



**GATE CITY TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES**  
**December 09, 2025**  
**156 East Jackson St., Gate City, VA 24251**  
**6:30 PM**

**I. PUBLIC HEARING MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 6:36 PM By: Mayor, Jamie Lawson**

**II. ROLL CALL – Town Clerk, Kristie Tipton**

	PRESENT	ABSENT
Mayor, Jamie Lawson	X	
Vice Mayor, Kevin Barnett	X	
Council Member, Allen Dougherty	X	
Council Member, Wallace W. Ross, Jr.	X	
Council Member, Pat Elliott	X	
Council Member, Dexter Harmon	X	
Town Manager, Greg Jones	X	
Town Attorney, Michele Brooks	X	

**Others present:** Anna Barnett; David Dawson, Virginia Department of Health; Gabe Edmunds, Scott Co. Virginia Star; Allison Winters, Kingsport Times News

**III. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Zoning Ordinance: C1 and C2 Setback Amendments**  
**Motion made to**

Motion by:	2 <sup>nd</sup> by:
VOTE:     Aye:	
Nay:	
Absent:	
Abstain:	<b>*Take No Action</b>

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT – Email from Hal Weeden, previous Planning Commission Member and Town Council Member, sent to Mayor Lawson and current Council members:**

Mayor Lawson and Council members,

As one of the original authors of the Gate City zoning regulations, and the first chairman of the Gate City Board of Zoning Appeals, I wanted to share some insight as to how your Planning Commission of the early 1990s came up with the current building setback requirements for the commercial districts. I had hoped to attend one of your meetings in person; however, my work schedule has prevented me from traveling to town.

I am going to take some liberty to speak for my fellow commissioners of that time, several of whom have unfortunately since passed away.

We had concerns with how close to the roadway some of the existing commercial buildings were, and how narrow some of the roadways were. Understanding that all structures existing at the time the code was adopted would be grandfathered in as compliant, our focus was solely on new construction. Our hope was that eventually there would be sufficient room for some form of on-street parking, and sidewalks in front of every business. We also wanted to improve fire safety by reducing exposures from heat and flames across roadways and reducing building collapse zone hazards.

I agree that the actual wording laying out the setback distances seems cumbersome; however, the end result is actually pretty simple: all buildings would be set back 35 feet or more from the street centerline, thus being a minimum of 70 feet from structures on the other side of the street.

Right-of-Way Width	Distance from Centerline to ROW Edge	Required Additional Setback	Total Distance from Street Centerline
50 feet or more	25 feet (or more)	10 feet	35 feet (or more)
Less than 50 feet	Does not matter	35 feet from centerline	35 feet

Articles in the *Scott County Virginia Star* have mentioned that most commercial buildings within the C1 and C2 zones do not meet the current setback regulations, and it appears to me there is a desire to amend the zoning regulations to accommodate these buildings. As the perceived problem is actually non-existent, I believe any change beyond just clarifying wording for the existing setbacks is misguided and should be rejected. While it is true that many of the commercial buildings in these zones may not meet the setback requirements for new construction; nearly all (or perhaps actually all) of them DO meet the current regulations because they are covered under the grandfathering clause as pre-existing. Only buildings built since the code was adopted (1992 or 1993), would have to have met these standards, or have been granted a successful appeal for relief from these standards by the BZA.

I distinctly remember that when we discussed writing this section of the code, we understood that it would take a very long time to achieve this goal of wider, safer streets. Comments were made that it would likely take 50 to 75, or perhaps even 100 years to bring this goal to fruition, and someone said that, as the youngest member of the commission, I might be the only one to see significant progress toward it. Planning for the future was our commission from the Council, and each one of us took that charge to heart.

Modifying zoning codes to conform to existing conditions really negates the very purpose for which these codes exist. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Hal Weeden

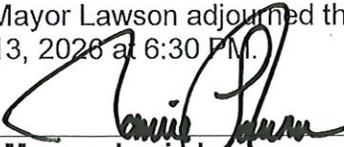
Former Gate City Town Councilman, Planning Commissioner, and BZA Chair

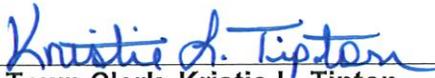
841 Crestfield Court

Maryville, TN 37804

PS – I feel I have standing in this issue as I still own a real estate interest in Gate City

\*Mayor Lawson adjourned the meeting at 6:43 PM, until the next scheduled meeting on January 13, 2026 at 6:30 PM.

  
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Mayor, Jamie Lawson

  
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Town Clerk, Kristie L. Tipton