abfnet.org) → Resources → Urban Beekeeping Guidelines.
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – “Healthy Pets, Healthy People: Bees and Pollinators”
  - Location: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) → Healthy Pets → Backyard Animals → Bees.
  - Virginia Cooperative Extension guidance 31 March 2026

# Standards and Justifications

- References for Bee Keeping Standards

- United States Department of Agriculture – “Urban Beekeeping: Best Management Practices” (available through USDA Agricultural Research Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service publications)
- Location: USDA website ([www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)) → search publications or ARS/NRCS resources on “urban beekeeping” and “pollinator conservation”
- Virginia Cooperative Extension – “Beekeeping in Virginia” (Publication 426-302) and “Honey Bee Colony Management”
- Location: Virginia Cooperative Extension website ([ext.vt.edu](http://ext.vt.edu)) → Publications → search “beekeeping” or publication number 426-302
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – “Healthy Pets, Healthy People: Backyard Beekeeping”
- Location: CDC website ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) → Healthy Pets section → Backyard Animals → Bees and beekeeping guidance
- American Planning Association – “Zoning for Urban Agriculture” (PAS Report 563)
- Virginia Cooperative Extension guidance 31 March 2026



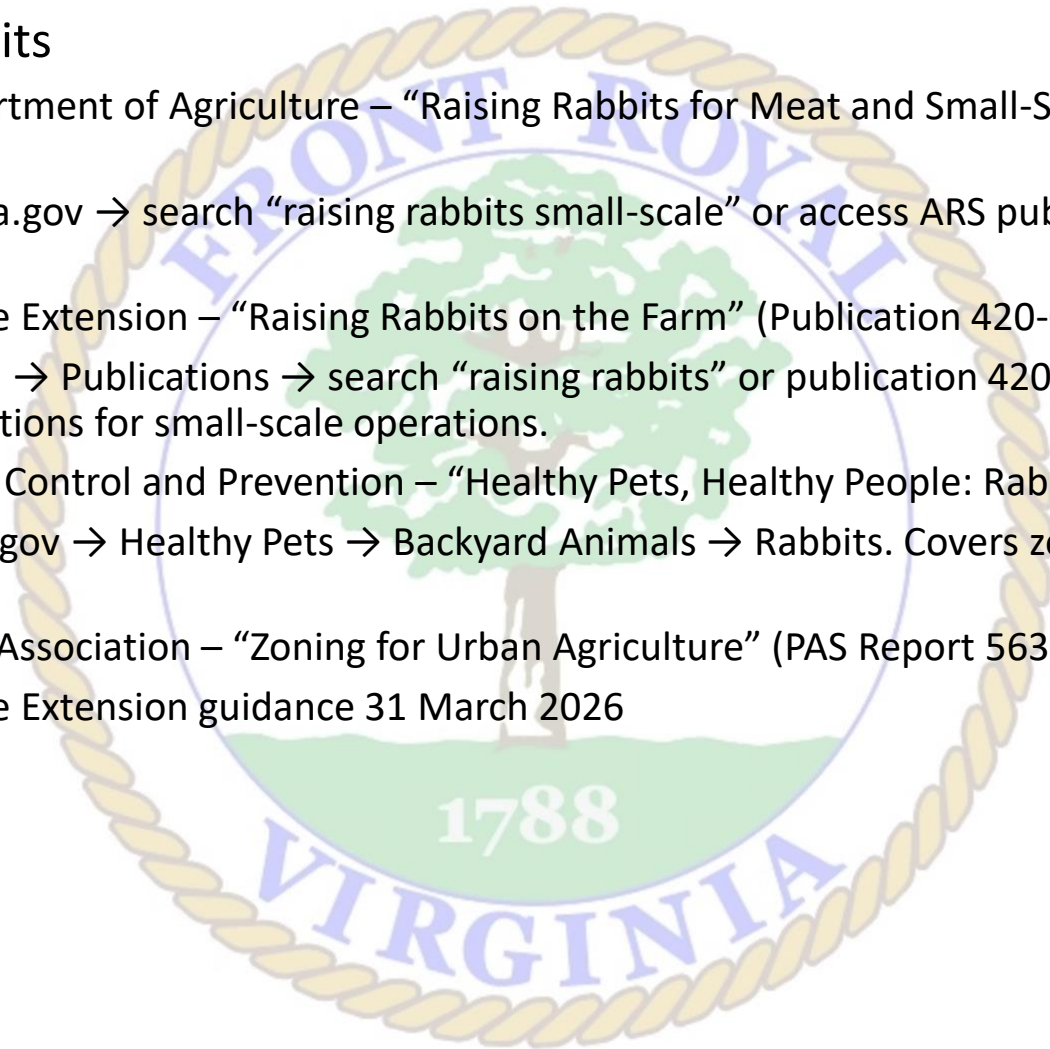
# Standards and Justifications

- Number of Rabbits Allowed
  - Limiting outdoor rabbits on Tier 1 properties to six animals allows residents to engage in small-scale meat or hobby production without creating nuisance, odor, or health risks in denser residential areas. Rabbits, if overstocked, can produce excessive waste, attract rodents, and require adequate space for humane housing. Guidance from the United States Department of Agriculture and Virginia Cooperative Extension emphasizes proper housing, sanitation, and manageable stocking levels for small-scale rabbit production, indicating that a limited number of animals can meet household-scale needs while remaining manageable in terms of space and animal welfare. The American Planning Association supports scaling livestock intensity to lot size to minimize conflicts with neighbors, and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention highlights the importance of proper housing and waste management to reduce zoonotic disease risks. Limiting the number of rabbits and requiring secure hutches in rear yards supports public health, animal welfare, and neighborhood compatibility.
