



GATE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

May 5, 2011

The regular monthly meeting of the Gate City Planning Commission was held Tuesday, May 5, 2011 at 6:00 PM.

CALL TO ORDER:

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and asked the secretary to call the roll.

ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tim Bartley, Jo Ann Castle, Delany Herron, and Faye Sanders.
MEMBERS ABSENT: Roger Cassell, and Steve Templeton, Gate City Town Manager
ALSO PRESENT: Michele Brooks, Gate City Town Attorney, and Mayor Mark Jenkins, acting Town Administrator.
Roger Cassell arrived later.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:

With four (4) voting members present, the requirements for a quorum are met.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

No citizens present requesting audience.

REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

The minutes from the previous regular meeting held Tuesday April 5, 2011 was presented.

Motion made by Tim Bartley to adopt the minutes as presented. Motion seconded by Faye Sanders.

VOTING AYE: Tim Bartley, Jo Ann Castle, Delany Herron, and Faye Sanders.

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Roger Cassell

MOTION CARRIED

REPORTS:

A) SECRETARY:

a. Nothing to report

B) COMMITTEES:

- 1) Comprehensive Plan: Nothing to report.
- 2) Land Use: Presented follow-up report relating to the potential development of a wayside area at the entrance to Gate City on Hwy 23-N. Copy attached.
- 3) Subdivision Ordinance: Nothing to report
- 4) Zoning: Presented a report concerning adjusting the setback, side and rear yard regulations in the zoning ordinance. Copy attached.
- 5) Capital Improvements: Nothing to report.

B) TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE MEMBER:

At the request of Roger Cassell the Commission agreed to consider the development of a leash law to be incorporated in the zoning ordinance.

D) ZONING ADMINISTRATOR:

The acting Town Administrator, Mark Jenkins informed the Commission that the request for re-zoning discussed at the last regular meeting has been formally submitted to the Town Council and Council members voted to refer the request to the Planning Commission. After brief discussion of information provided at the last regular Commission meeting, a motion was made by Jo Ann Castle to recommend that the request for re-zoning be approved. Motion seconded by Tim Bartley.

VOTING AYE: Tim Bartley, Jo Ann Castle, Delany Herron, and Faye Sanders.

VOTING NAY: None

ABSENT: Roger Cassell

MOTION CARRIED

Mayor Jenkins reported that several residents of the Chestnut Street area have been canvassed concerning the possible installation of a small community park in that area. Most surveyed agreed with the plan. The only concern expressed, was that it might become a collection site for illegal activities.

E) GATE CITY TOWN ATTORNEY:

Michele Brooks, Gate City Town Attorney advised the Commission of the status of actions concerning the Scott Farmer's Co-op and the David Baker property.

Jo Ann Castle cited the present variance process and asked if there were a way that this process could be handled in a speedier manner. She feels that the time necessary could be a major deterrent to growth. Michele stated that she would examine the procedure and provide an opinion at the next regular meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A It was agreed among Commission members that there is no reason to change the frequency of Commission meetings at this time.

B. Members will examine the report provided by the zoning committee concerning altering present set back, side and rear yard requirements and provide an opinion at the next regular meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A) Jo Ann Castle informed the Commission that she had received two requests from residents asking for changes on Park Street and East Jackson Street.
 - a. A resident of Park Street asked if the speed limit could be reduced and speed bumps be installed on this street. The resident reports that vehicles exceeding the speed limit are common and result in dangerous conditions. Due to the width of the street and no available off-street parking for residents the street is very congested. Resident was advised that rumble strips might be a better solution to the problem and she should submit a written request to Town Council.
 - b. A resident of East Jackson Street has asked if the Town would take steps to install a left turn lane at the intersections of Moccasin Hills Drive, Ellen Drive and Davidson Street with East Jackson Street. Because through traffic does not always recognize vehicles stopped to make left turns, several accidents and numerous near misses have occurred. Resident was advised to submit a written request to Town Council.

ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA:

It was pointed out that the Zoning Regulations require that a member of the Planning Commission be seated on the Board of Zoning Appeals. This over-sight will be corrected.

ADJOURNMENT:

With nothing further to discuss, a motion for adjournment was made by Faye Sanders and seconded by Roger Cassell.

VOTING AYE: Jo Ann Castle, Faye Sanders, Delany Herron, Roger Cassell, and Tim Bartley
VOTING NAY: None
ABSENT: None
MOTION CARRIED

Meeting adjourned at 7: 42 PM

Secretary, Jo Ann Castle

Delany Herron, Chairman
Approved: 6-7-11

LAND USE COMMITTEE REPORT: Follow-up. Presented May 5, 2011

During the months of March and April, The LAND USE COMMITTEE toured, and presented opinions on several pieces of property being considered for future development by the Town of Gate City. Some question arose concerning ownership and accessibility to property located at the southern entrance to Gate City along Highway 23-N.

The property lies in three separate pieces beginning with that on which sits the Virginia ABC store. The second piece fronts directly on Hwy 23-N and has been used as commercial property in the past. The third section is a long narrow strip lying behind this across Big Moccasin Creek.

These three lots are privately owned by an individual who does not live in the area. If any development were possible, The Town would have to either acquire a long-term lease or make an offer to purchase the property. Before any action is taken, it would be necessary to gain approval from V-DOT to access this property from Highway 23-N.

Jo Ann Castle

Faye Sanders

At the date of and after the adoption of this zoning ordinance, no individual property can be separated from another larger property within a zone, in a size and shape not in compliance with the requirements of that zone. However, in SEC.24.13...APPEAL OF PROVISIONS, a remedy exists for properties whose lot lines were established prior to the time of the adoption of this ordinance. In the case of irregular lot lines or sizes, SEC. 24.13.5 allows for the exception of requirements by means of a variance to permit construction consistent within the area.

At the time the ordinance was designed, V-Dot required that any street or road taken into the state system have a 50' right of way. The setback lines were set so that in the future, streets could be made wider to comply with V-DOT requirements while not encroaching on private living space. No setbacks should be altered.

To maintain the integrity of the designations of 'Low density' and 'Medium density', side and rear yard requirements should remain as defined in R-I and R-II zones.

The term 'Moderately low density' in the R-III zone does not properly describe the reduction in size requirements-25% less than those defined in 'Medium density housing' and 60% less than in 'Low density housing. To better define this area, the designation should reflect the smaller lot and structure sizes even though the open space requirements are the same. A better choice of words might be 'Moderately high density'.

With-in the R-III zone, a reduction in the rear yard requirements from 25 feet to 15 feet would not pose an overly large encroachment on the space and privacy of residents, but could prevent the use of accessory buildings. Side yard requirements at 10' leave barely enough room to park a vehicle or access the rear yard. Side yard distances should not be changed.

FURTHER OBSERVATION::

In reference to corner lots, the zoning ordinance states "the front shall be deemed to be the shortest of the two (2) sides fronting on streets. This will usually make the side of a house with no entrance door the 'front'. It is recommended that this description be reviewed and possibly re-worded to reflect the actual 'front' of the structure.

Jo Ann Castle

Tim Bartley