

**REGULAR MEETING OF
LURAY PLANNING COMMISSION
March 14, 2018**

The Luray Planning Commission met on Wednesday, March 14, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in regular session. The meeting was held in the Luray Town Council Chambers at 45 East Main Street, Luray, Virginia at which time there were present the following:

Commissioners Present:

Ronald Good, Chairman
John Shaffer
Gail Kyle
Brian Sours
Tracie Dickson
Bill Huffman

Absent:

Grace Nowak

Others Present:

Steve Burke, Town Manager
Bryan Chrisman, Assistant Town Manager
Brooke Newman, Planning & Zoning Assistant
Lowell Baughan, Luray Park Board Association

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Ronald Good, at 7:00 p.m. and everyone joined in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion: Commissioner Brian Sours made the motion to accept the minutes from the February 14, 2018 regular Planning Commission; seconded by Commissioner John Shaffer.

YEA: Chairman Ronald Good, Commissioners John Shaffer, Gail Kyle, Brian Sours, Tracie Dickson and Bill Huffman **Approved 6-0**

CITIZEN COMMENTS

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Fences – Proposed Amendments to Section 504 of Article V

Mr. Burke presented the proposed changes to Section 504 of Article V of Appendix A of the code regarding fences. “Three general areas are being amended. The first is changes that include descriptive headings that are consistent with and declarative of each section’s content. Another includes the height limit of four feet for fences that are parallel to a street abutting the front yard in residential districts. The final change would provide that a fence is not a structure for the purpose of the zoning ordinance

and may be located along or parallel to property lines. Staff would recommend the planning commission recommend approval to the town code.”

ACTION ITEMS

- A. Fences – Proposed Amendments to Section 504 of Article V

Motion: Commissioner John Shaffer made the motion to approve the adopted amendments and pass them to town council for approval; seconded by Commissioner Tracie Dickson.

YEA: Chairman Ronald Good, Commissioners John Shaffer, Gail Kyle, Brian Sours, Tracie Dickson and Bill Huffman **Approved 6-0**

UPDATES & DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- A. Luray Park Board Association – Lowell Baughan

Mr. Lowell Baughan presented a power point on the history of the Luray Park Board Association and spoke about their relationship with the Town of Luray.

Established in 1917 and currently a 501c3 nonprofit corporation. The Luray Land Company purchased the residual property of the Inn, some of which had already had been sold off for subdivision. Vernon Ford, business man and friend of Mr. Harnsbarger (Mr. Baughan’s maternal grandfather) and members of the newly formed park board, sought to get 100 feet of property along the railroad for access from the railroad to the park land which would become a public park in Luray. Events held on park property are by donation only and any vendors with items of sale are place outside park boundary. The canon sits on the park land that was purchased to access the park from the railroad. The town tennis court is located on the lot purchased in January of 1945 and donated to the association. In December of 1945 the association purchased the corner lot which is the location of the public library, built in 1968. If the use ceases to be a public library, the land will revert back to the park association. The Page County Heritage Association was in need of a location for the Massanutten School and so it was moved to its current location next to the library in 1974.

The association also owns the Bell Brown Northcott Memorial Carillon Park. In 1937, Colonel Northcott built the tower in honor of his wife. The park association, being a nonprofit in existence at the time, provided the vehicle with which he could donate this to the community.

The association also owns the PAL Center for the Performing Arts, which has been around since 2005. In order to help with owner financing, the association as a nonprofit, was able to obtain a 40-year loan from Rural Development Department of Agriculture and in return leases the building back to PAL.

Sometime after WWII, there was a park levy on the town tax bill. This money was given over the the park association for the maintenance of the parks. During the term of Mayor Harry Dyke, the town and the trustees agreed that the town would start turning the money over to the association and the association would be responsible for maintenance of the parks or the town simply keep the park levy and maintain the parks. It was agreed that the town would keep the levy and maintain the parks. At some time in the 70’s, the town revised the municipal code and the tax structure and they eliminated the park levy. At that time Mr. Baughan approached the town to discuss the elimination of the levy and how the parks would be maintained. The town agreed to continue maintenance of the parks. Some of

the older equipment being used was donated over the years and newer equipment has been added by parks and recreation. The gazebo was moved from the property which is now the site of the county office building and was relocated by the garden club and restored by a student club. While the park board association is a private corporation, they hold these properties in trust for the community.

