



**CITY OF COLONIAL HEIGHTS, VIRGINIA
MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
Tuesday, January 7, 2020
7:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:58 PM..

II. Roll Call

Present:

Mr. Hartson
Mr. Cherry
Mrs. Hamilton
Mr. Kohan
Mrs. Schiff
Mr. Wade

Absent:

Mr. Kollman

III. Determination of Quorum

A quorum was determined.

IV. Approval of Agenda

Mrs. Schiff made a motion to approve the agenda and Mr. Cherry seconded the motion, with all commissioners in favor.

V. Annual Organization Meeting

- Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman
Mrs. Schiff nominated Mr. Hartson to remain Chairman and Mr. Wade seconded the motion with all commissioners in favor.
Mrs. Hamilton nominated Mrs. Schiff to remain Vice-Chairman and Mr. Kohan seconded the motion with all commissioners in favor.
- Appointment of Secretary

Mrs. Schiff nominated Ms. Hall to remain Secretary and Mr. Wade seconded the motion with all commissioners in favor.

- Adoption of Rules of Procedure
 - Mr. Cherry moved to adopt the rules of procedure and Mrs. Schiff seconded the motion with all commissioners in favor.
- 2019 Annual Report
 - Mr. Cherry moved to approve the 2019 Annual Report and Mrs. Schiff seconded the motion with all commissioners in favor.
- Adoption of Planning Commission Meeting Schedule for the Next 12 Months
 - Mrs. Schiff moved to adopt the meeting schedule and Mr. Wade seconded the motion with all commissioners in favor.

VI. Approval of Minutes for December 4, 2019 meeting

Mrs. Schiff made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Cherry seconded the motion with all commissioners in favor.

VII. Hearing of Citizens Generally

No citizens spoke.

VIII. Public Hearings

A. Planning Commission Resolution 20-1

To recommend to City Council the approval of Ordinance 20-1, to amend § 286-202.04 of Chapter 286, Zoning, of the Colonial Heights City Code by updating terminology in the definition of “Group Home”.

Ms. Hall stated Mr. Fisher brought this to her attention due to the change in name of the licensing authority from the “Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services” to the “Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Development Services.” This resolution is also to update the term mental retardation to intellectually disabled in order to reflect politically-correct language.

Mrs. Hamilton asked if group homes were allowed in any zoning district. Ms. Hall replied that they are permitted in all zoning districts including Residential Low. Mrs. Hamilton asked if that included commercial zones. Ms. Hall responded that they are permitted in Boulevard Business but she was unsure about General Business and that she would review the Zoning Code. Mr. Fisher stated that state and federal law require that group homes be allowed in any residentially-zoned district, however, the requirement does not extend to non-residential districts, and that would be determined by the locality.

Mr. Hartson asked if there were any drug or alcohol abuse rehabilitation facilities or halfway houses in the City. Ms. Hall stated that there were none that she was aware of, but she had received regular inquiries about bringing these types of facilities, as well as group homes, to Colonial Heights.

Mr. Cherry made a motion to approve Resolution 20-1 and Mrs. Schiff seconded

the motion.

Vote: 6-0

Yes:

Hamilton
Schiff
Hartson
Wade
Kohan
Cherry

No: None

Abstained: None

Motion: Unanimous Pass

B. Planning Commission Resolution 20-2

To grant a special use permit to Colonial Heights School Board to upgrade existing signage and allow for a 21.47 square foot internally illuminated sign and a 26.65 square foot electronic message board on the existing freestanding sign structure at Colonial Heights High School, 3600 Conduit Road, also known as parcel identification number 68090000023 and being zoned RL – Low Density Residential District.

Ms. Hall presented visuals to exemplify the proposed electronic message board. She also presented staff recommendations that all electronic message boards meet, as the standard was set with previous message boards.

Principal of Colonial Heights High School, Kristin Janssen, and a representative of Moore Sign Corporation, Marty Wells, came to the podium to speak about the special use permit.

Ms. Janssen expressed how useful the sign would be to the school due to the ease of use, and overall would improve communication. She stated that they change the current sign weekly, and often cannot fit all events on the sign. She believes the ability to update it from a mobile device will also provide a needed convenience.

Mr. Wells was present to answer any questions regarding the sign construction.

