



**MINUTES CITY OF COLONIAL HEIGHTS
Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission
Tuesday, April 4, 2023**

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Present:

Mr. Hartson

Mrs. Schiff

Mrs. Hamilton

Mrs. Levenson-Melvin

Mr. Wade (present via telephone)

Mr. Kohan

Absent:

Mr. Kwiek

III. Determination of Quorum

A quorum was determined.

Mr. Wade was unable to attend the meeting in person due to a personal matter as he was on a vacation in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Mr. Hartson called for a vote of Commissioners to allow Mr. Wade to participate virtually. All Commissioners were in favor.

This is the first time in 2023 that Mr. Wade has participated remotely in a Planning Commission meeting.

IV. Approval of Minutes for the March 7, 2023 meeting

Mr. Kohan asked for clarification from Mr. Fisher about a reference in the March 7 minutes to a Planning Commission member serving on the Board of Zoning Appeals. Since the minutes read that the Planning Commission will select a member of the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) to serve on the Planning Commission if Mr. Kohan chooses to not continue as a member of the BZA, will he cease to be a member of the Planning Commission as well? Mr. Fisher confirmed that Mr. Kohan's understanding was correct.

Mrs. Schiff made a motion to approve the March meeting minutes, and Mrs. Levenson- Melvin seconded the motion and all Commissioners voted to approve the minutes as written.

V. Approval of Agenda

The applicants with plans of development on the agenda requested the Chair to revise the agenda, and move Item No. VIII, Subdivision/ Plan of Development, before Item No. VII. Mrs. Schiff made a motion to approve the revised agenda which included putting Item No. VII behind No. VIII; and Mrs. Levenson-Melvin seconded the motion, and all Commissioners voted to approve the motion.

VI. Hearing of Citizens Generally

No citizens spoke.

VII. Subdivision/Plan of Development

A. PD 22-08 Southlake Park Pond Fill

Property Owner, Roslyn Farms Corporation, requests approval of a preliminary plan of development/site plan for the development of approximately 5.30 acres of land at the intersection of South Avenue and East Roslyn Avenue. The purpose of the application is to fill portions of the existing stormwater management pond on the property to create two (2) developable lots. The property is identified as Tax Parcel 69011100003, which is zoned GB – General Business.

All Planning and Zoning review comments have been addressed by the Applicant. Staff recommends that Planning Commission approve PD 22-08 subject to the application receiving final plan approval meeting all City requirements.

The applicant was represented by Mr. Nicholas Walker. Mr. Kohan asked how would the stormwater drain off from the surrounding areas and streets be taken care of when the pond is filled? Mr. Walker responded that the pond is oversized and can hold the stormwater run-off even after filling as per the proposed design. The design meets the standards and specifications of the DEQ. A portion of the pond will be filled and not the entire pond.

Mr. Hartson asked Mr. Walker what percentage of the existing pond would be filled up to convert as developable land. Mr. Walker responded that he would get the numbers to the Commissioners later as he did not have that information handy. Mr. Hartson also asked if the existing fountain would be removed and Mr. Walker responded that the fountain would be not be removed, however, it will be moved.

Mrs. Hamilton asked Mr. Walker if there were any negative effects of the project. Mr. Walker responded that he had none to report as the design meets all the specifications and requirements of the DEQ and the Engineering Department.

Mr. Wade asked Mr. Walker if there would be a retaining wall built. Mr. Walker responded that there will be no retaining wall constructed but the ground would be graded and topped with a layer of vegetation to prevent soil erosion.

Mrs. Schiff made a motion that the Planning Commission approve PD 22-08 subject to the application receiving final plan approval meeting all City requirements; Mrs. Levenson-Melvin seconded the motion; and all Commissioners voted to approve the motion.

Approved 6-0

B. PD 23-02 Temple Avenue Storage; 801 Temple Avenue

Property owners, Stallings Oil Company and Boddie-Noell Enterprises, Inc., have submitted a preliminary site plan/plan of development for a fully enclosed self-storage mini-warehouse facility, containing a total of 119,900 square feet for the use to be located on 1.89 acres. The property is identified as Tax Parcel 68035600003, which is zoned GB – General Business.

Staff recommends Planning Commission approve PD 23-02 subject to the Applicant receiving final plan approval meeting all City and VDOT requirements.

The Applicant was represented by Mr. Krolewski, the Engineer for the project. Mr. Hartson asked Mr. Krolewski how many parking places were provided in the proposed design, and Mr. Krolewski said 19 parking spaces. Mr. Hartson asked what interest VDOT has in this property and Mr. Krolewski said that the proximity of the property to Interstate 95 requires VDOT approvals.