  - Allowing additional rabbits on Tiers 2 and 3 properties is justified because larger lots provide sufficient space to manage increased animal numbers while maintaining humane housing, proper sanitation, and reduced nuisance for neighbors. Greater acreage allows for appropriately sized hutches and runs with adequate spacing, helping prevent overcrowding, odor buildup, and pest attraction. Guidance from the United States Department of Agriculture emphasizes proper housing, sanitation, and management practices for small livestock, while recognizing that stocking levels must be appropriate to available space and resources. Similarly, Virginia Cooperative Extension provides guidance indicating that small-scale rabbit production can be successfully managed on larger parcels when enclosures are well maintained and animals are provided sufficient space. Public health guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention highlights the importance of proper housing, sanitation, and biosecurity to reduce zoonotic risks. In addition, the American Planning Association supports scaling animal intensity to lot size to minimize conflicts and maintain neighborhood compatibility. Increasing allowable rabbit numbers in Tiers 2 and 3 is consistent with the principle that larger lots can accommodate more animals without compromising sanitation, public health, or residential quality of life.

# Standards and Justifications

- References for Rabbits

- United States Department of Agriculture – “Raising Rabbits for Meat and Small-Scale Production”, USDA Agricultural Research Service.
- Location: [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov) → search “raising rabbits small-scale” or access ARS publications on small livestock management.
- Virginia Cooperative Extension – “Raising Rabbits on the Farm” (Publication 420-081)
- Location: [ext.vt.edu](http://ext.vt.edu) → Publications → search “raising rabbits” or publication 420-081. Includes housing, feeding, and space recommendations for small-scale operations.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – “Healthy Pets, Healthy People: Rabbits”
- Location: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) → Healthy Pets → Backyard Animals → Rabbits. Covers zoonotic risks and best practices for safe husbandry.
- American Planning Association – “Zoning for Urban Agriculture” (PAS Report 563)
- Virginia Cooperative Extension guidance 31 March 2026