Mr. Wade asked if Mr. Wells was contracted for all of the schools applying for special use permits. Mr. Wells replied that he is not working on the electronic message board for Tussing Elementary, but that he would be working on the four remaining schools. Mr. Wade further asked if Moore Signs was offering the same discounted price that was offered to Tussing Elementary. Mr. Wells verified that it would be the same pricing.

Mr. Hartson asked if funds were from the school budget or the PTA, as Tussing Elementary had their message board funded by the PTA. Ms. Janssen said it was budgeted from the school budget.

Mr. Wells stated that he wasn't sure about the functioning of the Tussing Elementary sign, but that the other signs will have the ability to be edited from a mobile device from anywhere, as the boards themselves will be connected to a cellular network. If needed, the Principal could change the message board from home. He went on to say that in an emergency situation, the same message could be instantly uploaded to all signs simultaneously.

Mr. Cherry asked about encryption to prevent students from hacking into the system and changing the messages. Mr. Wells assured him that there is protection from hacking and it was discussed with the School Board.

Mr. Kohan asked when construction would begin. Mr. Wells stated that they would begin roughly 10 weeks after final approval of permits.

Mrs. Schiff made a motion to approve Resolution 20-2 and Mr. Wade seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0

Yes:

Hamilton
Schiff
Hartson
Wade
Kohan
Cherry

No: None

Abstained: None

Motion: Unanimous Pass

C. Planning Commission Resolution 20-3

To grant a special use permit to Colonial Heights School Board to upgrade existing signage and allow for a 13.44 square foot internally illuminated sign and a 23.22 square foot electronic message board on the existing freestanding sign structure at Colonial Heights Middle School, 500 Conduit Road, also known as parcel identification number 43000600001 and being zoned RL – Low Density Residential District.

Ms. Hall provided visuals to exemplify the proposed electronic message board.

Mr. Burke George, Principal of Colonial Heights Middle School came to the podium to speak. Mr. Burke emphasized that the Middle School is also the City's emergency shelter, so this message board could be vital in emergency situations.

Mr. Wade made a motion to approve Resolution 20-3 and Mr. Kohan seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0

Yes:

Hamilton
Schiff
Hartson
Wade
Kohan
Cherry

No: None

Abstained: None

Motion: Unanimous Pass

D. Planning Commission Resolution 20-4

To grant a special use permit to Colonial Heights School Board to upgrade existing signage and allow for a 11 square foot internally illuminated sign and a 15.28 square foot electronic message board on the existing freestanding sign structure at Lakeview Elementary School, 401 Taswell Avenue, also known as parcel identification number 1900010N024 and being zoned RL – Low Density Residential District.

Ms. Hall provided visuals to exemplify the proposed electronic message board.

Principal of Lakeview Elementary, Patrick Neuman, came to the podium to speak. Mr. Neuman stated that this sign would be a great form of communication to parents or guardians. He noted that Lakeview Elementary will have the only single-sided sign. While this sign does face housing, the hours would be restricted by proposed conditions and turned off at 10 pm.

Mr. Wade asked what hours the current sign was illuminated. Mr. Neuman responded that it is permanently illuminated.

Mr. Cherry made a motion to approve Resolution 20-4 and Mrs. Schiff seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0

Yes:

Hamilton
Schiff

Hartson
Wade
Kohan
Cherry

No: None

Abstained: None

Motion: Unanimous Pass

E. Planning Commission Resolution 20-5

To grant a special use permit to Colonial Heights School Board to upgrade existing signage and allow for a 11 square foot internally illuminated sign and a 15.28 square foot electronic message board on the existing freestanding sign structure at North Elementary School, 3201 Dale Avenue, also known as parcel identification number 6300010J000 and being zoned RL – Low Density Residential District.

Ms. Hall provided visuals to exemplify the proposed electronic message board. This sign is similar to Colonial Heights Middle School sign's base structure.

Principal of North Elementary School, Travis Ridley, came to the podium to speak. Mr. Ridley echoed the previous principals' statements regarding the benefits of this sign, and thanked the commissioners for their time.

Mr. Kohan asked why the Elementary Schools' signs are smaller than the Middle and High School signs. Mr. Ridley replied that the existing signs are smaller.

Mr. Wade asked if all the signs would be going up around the same time. Mr. Ridley stated that Moore Signs has ensured the school board that they would begin work 10 weeks after final approval of permits, so ideally, all the signs will be completed before the end of the school year.

Mr. Wade made a motion to approve Resolution 20-5 and Mrs. Schiff seconded the motion.

