



Town of Vienna

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Meeting Minutes Planning Commission

Wednesday, October 30, 2019

8:00 PM

COUNCIL CHAMBERS-VIENNA TOWN
HALL

Planning Commission Meeting

The Planning Commission met in regular session on Wednesday, October 30, 2019, at 8:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Vienna Town Hall, 127 Center Street South, Vienna, Virginia. Michael Gelb, Chairman, presiding and the following members present: David Miller, Julie Hays, Mary McCullough, Sarah Couchman, Steve Kenney, Andrew Meren, Sharon Baum, and David Patariu. Also, in attendance and representing Town staff were Michael D'Orazio, Deputy Director of Planning & Zoning, Kelly O'Brien, Principal Planner, and Jennifer Murphy, Clerk to the Commission.

Roll Call

All members are present.

Communication from Citizens and/or Commissioners

None

Public Hearings

Public hearing to extend the temporary suspension of the Maple Avenue Commercial (MAC) Zone, set to expire on November 15, 2019, to June 30, 2020.

Chairman Gelb opened the public hearing, stating that there is a sign-up sheet for those interested in speaking. He noted that all speakers are limited to 3 minutes and invited the first speaker to come forward.

Jon Pott, residing at 134 Wade Hampton Drive stated that he supports the moratorium extension. Much work is needed and it is an opportunity for the town to take a step back. More effort should be required in assisting the town in presenting the town's vision. They should be able to cite comparisons across the county and not just Virginia. He reiterated his support for the extension and was seated.

Brian Cohan, residing at 9800 Bridleridge Ct. Vienna, VA stated that he is speaking in favor of development. He feels that the area is in crisis of housing development. They should be accommodating the demand for housing or else they will see a displacement across the region. It will only make traffic worse due to longer commute times. The Town has the opportunity to alleviate such issues. He would like to live in a higher density area, limiting the need for a cars. Concluding his comments, Mr. Cohan was seated.

Kathleen Gilder, residing at 216 Locust Street SE NE does not want to see the moratorium extended. It limits smaller developers from coming in, guaranteeing that only large developers can develop in town. Ms. Gilder concluded her comments and was seated.

Shelley Ebert, residing at 402 Roland Street SW had anticipated that a vast majority would be in favor of extending the moratorium. She is not against development but feels the Town needs to iron out issues regarding sidewalks and setbacks. They want to ensure that they get the kind of development that is right for the Town. Although there has been issues with the MAC it is a living document that was meant to be amended. Ms. Ebert concluded her comments.

There being no further public comment, Chairman Gelb called for a motion.

Commissioner Miller made a motion to close the public hearing.

Motion: Miller

Second: McCullough

Closed: 9-0

Chairman Gelb called for discussion.

Commissioner Meren expressed concern for having a June 2020 expiration date, noting that the previous moratorium dates were in place to allow time for the new Town Council members. To date the Planning Commission has received no information or feedback on any codes or recommendations. Given that, he asked if they can even recommend a third moratorium if they have not received any direction. He asked if they should make no recommendation or should it be modified to reflect 2020 Town Council elections. whether they should consider recommending against and/or limiting it to the election schedule. Chairman Gelb responded, per their discussion with the Town Attorney they could recommend an extension. Additional discussion followed regarding motion procedures.

Commissioner McCullough asked for a round of feedback from commissioners.

Commissioner Miller stated that tonight's purpose is to limit review of new development under the current MAC. he is not concerned with the election cycle and would like the planning commission to be removed from town politics. If it is the consensus to have a shorter moratorium, it only limits the town's ability to review and update the MAC code provision.

Commissioner Couchman expressed concerns extending it down the line, stating she supports Commissioner Meren's suggestion for a shorter timeframe.

Commissioner Kenney had less concern with the proposed date, stating that Town Council is actively holding work sessions and appears to be moving forward. He is less concerned with election dates and is comfortable with the June 30, 2020 date.

