



Town of Vienna

Charles A. Robinson Jr.
Town Hall
127 Center Street South
Vienna VA, 22180

Meeting Minutes Town Council Work Session

Tuesday, October 22, 2019

7:30 PM

Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry
Street, S.E.

Work Session

1. Regular Business

Councilmembers Present:

Mayor Laurie A. DiRocco
Councilmember Linda J. Colbert
Councilmember Pasha M. Majdi
Councilmember Douglas E. Noble
Councilmember Nisha Patel
Councilmember Steve Potter
Councilmember Howard J. Springsteen

Staff Present:

Director Cindy Petkac, Planning and Zoning
Kelly O'Brien, Principal Planner, Planning and Zoning

[19-1466](#)

Discuss Draft Amendments to Maple Avenue Commercial (MAC) Zone and Other Commercial Zoning Districts along with Related Amendments per Town Council Directive

Town Manager Mercury Payton opened the special work session at 7:30 p.m. identifying one item for discussion.

Item 1. Discuss Draft Amendments to Maple Avenue Commercial (MAC) Zone and Other Commercial Zoning Districts along with Related Amendments per Town Council Directive.

During the fall of 2018, over one thousand Town residents, property, and business owners provided input through a visual preference survey, which served as the basis for creating draft design guidelines and proposed amendments to the MAC Zone regulations. Kelly O'Brien, Principal Planner, Planning and Zoning, reviewed the results of this survey noting four primary issues:

- 1. Bury power lines;*
- 2. Limit building height to 4 stories;*
- 3. Widen sidewalks;*
- 4. Incorporate mixed-use buildings.*

At the August 19, 2019 meeting, Town Council directed staff to draft amendments to the Maple Avenue Commercial (MAC) Zone as its top priority and simultaneously to consider amendments to the regular commercial zoning districts of C-1, C-1A, C-1B, and C-2 in Chapter 18 of the Town Code that effect the MAC. Staff was also directed

to draft amendments to the commercial zoning districts that require the MAC streetscape, require landscaping for parking lots, and to consider changes to parking requirements or other incentives to encourage economic growth on Maple Avenue when drafting these amendments.

A citizen survey has been proposed to garner additional feedback on various issues under review for updating and clarification. Following Council input, Cindy Petkac, Director of Planning and Zoning identified six priorities:

1. Height;
2. Residential commercial balance;
3. Streetscape/Building;
4. Open/gathering/greenspace;
5. Parking;
6. Application eligibility for MAC.

She proposed a timeline which will allow for Council input of a draft survey at the next work session. She invited Council discussion on the priorities. Councilmember Springsteen questioned the pace of the project. He opined that due to the divisiveness of the MAC, it might be advisable to slow the draft amendments to the MAC in order to first see results of current MAC projects. Councilmember Patel pointed out that limiting public input on any subjects would be inadvisable.

Observing that the survey will not provide new information Councilmember Potter asserted that Council is not utilizing the information it already has. He further suggested that the MAC should comply with the comprehensive plan, but it does not. Councilmember Colbert agreed that considerable information has been collected, but none that provides specifics. This lack can lead to false assumptions. She questions the need for another survey at this point in time. Councilmembers Majdi and Noble expressed concern regarding slowing the process. Additionally, Councilmember Noble noted that Council must assure compliance with current code as projects present themselves; observed that it is a disservice to the citizenry to focus solely on commercial, slow down MAC and back burner residential. Mayor DiRocco emphasized the necessity to move forward as planned but at a reasonable pace. She suggested addressing the older code, in its entirety, to establish a solid foundation. She further supported the assistance of a professional.

Councilmember Majdi put forth a compromise that would allow for addressing all these concerns while simultaneously reorganizing and modernizing the commercial code. Director Petkac stressed that reorganizing the zoning code is not possible at this juncture. She pointed out that the code is antiquated in its organization and that the first step is to organize what is there into common areas that make sense. The second step is to update. She further noted that even with a consultant, it is impossible to address the commercial and MAC codes simultaneously.

Mayor DiRocco emphasized the need to maintain focus on the MAC and a portion of the zoning codes, noting the necessity of a survey to provide feedback on the nuances related to citizen priorities. A back and forth discussion followed with reference to priorities two and five highlighting the question of commercial/residential ratio in the commercial zone.

Director Petkac brought the discussion to a close confirming adequate information for survey development. The timeline will include a first draft by November 8th with Council feedback prior to Thanksgiving. A revised draft will be ready for presentation by December 4th.

2. Meeting adjourned at 10:00pm.

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