Mr. Kohan recollected the project being approved by the Planning Commission as well as the City Council earlier and asked why it was before the Planning Commission again for approval. Mr. Fisher clarified that the earlier approval by the Planning Commission was to allow this particular use on this property by granting a Special Use Permit. The current approval is for the Preliminary Plan of Development.

Mrs. Schiff made a motion that the Planning Commission approve PD 23-02 subject to the application receiving final plan approval meeting all City and VDOT requirements, Mrs. Hamilton seconded the motion; and all Commissioners voted to approve the motion.

Approved 6-0

VIII. Public Hearings

A. PC RESOLUTION NO. 23-02; Ordinance Number 23-8

City's proposed FY2024-2028 Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)

Mr. Smith made a summary presentation of the CIP. He said the CIP document is a planning tool used to match anticipated major facility, equipment, infrastructure, and technological improvements with the funding available to meet those needs. To be included in the CIP, a project must meet specific criteria.

A capital improvement project is defined by the City as:

a) Construction and/or acquisition of new assets, including buildings, land, vehicles, equipment, or hardware/software where the costs of construction or acquisition (including

incidental costs) meet or exceed \$50,000 for a specific project or unit and the useful life of the asset exceeds one year.

b) Upgrades, improvements, or additions to existing buildings, equipment, or other assets that increase the value or greatly extend the estimated useful life of the asset where the cost of the upgrade or addition exceeds \$50,000.

c) Remodeling or repair of existing assets where the costs of the remodel or repair will exceed \$100,000.

Mr. Smith said the projects proposed for funding FY24- FY 28 is \$22.26 Million which is slightly higher than the number indicated in the CIP document shared earlier with the Commissioners. Local match funds for Boulevard Spur of \$79,901 need to be added to FY23-24 appropriations which change the overall FY23-24 funded value to \$2,653,559. This will reflect some changes to the totals of certain line items in the document.

Mr. Wade asked Mr. Smith if the exclusion of funds for the Boulevard Spur project in the initial CIP was due to an oversight or if funds are being taken from other projects to include it now. Mr. Smith clarified that the fund was shown in the initial document as a local match, but it was not reflected in the summary sheet.

Mr. Hartson referred to the methane extraction system included in the CIP document on page 83 and asked if DEQ mandates methane extraction monitoring. Mr. Flippen responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Hartson asked Mr. Flippen if VDOT would partially fund the project I-95 South Park Boulevard interchange of Roslyn Road. Mr. Flippen said the project is included in the CIP to see if VDOT will partner with the City.

Mr. Hartson asked about the payback period for the Shepard Stadium Field Lights Replacement project which shows a reduction in energy of maintenance cost by up to 85%. Mr. Skalak responded that he would provide that information later as he did not have it with him.

Mrs. Hamilton remarked that the asphalt path renovation at Fort Clifton Park and White Bank Park was great and asked if Mr. Skalak would consider adding the walkway at Flora Hill Park. She pointed out that the trail is cracked and uneven and shared pictures showing the condition of the walkway with the Commissioners. Mr. Skalak agreed and said the numbers could be worked out and considered for a future project.

Mrs. Hamilton shared some project ideas that she thought were worthy of consideration. She would like the installation of Anti-Littering Signs placed strategically in the City of Colonial Heights to educate the public and be of a positive nature. She would also like to have a fine included to establish accountability if the law permits.

Mrs. Hamilton said she was happy to see the inclusion of a walkway in Flora Hill Park in the CIP.

Mrs. Hamilton said another idea that she has been sharing a few times with the Planning Commission is the installation of security cameras in heavy thoroughways like the Boulevard, Ellerslie Avenue, and Temple Avenue. She shared that the City of Richmond is using cameras that can read license plates and is helping law enforcement tremendously. Mr. Smith responded that the City has received a grant of \$10,000 and is procuring four license plate reading cameras that will be installed in strategic locations. The neighboring cities either have such cameras installed or are in the process of doing so. There will be a collaborative effort led by the Police Department to share data from our cameras with the neighboring cities and vice versa.

Mrs. Hamilton shared that more green pockets should be established in the City in the form of small parks which would make the City more appealing and environmentally healthier. She would also like a goal-oriented tree-planting program for the City. This program will have to be overseen by an Arborist, may be part-time, as the City's Horticulturist has limited resources.

Mrs. Levenson-Melvin asked about the status of the Lakeview Dam project. Mr. Smith responded that the City has been working with the City Council on this project. A construction bid has been received and Mr. Flippen shared that the dam is licensed through the Federal Emergency Resource Commission (FERC). The City has submitted the Plans to FERC which is under review. Most of the plans are approved and construction approval should be issued soon. Once the improvements are made to the dam upon receiving the approvals, it should secure the surrounding areas and make them safe against flooding. Mr. Flippen said that the construction time projected is about four months and the work should be completed before the hurricane season in August of this year.

