

Town of Onancock, Virginia
Planning Commission Meeting

Tuesday

September 19, 2017

5:30 P.M.

Call to Order and Roll Call:

Chairman Fletcher Fosque called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

Commission members Bill Bagwell, Ridgway Dunton, Fletcher Fosque, Judith Grier, Scott Schreiber, and Buck Walters were present. Commission member John Simpkins was absent. A quorum was established.

Minutes:

Chairman Fosque asked if there were any changes or additions to the July 18, 2017 minutes as presented.

A motion was made by Commission member Bill Bagwell to approve the minutes as presented. Commission member Judith Grier seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Items of Business:

Comprehensive Plan Review

Section One: Population

Discussion: Chairman Fosque stated he and Town Manager William Kerbin are still working on this section. Commission member Judith Grier stated that the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Survey shows the state of Virginia increasing in population in the future but Accomack and Northampton counties with declining population in the future.

Commission member Grier stated there were one thousand two hundred sixty-three residents in Onancock according to the 2010 Census and added we were an aging population.

Section Two: Land Use

Discussion: Chairman Fosque noted that no one has been assigned to review Section Two. He stated that zoning in Onancock was adopted in 1962 and at that time there were not that many districts just Residential (R1) and Business.

Discussion continued about the different types of zones. Chairman Fosque stated that in the Residential R1A district the lot sizes were ten thousand square feet with a thirty-five foot set back

and at least a seventy-five foot width, in R1B the lot sizes were smaller, in R1C it is manufactured homes which would allow a double wide trailer, Residential 2 (R2) is multifamily homes, Business 1 (B1) is the downtown businesses, B2 is business highway allowing for the same thing as B1 but also businesses like gas stations and Business Waterfront (BW) businesses at the wharf which allow recreational type businesses as well as the commercial landing of seafood. He stated that additional zones include Parks and Open Space (POS) and Cultural, Recreational and Community Facilities which are both self-explanatory.

Chairman Fosque read the goals and objectives for Section 2: Land Use and stated that zoning enforcement is by complaint. He added the Town has been very protective of the residential areas, not allowing businesses in the R1 areas especially since much of the available downtown business space is not being used. Chairmen Fosque also stated that the only type of business allowed in the R1 district is a bed and breakfast, a home occupation (with no retail sales) and now home stays.

Chairman Fosque also noted that some communities are changing their residential districts to allow for multiple uses. He stated there is more demand in Onancock for residential use rather than business use, so it makes more sense to expand the residential use. He added the Town is trying to allow multiple uses in the downtown business district (B1) and noted that everything that is allowed in B1 is allowed in B2. He gave as an example; apartments over a business.

Commission member Scott Schreiber said he was generally supportive of the comprehensive plan but not optimistic about the commercial areas since it would take a lot of money to fix up some of the old buildings.

A general discussion followed comparing Onancock's downtown business area to the towns of Cape Charles and Exmore. The main concern was the need for more people to make the business districts more viable.

Chairman Fosque reviewed the goals and objectives for Section 2: Land Use and asked for comments. He stated this was a very important section for the future of Onancock and noted again that more people and more sewer hookups would be helpful.

Chairman Fosque asked for clarification in this section of the plan under Business land use; discouraging large-scale commercial development which would detract from the existing character of the town, not sure what this means. Town Manager William Kerbin said he would check with the town attorney John Custis.

Chairman Fosque stated the sign ordinance was fairly restrictive and routinely violated.

A general discussion followed about the sign ordinance; what is allowed and what is not allowed.

Commission member Schreiber stated our comprehensive plan document is not meant to tell people how to do things, he gave an example of the sentence "Simplicity is the key to successful signs" and wants to clean up the wording, "less opinion". He asked if the document was something we want going into the future that will change based on who sits around this table or a document that leads going forward and is not based on who sits around this table.

Town Manager William Kerbin stated some of the content may not be legal if you are regulating content.

Commission member Bill Bagwell asked about the planned streetscape for Queen Street and what was happening with that. Town Manager Kerbin stated there was no money in the budget for the project adding it was a low priority item but could look into grant funding for it. Commission member Bagwell asked what the project might cost and whether businesses and homeowners might be interested in helping with the funding if they could see it would be a benefit to the future value of their property.

A general discussion followed about Queen Street, how projects get prioritized, what is a pleasing streetscape and who decides.

Chairman Fosque stated he thought Land Use was one of the most important parts of the comprehensive plan, He added it was overly wordy and needs a lot of work.

Chairman Fosque asked if everyone understood the zoning map and stated we need better maps.

Chairman Fosque suggested the commission pick a few sections, make a working draft and try to simplify the language. He asked if Lisa could get the numbers for Section 1. He also suggested the draft be emailed to everyone before the next meeting.

Public Comment:

None

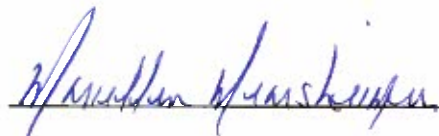
Adjourn:

Commission member Scott Schreiber made a motion to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 P.M.



Fletcher Fosque, Chair



Mariellen Mearsheimer, Deputy Clerk