



PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

Wednesday, January 15, 2025 at 7:00 PM

Work Session, 6:00 PM, Council Chambers Conference Room, City Hall, 114 North Broad Street, Salem, Virginia 24153

Regular Session, 7:00 PM, City Hall, 114 North Broad Street, Salem, Virginia 24153

Planning Commission Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, January 15, 2025, 7:00 PM

Work Session, 6:00 PM, Council Chambers Conference Room, City Hall, 114 North Broad Street, Salem, Virginia 24153

Regular Session, 7:00 PM, City Hall, 114 North Broad Street, Salem, Virginia 24153

WORK SESSION

1. Call to Order
2. New Business
 - A. Items for discussion on the January 2025 agenda.
 1. Special Exception Permit - 707 South Colorado Street
 2. Zoning Text Amendment - Townhomes
 3. Sign Ordinance Amendment.
 4. 2024 Planning Commission Annual Report
 5. Cancellation of February meeting
 6. Update on Comprehensive Plan

A work session meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Salem, Virginia, was held in the Council Chambers Conference Room, City Hall, 114 North Broad Street, at 6:00 p.m., on Wednesday, January 15, 2025, there being present the following members of said Commission, to wit: with Chair King, presiding; together

with Christopher J. Dorsey, City Manager and Executive Secretary, and H. Robert Light, Assistant City Manager and Executive Secretary, ex officio members of said Commission; Charles E. Van Allman, Jr., Director of Community Development; Mary Ellen Wines, Planning & Zoning Administrator; Maxwell S. Dillon, Planner, and Jim H. Guynn, Jr., City Attorney; and the following business was transacted:

Chair King reported that this date, place, and time had been set in order for the Commission to hold a work session.

Item 2.A.1. Staff noted that a special exception permit application had been submitted regarding a personal service, beauty salon, to be located at 707 South Colorado Street and a discussion was held.

Item 2.A.2. Staff noted that the zoning ordinance allowed for anyone to propose a text amendment and a change to the townhouse section of the zoning ordinance had been submitted and a discussion was held.

Item 2.A.3. Staff noted that only one wall sign per frontage was allowed within the HBD, Highway Business District and that many prospective businesses have a set sign package that does not meet the current regulations of the sign ordinance. Staff presented a text amendment to allow flexibility regarding wall signs that could allow up to 4 wall signs and a discussion was held.

Item 2.A.4. Staff presented the 2024 Planning Commission Annual Report, and a discussion was held.

Item 2.A.5. Staff noted that due to no items on the agenda, staff requested to cancel the meeting.

Item 2.A.6. Staff updated the commission on the current review of the comprehensive plan.

3. Adjournment

Chair King adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

1. Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Salem, Virginia, was called to order at 7:00 PM, in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 114 North Broad Street, on Wednesday, January 15, 2025, there being present the following members to wit: with Chair King, presiding; together with Christopher J. Dorsey, City Manager, and Executive Secretary, H. Robert Light, Assistant City Manager and Deputy Executive Secretary, ex officio members of said Commission; Charles E. Van Allman, Jr., Director of Community Development; Mary Ellen Wines, Planning & Zoning

Administrator; Maxwell S. Dillon, Planner; and Jim H. Guynn, Jr., City Attorney; and the following business was transacted:

Chair King reported that this date, place, and time had been set in order for the Commission to hold the regular meeting.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Election of Officers

Mr. Dorsey took charge of the meeting for the 2025 elections.

A. Election of Chairman for 2025

Vice-Chair Garst nominated Chair King to continue as Chair for 2025. Commissioner Henrickson seconded the nomination. No further nominations were made. Mr. Dorsey called for a vote, which passed unanimously. Chair King then presided.

B. Election of Vice-Chairman for 2025

Commissioner Beamer nominated Vice-Chair Garst to continue as Vice-Chair for 2025. Commissioner Routt seconded the nomination. No further nominations were made. A roll call vote passed unanimously.

Chair King requested that all attendees stand for a moment of silence in honor of former long-term Chair, Vicki Dalton.

Consent Agenda

A. Minutes

Consider acceptance of the minutes from the November 13, 2024, work session and regular meeting.

Chair King asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes from the November 13, 2024, work session and regular meeting. No changes were suggested, and the minutes were approved as presented.

4. New Business

A. Special Exception Permit

Hold public hearing to consider the request of Heather Pollard, contract purchaser, for the issuance of a Special Exception Permit to allow a personal service, beauty salon, on the property located at 707 South Colorado Street, Tax Map 160-7-3.

The Commission held a public hearing to consider the request from Heather Pollard, contract purchaser, for the issuance of a special exception permit to allow a personal

service beauty salon at 707 South Colorado Street (Tax Map 160-7-3).

Staff noted that the subject property (707 South Colorado Street) consisted of a 0.215-acre tract of land which currently sits within the RB Residential Business zoning designation. A residence with an attached commercial unit exists on-site. To provide a bit of history, Floyd & Sue's Barber Shop previously operated at this location; however, it ceased operations in December of 2019 and the commercial unit subsequently lost its legal nonconforming status. As a result, the applicant is requesting a Special Exception Permit for a personal service to operate a beauty salon in that same unit that is currently vacant. The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) identifies this area as Mixed Use which is consistent with the proposed future utilization of the property.