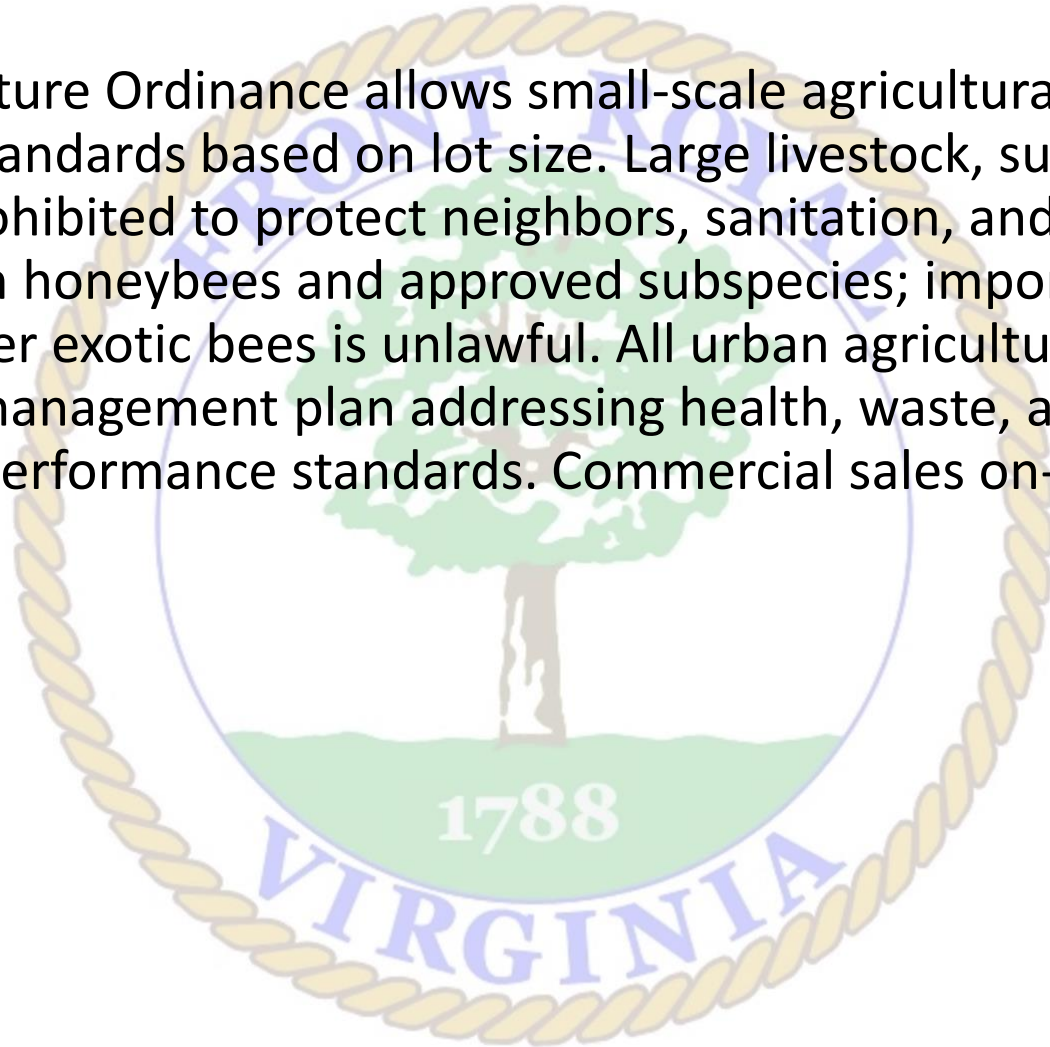


# Standards and Justifications

- Larger Livestock Exclusion
  - Prohibiting goats and other large livestock in urban and small-lot residential areas is appropriate to protect animal welfare, public health, and neighborhood quality. Large animals require substantial space for grazing, housing, and waste management; without adequate space, they may experience stress and increased susceptibility to disease. They also produce significant manure, odors, and noise, which can create nuisances and, if not properly managed, contribute to public health risks. Guidance from the United States Department of Agriculture and Virginia Cooperative Extension emphasizes proper space, housing, and waste management for livestock care. Public health guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention highlights the importance of sanitation and animal management to reduce zoonotic disease risks. In addition, the American Planning Association supports land-use approaches that scale animal intensity to lot size to maintain neighborhood compatibility. Restricting large livestock while allowing smaller, more manageable species such as chickens, rabbits, and bees reflects common zoning practices intended to support low-impact urban agriculture.
- References:
  - United States Department of Agriculture – “Animal Housing and Management in Small-Scale Production”, USDA Agricultural Research Service.
  - Location: [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov) → search “small-scale livestock management” or “urban animal husbandry.”
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – “Healthy Pets, Healthy People: Farm and Backyard Animals”
  - Location: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) → Healthy Pets → Backyard Animals → Livestock. Discusses zoonotic risks and safety concerns with large livestock.
  - American Planning Association – “Zoning for Urban Agriculture” (PAS Report 563)
  - Location: [planning.org](http://planning.org) → Research → PAS Reports. Recommends restricting large livestock in residential areas to maintain neighborhood quality of life.
  - Virginia Cooperative Extension – “Small-Scale Livestock Management”
  - Location: [ext.vt.edu](http://ext.vt.edu) → Publications → search “small livestock” or “urban livestock management.” Provides guidance on appropriate species and lot size requirements.

# Summary

- The Urban Agriculture Ordinance allows small-scale agricultural activities on residential lots, with tiered standards based on lot size. Large livestock, such as goats, cows, pigs, and sheep, are prohibited to protect neighbors, sanitation, and animal welfare. Bees are limited to Western honeybees and approved subspecies; importing or breeding Africanized or other exotic bees is unlawful. All urban agriculture uses require an annual zoning permit, a management plan addressing health, waste, and nuisance control, and compliance with performance standards. Commercial sales on-site are prohibited.