Mr. Shaffer: In the initial days when you were purchasing property around the Inn Lawn Park, where those funds from the directors before the levy was put on? How did they get the funds to buy additional properties?

Mr. Baughan: The Luray Land Company, which had subdivided all of the residual property of the lots, they gave the property inside the circle and the property between the circle and the Christian church to the association. The 100-square foot piece where the canon sits, was bought with funds raised by my grandfather. The Town bought the tennis court property and gave it to the association. There was no parks and rec at the time. The library and Massanutten school property was purchased with funds raised by the association.

Mr. Shaffer: Was PAL purchased with the same funds from the levy?

Mr. Baughan: PAL needed to refinance the building and the association went to Rural Development and asked if PAL could refinance the building so they would not have to refinance back to the bank? They were looking for a longer term with a lower rate. Rural Development did not do refinancing, only purchases. The association inquired, if another nonprofit purchased the building did it classify as a purchase and they said yes. So, the park association borrowed the money from rural development department of agriculture to purchase the building from PAL and they lease it back to PAL.

Mr. Shaffer: Are there any funds still left in the endowment Northcott left?

Mr. Baughan: Yes, that money is held separately and it can only be used at the tower.

Ms. Kyle: I understand the tower needs some work, can that money can be used for these repairs?

Mr. Baughan: Yes, this was done around 1987 as well.

Ms. Kyle: Are there any restrictions in using the tower property for fund raising events and using those funds for the tower?

Mr. Baughan: No, the only property with restrictions in the deed is Inn Lawn Park.

Mr. Chrisman: The caverns does contribute money from time to time and has contributed for pump replacement and other maintenance costs.

Mr. Shaffer: Wasn't there a consultant that came in the past and determined there was a substantial amount of work that needed to be done? Did the board take a position on that assessment?

Mr. Baughan: Some of the cost were associated with changing out the entire way the bells were played and how they struck. There was a certain amount of resistance to changing what is a historic instrument just because modern times suggest you do it better. We will likely not do those changes but will continue to do maintenance to keep it playing as it is now.

Ms. Kyle: What is the cost of those repairs? There is an interest in helping raise the money for these repairs.

Mr. Shaffer: This is good clarification of information. It is important not to change such a unique historic structure.

Mr. Baughan: We have an amazing world class instrument. And it is known worldwide. Visitors come just to hear it.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2018 – CHAPTER OUTLINE

Brooke Newman presented the revised chapter outline and requested guidance from commission for these revisions. Gail Kyle suggested we do a community survey at some point in this process to get feedback on the comprehensive plan. Mr. Burke asked the commission what input they were seeking

from the community. Ms. Kyle suggested we give them a general statement about what the comprehensive plan does, the purpose of the plan and why it is important for them to comment. Mr. Huffman recommended we include the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Solutions and the Young Entrepreneurial Program in the plan in the economic development chapter. Ms. Kyle suggested that chapter 16 and chapter 7 be combined. Mr. Burke recommended we put the chapters back to back moving 16, land use and growth behind chapter 7, housing. Ms. Kyle also recommended combining chapters 12 community design and chapter 13 community facilities. She also recommended the addition of our growing short term and lodging home rentals in town.

Announcements

Chairman Good announced the town is having two public hearings regarding the block grant for the proposed housing project on Airport Road which is being considered and recommended to the town council. This would provide 52 units of affordable housing. Ms. Kyle inquired as to how much of a percentage does the town put up. Mr. Chrisman stated that amount is zero percent. It is a straight grant from the state and the maximum for this grant is \$700,000.00 and of that up to \$80,000 can be spent on the administrator which in this case is the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission. They are also adding some of their own money into the project and they have designated this project as their number one residential development project in our entire region. Mr. Burke informed the commission that council has to do the resolution of support and then the regional commission submits the application.

Chairman Good added the unique places in Luray such as the theatre, Shenandoah National Park, Bell Tower, and the caverns. Ms. Kyle mentioned the upcoming arts festival weekend presented by the arts council. Their goal is to bring out the historical aspect of the crafts and arts in the county. There are 65 local page county participants bringing this aspect to the event. Mr. Shaffer mentioned the Luray Valley Museum and the connection to the art projects that were happening in the late 1700's. Ms. Kyle agreed and that the goal is to tie in to the fact that this is a generational thing and Luray and Page County has always been an inspiration. It's very important to bring this back.

Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Steve Burke
Town Manager

ATTEST: _____
Prepared by: Brooke Newman
Planning & Zoning Assistant