Vote: 6-0

Yes:

Hamilton
Schiff
Hartson
Wade
Kohan
Cherry

No: None

Abstained: None

Motion: Unanimous Pass

IX. Old Business

Ms. Hall stated that proposed edits to the Comprehensive Plan would be presented to Planning Commission throughout the year. Staff anticipated that revisions will be published by the end of 2020.

X. New Business/Reports

No new business.

Reports

1. Chairman-Mr. Hartson

Mr. Hartson stated he had nothing to report at this time.

2. Director of Planning and Community Development – Ms. Hall

Ms. Hall stated that there were no applications for February, so there may be no meeting held. Mr. Smith stated that the meeting would need to be held to review the Capital Improvements Plan. Ms. Hall also stated that Mr. Kollman had officially resigned from Planning Commission, and that she would be putting together a resolution in his honor, as suggested by Mrs. Schiff.

Mrs. Schiff asked when there would be a new member serving on Planning Commission. Mr. Fisher replied that a new member would be appointed in February to begin serving in March at the earliest. However, depending on the number of applicants, it may take longer.

3. City Engineer or Designee – Asst. Director of Public Works – Mr. Flippen

Mr. Flippen stated that the fountain at the roundabout near Interstate 95 had been installed but that work was still being done. He went on to explain that there were green bottles in the pond temporarily marking aeration plates, in the event that there is citizen commentary, those bottles are not litter.

Mr. Cherry asked if Engineering Department did a study to determine the size of the fountain. Mr. Flippen responded that the aeration system was studied because that is critical in keeping the algae under control. He stated that it is somewhat understated, but they don't want to create a distraction for people coming off of the interstate. He also stated that the fountain does have multiple spray settings which could be maneuvered to make the water go higher, but it is currently at the manufacturer's settings.

4. Others, as necessary or appropriate

a. City Manager – Mr. Smith

Mr. Smith stated that Economic Development informed him that the Extended Stay is hoping to open in mid-late April. Mr. Smith outlined the timeline for the Violet Bank renovations. He stated the architectural firm notified him that the final construction documents would be done by the end of January to go out for bid in February to April, with work to begin in May. The Tri-City Chili Peppers tickets are now on sale through their website. Mr. Smith stated that he had spoken with Mr. Skalak, who would be meeting with the contractors in January and would provide a more complete update on renovations to Shepherd Stadium the following month. Mr. Hartson asked when the baseball games would begin. Mr. Smith replied that the first game is scheduled for the end of May.

Mrs. Schiff noted that a lot adjacent to Violet Bank was for sale and asked if the City would be buying it. Ms. Hall stated that a building permit application for a new single-family home had been submitted. Mr. Kohan asked how that would affect the Cucumber tree. Mr. Flippen stated that it depended how close to its roots the foundation would be built. He would need to look at the radius of the roots to make a determination. Mr. Hartson asked how close the lot was to Violet Bank. Ms. Hall stated that she had not yet received a site layout, so the application was not complete and had not been reviewed yet. She stated that she still needed to determine whether it is a buildable lot. Mrs. Schiff expressed her opposition to a home being built near Violet Bank, but understood the need to sell land. Mrs. Hamilton was also opposed to a house being built near Violet Bank. She proposed that if a home were to be built on this lot, it should complement the area, rather than stand out amongst the historic homes and museum. As it is an historic site, Mrs. Hamilton suggested that Planning Commission should have an interest in maintaining it.

Mrs. Schiff asked whether Mission BBQ developers had received permission from VDOT for an ingress/egress along Temple Avenue. Mr. Smith stated that the company had decided against pursuing a separate ingress/egress along Temple Avenue, and that Mrs. Epps has learned construction of another one of their new sites had also been delayed. Mr. Smith assured Planning Commission that as he received additional information, he would share it with Planning Commission.

Mr. Wade asked if the Violet Bank renovations beginning soon were just to repair the foundation. Mr. Smith responded that the renovations were to resolve the moisture issues with the structure itself, and while the foundation is a part of that it would not exclusively be a foundation repair. It may also include roof work, and the beam across the front of the building.

- b. City Attorney – Mr. Fisher**
Mr. Fisher stated he had nothing to report.

XI. Adjournment

Mrs. Schiff made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Kohan seconded the motion, with all commissioners in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 PM.



Kelly Hall
Secretary



Mitchell Hartson
Chairman