

**Planning Commission
Town of Front Royal, Virginia**

August 16, 2017

Present: **Deborah Langfitt, Chairman**
 Douglas Jones, Vice Chairman
 David Gushee, Commissioner
 Joseph McFadden, Commissioner
 Connie Marshner, Commissioner
 Cee Ann Davis, Commissioner

Staff: **Jeremy Camp, Director**
 Darryl Merchant, GIS Analyst/Planner/Surveyor
 Connie L. Potter, Sr. Administrative Assistant

The August 16, 2017 meeting of the Planning Commission for the Town of Front Royal, Virginia was called to order by Chairman Langfitt at 7:00 p.m.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

There were no speakers.

MINUTES:

Commissioner Gushee moved to approve the meeting minutes as written, seconded by Commissioner Davis.

VOTE: Yes – Langfitt, Gushee, Jones, Davis, McFadden, Marshner

PUBLIC HEARING:

There were no items for public hearing.

CONSENT AGENDA:

There were no items on the consent agenda.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Llewelyn Conservation Easement Review.** A request by Llewelyn LLC for the Town to accept a conservation easement of approximately 40 acres located on U.S. Route 340 and along the South Fork of the Shenandoah River.

Mr. Camp explained that a request from Llewelyn LLC was submitted for the Town to consider accepting a conservation easement of approximately 40 acres. An aerial view of the proposed easement was shown and Mr. Camp explained the different areas of the property. The purpose of the conservation easement is to retain open-space and natural resource values of the property. The easement would substantially limit future development and subdivision of the property.

Pursuant to the Open-Space Land Act, the Town is required to acknowledge that the conservation easement is consistent with the local Comprehensive Plan in order for the owner to receive tax credits through the state. As reviewed in work session, the proposed conservation easement is located within an area that is designated for future conservation on the Comprehensive Plan, therefore it is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. Particularly that the commercial areas and the other excluded areas are not inside the proposed conservation easement.

Attached in the meeting packets was a draft “Deed of Gift of Easement” submitted by the applicant, as well as the existing survey of the property. This was discussed at a work session. There are a number of changes and verifications that were made to the document. Most of those are highlighted in yellow. In addition, there is correspondence in the meeting packets.

Staff recommends approval of the proposed conservation easement conditional on the proposed areas to be excluded from the conservation easement, as well as a title search being done on the property before the Town would possibly accept it. This will have to go to Town Council for their consideration of accepting the conservation easement.

Commissioner McFadden moved, seconded by Commissioner Marshner that the Planning Commission recommend issuing approval of the proposed conservation easement, including acknowledgement that the proposed conservation easement conforms to the Town of Front Royal Comprehensive Plan, subject to the following conditions:

- 1) That the acreage and boundaries be revised to exclude the relatively small portion of property located to the west of the intersection of W. 18th Street and N. Shenandoah Avenue, and the 40’ right-of-way to 15th Street; and***
- 2) That a title search be completed and reviewed by the Town before final acceptance of the conservation easement by the Town; and***

Furthermore, the Planning Commission has no objection for the Town to accept the conservation easement as the Grantee, if so desired by Town Council.

Commissioner Davis referred to discussions at the work session asking if it would be appropriate to mention the requirement of fencing if livestock was run in the areas and asked if there was any feedback on that discussion.

Planning Commissioners held a brief discussion.

Commissioner McFadden referred to Section II, number 5 of the “Deed of Gift of Easement” document. **“RIPARIAN BUFFER.** To protect water quality, a 35 -foot buffer strip shall be maintained in forest or be permitted to revegetate naturally along the edge of the South Fork of the Shenandoah River as measured from the top of the bank.” The final sentence of that paragraph reads: “There shall be no grazing of livestock in the buffer strip.”

VOTE: Yes – Marshner, Davis, Langfitt, Jones, Gushee, McFadden

OLD BUSINESS:

There were no items for old business.

PLANNING DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

The Board of Architectural will hold a public hearing on August 22, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall to review an application submitted by the EDA for demolition of the Afton Inn.

Town Council will hold a public hearing on August 28, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at the Warren County Government Center for the Property Maintenance and Rental Inspection Program to obtain additional public input.

Mr. Camp reviewed the July monthly report and noted that permitting and business license applications are still running at a high pace.

Bids have been received for the Criser Road Trail and are currently under the contract negotiation phase.

A work session followed the regular meeting. Mr. Camp said the work session will include a discussion with the pastor of Skyline Baptist Church over a possible ordinance

amendment change. Also for discussion at the work session is a referral from Town Council possibly shifting traffic to one-way on E. Main Street, a new special use permit application that will go to the next regular Planning Commission meeting and review of the upcoming draft Capital Improvement Program review process. Mr. Camp noted he will have several updates on the Criminal Justice Academy, Afton Inn, Beau Ridge Subdivision II and the flea market.

COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS:

Commissioner Davis asked if the BAR meeting on August 15th was a second work session regarding the Afton Inn.

Mr. Camp said yes and explained that it was in preparation of the public hearing that will be held on August 22nd. The BAR has held (2) work sessions on the matter. The work session held on August 15th included a tour of the Afton Inn. The video of that tour can be viewed online at the Royal Examiner website.

There were no additional comments.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Gushee moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Davis.

VOTE: Yes – Langfitt, McFadden, Marshner, Davis, Jones, Gushee

The meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Connie L. Potter
Sr. Administrative Assistant