Heather Pollard, the applicant, addressed the Commission, stating that she currently owns a salon at 1325 West Main Street and has a contract pending for the property at 707 South Colorado Street to relocate her business there. She plans to operate a beauty salon and potentially lease space to other health and beauty-related businesses upstairs.

Dr. Joe Foley, a nearby resident at 708 South Colorado Street, voiced his support for the proposal, noting the property's history as Floyd and Sue's Barbershop and its suitability for mixed-use business and residential zoning.

Vice-Chair Garst inquired about the number of employees and hours of operation, and Ms. Pollard responded that there would be four employees and the salon would operate Monday through Saturday, approximately 8 AM to 7 PM.

Commissioner Henrickson asked about the intended use of the upstairs space, to which Ms. Pollard confirmed it would be used for additional beauty-related businesses, with no residential use planned.

The Commission also discussed the parking situation, with Ms. Pollard confirming that parking would be located at the back of the building, not on South Colorado Street.

After closing the public hearing at 7:09 PM, the Commission moved to approve the request. Commissioner Beamer made a motion to approve, and Vice-Chair Garst seconded. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

B. Amendment to the City Code - Chapter 106, Zoning

Hold public hearing to consider the request of Patrick and Jamie Sneed to amend Chapter 106 Zoning, Article III Use and Design Standards, Section 106-304.17(B)(6) Townhouse, of the CODE OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA pertaining to setbacks for townhouses.

The Commission held a public hearing regarding a request from Patrick and Jamie Sneed to amend Chapter 106, Zoning, Article 3, Use and Design Standards, Section 106-304.17B6 of the City Code, pertaining to setbacks for townhouses.

Staff noted that in the City of Salem, townhouse developments are permitted by right in the RMF Residential Multi Family and RB Residential Business District zoning designations, and by Special Exception Permit in the RSF Residential Single Family, DBD Downtown Business District, TBD Transitional Business District, and CBD Community Business District. Regardless of the zoning district, each townhouse development is required to meet the Use and Design Standards specified in Chapter 106-304.17, which prescribes additional regulations related to items including, but not limited to minimum lot size/frontage, maximum density, and setback/buffer yards.

The applicant is requesting a text amendment related specifically to Chapter 106-304.17(B)(6), which currently requires a minimum 25-foot setback be established between townhouse groups and adjacent properties when buffer yards are not required between zoning districts of different intensities. The proposed adjustment would not require a 25-foot setback when adjacent properties are of the same or a higher-intensity zoning designation, instead requiring that the setbacks of the underlying zoning district be the standard in those scenarios. This change would continue to protect the least intense and most vulnerable zoning districts (AG Agriculture and RSF Residential Single Family) with the currently required 25-foot setback, but would revert setback requirements for scenarios in which adjacent properties are of the same or a higher-intensity zoning district to the setbacks that would be required for other structures that could be developed.

Patrick Snead, representing Riverland Oaks LLC, explained that the proposed amendment would reduce setbacks for townhouses when adjacent to properties with equal or higher intensity zoning, while maintaining larger setbacks where adjacent to single-family or agricultural zoning. The amendment aims to address the challenges posed by limited available land for development.

The Commission discussed the proposed amendment, and City staff supported the change, stating it would still protect single-family zoning while providing more flexibility for townhouse developments in higher-intensity areas.

The public hearing was closed at 7:14 PM, and Commissioner Routt made a motion to approve the amendment, which was seconded by Commissioner Henrickson. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Amendment to the City Code - Chapter 66, Signs

Hold public hearing and consider amending Chapter 66 Signs, Article IV Permitted Signs by Use and District, Section 66-105 Permitted Signs, of the CODE OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA pertaining to wall signs.

The Commission held a public hearing regarding proposed amendments to Chapter 66, Article 4, Permitted Signs by Use and District, Section 66-105, to adjust regulations for wall signs in the Highway Business District (HBD).

Maxwell Dillon, Planner, explained that the amendment would introduce the concept

of a "primary building side" to calculate allowable wall sign area, rather than relying solely on road frontage. The proposed changes aim to balance flexibility for businesses while maintaining the aesthetic character of commercial districts.

The Commission discussed the amendment, with Mr. Dillon emphasizing its business-friendly approach. Vice-Chair Garst asked if the change would meet the needs of most commercial entities, and Mr. Dillon confirmed that it was a step in the right direction.

After closing the public hearing at 7:20 PM, Commissioner Henrickson made a motion to approve the amendment, which was seconded by Commissioner Beamer. The motion passed unanimously.

D. 2024 Planning Commission Annual Report

Consider approval of the 2024 Planning Commission Annual Report with direction to submit to City Council.

Chair King presented the 2024 Planning Commission Annual Report for approval. Vice-Chair Garst praised the staff's work on the report. A motion to approve the report and submit it to City Council was made by Vice-Chair Garst and seconded by Commissioner Henrickson. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

E. Cancellation of February meeting

Consider cancellation of the February 12, 2025, Planning Commission meeting due to no items on the agenda.

Mr. Light informed the Commission that there were no items on the agenda for the February 12, 2025, meeting, and recommended its cancellation. Commissioner Henrickson made a motion to approve the cancellation, which was seconded by Commissioner Routt. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair King adjourned the meeting at 7:22 PM.