

Mount Jackson  
Planning Commission Meeting  
March 7, 2022  
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Regular Meeting

Chairman Larry Ambrose called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM in the council chambers at 5901 Main Street. Commissioners Anita Miller, Jim Hines, Evelyn Burner, and Dennis Andrick were in attendance. Also present were Neil Showalter, Town Manager; Erick Moore, Planning and Development Director; and Debbie Allen, Town Clerk. Darla Odom with the Berkley Group attended electronically through Zoom. Visitor Robert Whitehurst was present. Dave Moore from Cornerstone Technology was present to provide Zoom service.

Agenda Additions/Deletions/Changes: None

Introduction of Guests: None

Hear from Visitors: None

Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes – Commissioner Burner MOVED, seconded by Commissioner Andrick to APPROVE the Minutes of February 7, 2022 Regular Meeting.

VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Commissioner Andrick			
Commissioner Miller			
Commissioner Burner			
Commissioner Hines			
Commissioner Ambrose			
5 AYES, motion carried			

Old Business: None

New Business:

1. 2022 Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Moore stated he has begun to review the 2017 Comprehensive Plan in preparation for the update this year. Chapter I - Introduction, includes population and job figures, and these new numbers most likely will not be available until summer as most come from the Virginia Department of Labor and the Chamber of Commerce, and due to COVID they are having a difficult time getting the numbers together. The current plan has numbers from 2015/2016, he was able to find numbers from 2021, but would like to get them as close to 2022 as possible. Also in Chapter I is town government, town services, police department, updating the new school names, and some other odds and ends. Mr. Moore stated Chapter VIII - Implementation, included a 5 year, 10 year, and 15 year strategy and he will review these goals with the Town Manager to see where the Town stands on achieving those goals. He stated it is his hope to have a very detailed section on the Town's recreation and outdoor activities, such as Rails-to-Trails and biking areas, as these were items heavily supported in 2017 from the community. Mr. Moore stated he spoke with Chief Cowart who has a goal to provide the officers a special accreditation for the force, and that will be added under the police department section. Once this update is complete there will be a series of public invitations to review the plan and provide any feedback.

2. Commissioner Training

Mr. Moore stated the number 1 item in the 5 year strategic goal is require staff and elected and appointed leaders pursue appropriate education and certification opportunities. He provided commissioners a copy of the C Program, and briefly introduced it. The School of Government and Public Affairs at VCU offers the Virginia

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Certified Planning Commissioners' Program through the land use education program. For nearly 40 years the program was affiliated with Dr. Mike Chandler from Virginia Tech, whom Mr. Moore knows personally during his time with the Homebuilders Association and in local government. The C Program is the nation's first structured training program recognized in connection with the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development since 1984. The program offers planning commissioners' certifications to those dedicated individuals who give of their time and talent to make their community a better place in which to live, work, and do business. Whether one is newly appointed or a veteran commissioner who has never received formal training, one will greatly benefit from the knowledge gained from this program. Planning commissioners are essential to enabling good planning by obtaining the help and knowledge to properly make decisions as a public servant to meet their legal responsibilities in a manner that will withstand legal challenges while earning the trust of the people served. The program covers the what/why of planning, reviews the principles that guide the community planning process, and is designed to provide the legal and technical background needed by citizen planners and decision makers such as themselves. It is designed to provide a basic foundation of planning law, planning history, and technical expertise needed by planning commissioners. Participants will learn how to handle and respond to a large range of issues that will come before them. The ever growing and challenging legislation mandates regulate the operation of planning programs and procedures, making training necessary. Many localities find this program to be invaluable and affordable by providing a thorough understanding of the legal background planning process and practice. There are two opportunities for this training, the 107<sup>th</sup> class is June 13-August 23, and the 108<sup>th</sup> class is September 8-November 18. There is an in person 2-day opening session, at home studies in between with reading materials, and an in person 2-day graduation session at the end. The Town will pay for all expenses including overnight accommodations in Richmond. Mr. Moore stated he has taken this training twice in his career and is going to take it again, because things do change. Registration for the 107<sup>th</sup> class is required by June 1, and he asked commissioners to think about it for the next few weeks and let him or Neil know if they will be attending, as the classes do fill up quickly.

Board of Zoning Appeals Report: None

Town Council Items: Mr. Andrick stated Councilmembers had some questions regarding the proposed solar project, which staff has been working on and has done a very good job providing information, and the hope is something will move on that tomorrow at the Council meeting.

Zoning Administrator Report: Mr. Showalter stated he provided a synopsis of applications received and acted on in the month of February. He has been working on the solar case and Erick Moore, with his expertise, has been able to hit the ground running and handle these cases with very little input on his part. He appreciates how quickly Mr. Moore has taken to the job, and as the warm weather approaches and applications begin to increase, they will be filling out that form each month.

Board Members' Items: None

Commissioner Miller made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 PM.

Submitted by: Deborah L. Allen, Town Clerk