Commissioner Baum supported Commissioner Miller and Kenney's remarks.

Commissioner Hayes asked staff where the June 30, 2020 timeline came from and whether there was consideration for making it sooner. Mr. D'Orazio answered that it was a date that Town Council was comfortable with.

There being no further discussion, a motion was in order.

Commissioner Meren made a motion to recommend to Town Council to extend the temporary suspension of Article 13.1 – MAC Maple Avenue Commercial Zone Regulations of Chapter 18 of the Town Code, set to expire November 15, 2019, to March 31, 2020.

Commission Couchman seconded the motion.

Commissioner Kenney amended the motion language striking March 31, 2020 and replacing it with June 30, 2020.

Commissioner Patariu seconded amendment.

Addressing staff, Commissioner Couchman asked if the last moratorium was set at a five-month period. She stated extending to March 30, 2020 would be the same amount of time as the last moratorium. It would make sense to remain consistent.

Chairman Gelb supports the amendment although he shares the concerns expressed. He agreed with Commissioner Kenney that there was no malice. Town Council is adjusting and eager to complete the process but doing so thoughtfully. He would rather provide more time now than have to come back for another extension.

Commissioner McCullough asked for a point of order on voting on the amendment. A brief discussion followed.

Commissioner Hayes stated that although she supports moving forward with the suggested date for the moratorium they have not received any updates or proposed changes for review. Mr. D'Orazio explained that would be at the direction of Town Council. Commissioner Hayes asked, if they do move forward with the June 30, 2020 date, could Chairman Gelb provide commentary regarding the Commissioners concerns to Town Council. Chairman Gelb agreed.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Gelb called for vote on the amendment language.

Vote to Amend: 6-3

Nays: Meren, Couchman, & McCullough

Commissioner McCullough stated that back in September 2018 she expressed reservations on the moratorium. She ultimately voted for it feeling that it was in the best interest of the Town. She is now concerned that continuation is a delay tactic in moving forward. As such she will vote against the motion. She is additionally dismayed in the decrease in dialogue, stating that it goes against their commissioner training. Zoning updates do not take the entire town in to consideration. They should be working on a comprehensive code update that allows other needs of town to move forward. Commissioner Meren agreed, stating concern that it will continue to be an issue throughout each election cycle.

Commissioner Kenney was sympathetic to comments, stating that Town Council is trying to resolve those issues so that they can go back to the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Hayes agreed, stating that she was optimistic as well.

There being no further discussion Chairman Gelb called the question on the amended motion.

Amended motion to recommend to Town Council to extend the temporary suspension of Article 13.1 – MAC Maple Avenue Commercial Zone Regulations of Chapter 18 of the Town Code, set to expire November 15, 2019, to June 30, 2020.

Motion to recommend carries: 6-3

Nays: Meren, Couchman, & McCullough

No Regular Business

New Business

Planning Director Comments

Mr. D’Orazio stated that there is a possible work session on November 13, 2019 regarding amending proffers and a conditional use permit for 380 Maple Ave West. Currently no formal application has been filed. To date, nothing is scheduled for a regular November meeting. Staff does anticipate a Comprehensive Plan amendment in January 2020.

Chairman Gelb stated that he attended Sunrise’s public meeting held at the Community Center. They provided renderings of the new design, which included terracing at the back and egress access with one curb cut on Maple Avenue. They discussed having a retail element with a café that would be open to the public. He stated that there appeared to be positive reaction from the public.

Approval of the Minutes:

Chairman Gelb stated that he provided clerical corrections to the clerk for the August 14, 2019 regular meeting minutes.

There being no further correction the August 14, 2019 regular meeting minutes and the August 28, 2019 work session action minutes were accepted.

August 14, 2019 - Regular Meeting Minutes

August 28, 2019 - Work Session Action Minutes

Meeting Adjournment

There being no further discussion the meeting adjourned at 8:53 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Jennifer M. Murphy
Commission Clerk*

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