

Mount Jackson
Planning Commission Meeting
April 4, 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 Jim Hines, Evelyn Burner, and Dennis Andrick were in attendance. Commissioner Anita Miller was absent. Also present were Neil Showalter, Town Manager; Erick Moore, Planning and Development Director; and Debbie Allen, Town Clerk. Nick Harpold with the Northern Virginia Daily was also present.

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 March 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			

4 AYES, 1 ABSENT, motion carried

Old Business: None

New Business:

1. 2022 Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Moore stated he is moving forward with many aspects of the comprehensive plan, most recently the parks and recreation section such as the rails to trails project. It appears many of the same goals and objectives from 2017 have not changed, partly due to COVID and not progressing forward with many of the initiatives. He stated he would like to discuss Section III tonight regarding the vision and goals of the plan. The packet includes long term goals, and action and implementations as well. Mount Jackson’s vision statement reads as follow: “Mount Jackson seeks to: preserve and enhance its natural beauty and cultural heritage; promote economic development through diverse jobs and business opportunities; encourage educational opportunities through partnerships with local business; support wellness of all generations through recreational, cultural, and educational activities to promote a vibrant community; provide a safe and secure environment for all citizens; promote environmental responsibility; continue to be a visitor destination of choice; and create an environment in which residents and neighbors can live, work and retire in a family-oriented community”. Mr. Moore stated in the packet he provided 1-8 of the 2017 goals, and requested Commissioners review and return comments to him by April 25. For example, goal #1 is to maintain an open, active, and informed government that welcomes citizen participation, and is responsive to the needs of the resident. The 2017 comprehensive plan states this can be accomplished by, 1) requiring staff and elected and appointed leaders pursue appropriate education and certifications opportunities, and, 2) requiring the planning commission to annually review and report on desirable updates to the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, and subdivision ordinance. Under state law this is required once every 5 years, but can be done any time. For example, a change in the general assembly may require a code revision or a completely new section be added to the zoning ordinance.

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Chairman Ambrose asked if rails to trails is an ongoing project, because he received a letter from a lawyer. Mr. Showalter stated others received that letter, and he alerted councilmembers, but it does say it is an advertisement. Mr. Showalter stated his understanding is the rails to trails project went back to Richmond this week to vote on the budget, and there is 30 million dollars available for the next step. Mr. Andrick stated his main question is who is paying for the project, and his understanding is in Farmville, the college is. Mr. Moore stated he attended a legislative breakfast with the Chamber last week, and was able to speak to Todd Gilbert and Mark Obenshain. The project is still moving forward, such as the acquisition of the railroad property and right-of-way issues, and he understands the project is in the third of five steps. These steps include the safety of both the major crossroads that will intersect with the trail, and the elevated trestles. Mr. Showalter stated the rails to trails website has the most up-to-date information, and he will forward that web address to the commissioners. He stated there are a lot of details to be worked out, including whether or not the railway is going to offer it for sale, which is not a given yet. Mr. Andrick stated there is also a group trying to get Norfolk-Southern to start using the rails again. Mr. Ambrose and Ms. Burner stated that would be difficult as there are parts of the railway that are deteriorated and not safe.

Board of Zoning Appeals Report: None

Town Council Items: Mr. Andrick stated the Town Council approved two of the three items associated with the solar facility. Mr. Showalter stated the Council approved the special use permit subject to working out a satisfactory siting agreement. He stated there will be a public hearing next week and the Council will consider it as part of their business at their regular meeting. Ms. Burner stated she noticed the trees have been planted by the applicant. Mr. Andrick stated some people are commenting the trees are brown, but that is a good thing, otherwise they were raised inside and the cold weather could kill them. Mr. Ambrose stated GB Foltz has two men working on erosion issues as well, so the applicant is making progress in what was asked of them.

Zoning Administrator Report: Mr. Moore stated the report reflects there were no applications approved, none under review or pending, and no enforcement activities, but staff has been incredibly busy the last few weeks. He had two site visits for two potential employers looking at existing structures, one existing structure for a possible new use, an idled subdivision restart (the old Hickory Heights area at the end of Jackson Street), and a zoning application for a possible telecommunication tower. Mr. Moore stated he received a call today about an infield lot in an existing subdivision of two possible new single family dwellings. Mr. Andrick asked if staff heard any more regarding the lot on the other side of the railroad tracks. Mr. Showalter stated he spoke to the landowner in general terms stating the Council would like to know a more definite plan, but has heard nothing more.

Ms. Burner asked the status of the Old Mill and DBI properties. Mr. Showalter stated his understanding is DBI will reopen by the same group of people, but he does not have a lot of facts on it. He stated the mill changed hands again, and was recently sold to Yvonne Proctor. Mr. Moore stated he had a discussion with Ms. Proctor who has many ideas, and he explained that in order to utilize it would require some major investment on her part, such as site plan and off street parking. Mr. Moore stated he encouraged her to look at the Edinburg Mill, and the Burwell-Morgan Mill in Clarke County as examples of different uses. Mr. Ambrose asked if the property behind DBI which his cousin owned and he mowed last year, was sold to Mr. Murden. Mr. Showalter stated Mr. Murden has purchased and received zoning approval on three units on Craig Street. Ms. Burner stated the property on Broad Street is still a mess and asked if the Town can do anything to clean this up. Mr. Showalter stated he will have the police department ride by the location to make an evaluation.

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Mr. Moore stated he signed up for the 107th Planning Commissioners Program, which is an in-person class this summer held at a nice hotel. He stated the rest of the sessions after this one will be held through Zoom. The 108th class will most likely not open until late summer, but if commissioners are interested in attending the 107th in-person class, to please sign up.

Board Members' Items: Ms. Burner asked if the covered bridge would be reopening soon. Mr. Showalter stated he would find out, that it took a pretty good hit this last time. Mr. Andrick stated he would like to talk to VDOT about installing a concrete triangle with a sign in the center so large trucks cannot enter the bridge. Mr. Ambrose asked if Mr. Day would still be able to go through the bridge with his farming equipment, and Mr. Andrick stated yes.

Commissioner Burner made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Andrick, to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 PM.

Submitted by: Deborah L. Allen, Town Clerk