Mrs. Levenson-Melvin asked if the City has planned to fix the damage caused to the signage "Welcome to Colonial Heights" at the Chesterfield entrance. Mr. Smith responded that a new branding logo has been developed for the City. Once the new branding has been approved by the City Council, this signage along with the one on the Prince George's entrance would be redone using the new logo.

Mr. Kohan made a motion that the Planning Commission approve PC Resolution No. 23-02 and the City's proposed FY2024-2028 Capital Improvements Plan with an amendment suggested by the City Manager; Mrs. Schiff seconded the motion, and all Commissioners approved the motion.

IX. Old Business

Mrs. Levenson- Melvin shared the information sent by the Planning Department about the tax auction of the Swim Club property being scheduled for April 11, 2023, at the Colonial Heights Circuit Courthouse.

Mrs. Schiff asked Mrs. Levenson-Melvin if she knew of any interested parties, to which Mrs. Schiff responded that there have been a few inquiries and that there is also a Facebook string of communications going around about the property.

Mr. Fisher shared that the former President of the Swim Club contacted the City Attorney's Office inquiring about the property's financial liability to the City. Mr. Fisher said that his office referred the former President to the attorney in charge of the foreclosure process, as he would have the updated figure. Mr. Kohan asked Mr. Fisher how much the swim club owed the City in taxes. Mr. Fisher said the amount was \$30,000.

Mrs. Levenson-Melvin said that at a future meeting, she would like to discuss the fees charged for food trucks in the City sponsored by non-profits.

X. New Business/Reports

Reports

1. **Chairman – Mr. Hartson**
None.
2. **Planning and Community Development – Designee – Mrs. Payne, Asst. Director**
Mrs. Payne informed the Commissioners that the Planning Department would present the research that the Staff has compiled on the Short-Term Rental Ordinance in the Planning Commission meeting in May. This meeting would be like a work session in nature.
3. **City Engineer or Designee –Director of Public Works – Mr. Flippen**
Mr. Flippen reported that the leaf collection program for 2022-23 is complete. The City's focus now is grass-cutting.

Mr. Flippen reported that the asphalt plant in Petersburg was no longer operable. The other plant located near Chester is also going through some operational issues which is delaying the asphalt work needed in the City. The department is working with Mr. Melvin from the Purchasing Department to determine other options for plants to contract for the asphalt work.

Mrs. Schiff thanked the Department for the street sweeping work.

Mr. Kohan asked Mr. Flippen and Dr. Cox, Interim Superintendent of Colonial Heights Public Schools, if the school construction work was on schedule. Dr. Cox responded that the school construction work was progressing very well and was on schedule. He also invited the Commissioners for a tour of the school.

4. Others, as necessary or appropriate

a. City Manager – Mr. Smith

Mr. Smith gave a few updates on new businesses in the City. He mentioned that the building permits for Popeyes have been issued and "Popshelf" has opened a new store in the City.

Mr. Smith updated the Commissioners on the Violet Bank Cameron Foundation grant criteria. Currently, the Foundation has some restrictions on the bond-funded

projects which made the project ineligible for funding. Mr. Smith said he had discussions with the new President of the Foundation who has agreed to speak with their Board to make the criteria more flexible, in which case the project may be eligible to reapply for funding. This timeline, he said will also help align with the best-suited season for construction activities based on the inputs from the architects.

Mrs. Schiff asked Mr. Smith if the lot next to the Violet Bank would be made a parking lot. Mr. Smith responded that he was not sure if that is something that could be done now; however, it could be considered sometime in the future.

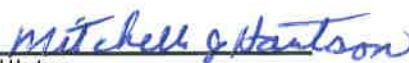
b. City Attorney – Mr. Fisher

Mr. Fisher gave an overview of the new comprehensive ordinance on tall grass, reducing the time for compliance after being given notice, simplifying the method of serving the notice of violation on property owners, and the stringent penalties. He also mentioned that the changes to the Code grant more enforcement power to regulating exterior objects inappropriately left outside. The term *Clutter* is being added to the new ordinance, which will give some authority to regulate objects outside which formerly would have been legal.

Mrs. Hamilton asked Mr. Fisher to clarify that the new clutter ordinance would apply to objects placed anywhere in the yard that are visible to the code enforcement officers. Mr. Fisher replied that was correct.

XI. Adjournment

Mrs. Schiff made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mrs. Levenson- Melvin seconded the motion, and all Commissioners voted to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

X 

Mitchell Hartson
Chairman

X 

Joseph Carter Jr.
Secretary