## **MARCH MONTHLY REPORT**

## PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT – MARCH 2026

|                                                                   | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 YTD | MARCH |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|-------|
| <b>Zoning Permits</b>                                             | 280  | 393  | 319  | 291  | 49       | 24    |
| <b>New Dwelling Units</b>                                         | 37   | 32   | 60   | 21   | 1        | 0     |
| <b>New Code Enforcement Cases Open</b>                            | 424  | 407  | 177  | 152  | 22       | 7     |
| <b>Code Enforcement Cases in Compliance/Closed</b>                | 361  | 378  | 112  | 59   | 5        | 1     |
| <b>Code Enforcement Inspections/Reinspections</b>                 | 340  | 423  | 388  | 191  | 23       | 6     |
| <b>Land Use Applications</b>                                      | 56   | 36   | 45   | 44   | 9        | 1     |
| <b>Ordinance Amendments</b>                                       | 2    | 4    | 1    | 9    | 3        | 2     |
| <b>Sign Permits</b>                                               | 41   | 62   | 42   | 36   | 11       | 7     |
| <b>Business Licenses</b>                                          | 155  | 148  | 129  | 127  | 34       | 16    |
| <b>Short-Term Rentals</b>                                         | 13   | 5    | 5    | 2    | 1        | 0     |
| <b>Administrative Variance</b>                                    | --   | 4    | 1    | 1    | 0        | 0     |
| <b>COA Administrative Review</b>                                  | --   | 39   | 18   | 33   | 3        | 3     |
| <b>COA Board Review</b>                                           | --   | 11   | 15   | 5    | 1        | 0     |
| <b>Solicitor/Itinerant Merchant</b>                               | --   | 10   | 27   | 19   | 4        | 1     |
| <b>Urban Agriculture</b>                                          | --   | 18   | 11   | 4    | 2        | 0     |
| <b>Vacation of Alleys, Streets, Right-of-Ways &amp; Easements</b> | --   | 5    | 2    | 9    | 0        | 0     |
| <b>Right of Way Utilization Permits</b>                           | --   | 46   | 105  | 32   | 26       | 6     |
| <b>BZA Variance</b>                                               | 3    | 2    | 0    | 1    | 0        | 0     |
| <b>BZA Appeal</b>                                                 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 2        | 0     |
| <b>Walk-Ins to Planning &amp; Zoning</b>                          | --   | --   | 2606 | 2255 | 540      | 236   |

### SPECIAL PROJECTS UPDATES/NEWS

- **Chapter 175 Rewrite:** A rough draft of Chapter 175 was distributed to the Planning Commission August 7, 2024. Review is ongoing.
- **Chapter 148 Rewrite:** Summit will present the Draft Subdivision Ordinance to the Planning Commission on April 29, 2026.
- The applicant is addressing staff comments for the preliminary plan for “Riverton View” Subdivision Development Plan off of W. Strasburg Road (formerly named “Riverview Heights”). The “Strasburg Road Subdivision Development Plan” off Forest Hill Drive and the “Marshall’s Glen Subdivision Development Plan” have been approved and staff is waiting on the submission of the bond agreement. The applicant for the “Squirrel Hill Final Subdivision Development Plan” is addressing comments from VDOT and street design. The applicants are addressing staff comments for the Heritage Hall Development Plan, the Royal Lane Apartments (36 units), and Harwood Place Phase 1 (45 units).

**PC** – In March the Planning Commission (PC) held one (1) regular meeting and two (2) work sessions. At their regular meeting the PC approved the consent agenda to advertise for a public hearing in April for a Special Use Permit Application for a short-term rental at 1521 N. Royal Avenue and an application for a Zoning Text Amendment to define Firearms Retail Establishment and Firearms Manufacturing and to amend Town Code 175-39.A & B to permit Firearms Retail Establishments by-right in the C-1 Community Business District and permit Firearms Manufacturing by Special Use Permit.

At their work sessions the PC reviewed the above mentioned applications and continued their review of the Draft Zoning Ordinance.

**BAR** – In March the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) held one (1) work session to continue reviewing the Historic District Guidelines.

**BZA** – The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) held one (1) regular meeting in March to approve meeting minutes, make amendments to the Board of Zoning Appeals By-Laws, and elect a BZA secretary.