

**REGULAR MEETING OF
LURAY PLANNING COMMISSION
MAY 14, 2014**

The Luray Planning Commission met on Wednesday, May 14, 2014 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
Mark Malone
Brian Sours
Grace Nowak
Jerry Dofflemyer

Absent: Clifton Campbell
Larry Hakel

Others Present:

Ligon Webb, Town Planner

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Sours moved that the minutes of April 16, 2014 be approved as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Nowak with the vote as follows: YEA: Commissioners Good, Malone, Sours, Nowak and Dofflemyer. **Approved 5-0**

NEW BUSINESS:

Review: Revised Official Zoning Map (Public Hearing June 2014)

Commissioner Good stated that Ligon will give us information on this and it looks like we look at it this time and we will hold a public hearing next month.

Mr. Webb stated this is our Official Zoning Map that we keep in the office. You have the revised one but this is actually the go-to official zoning map and if anyone has any questions they come in the office and we hopefully can answer them. This is what happens over the years; some lots are divided; new lots are created, not too many, because we would do those ourselves. It is

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possible to have some discrepancies because there are split-zone parcels that have been pieced together over the years. Every now and then there could be a question and we try to keep an accurate zoning map that the public can easily review; that we can go back and look at past zoning maps if anyone has a question about a zoning change, etc. I believe years ago when they created this, they went through and asked people what would they prefer; and there are some places that the town is larger than ours and I don't think Virginia, but I know other parts of the country that have no zoning at all. The reason we have a building code in town is to have a little bit of say in how the land is used for our purpose and also to help people's land value. Here is the new map. What I want to show you is if you are not aware of Page County; I have been around these things and looked at GIS systems and they collect the data that they need and to make it easy to use. Page County has an excellent GIS system; ease of use, you can get around on it, look things up; property owner information. This is actually an address map. You can actually go through every structure so you don't have to guess the address, if you kind of know where it is, it will tell you right here. It is just an address map. What they are doing now, they are working with the Commissioner of Revenue's office, the Clerk's office and they are putting surveys on here to get the exact or close to the boundary location.

Commissioner Nowak stated there is a house going up right down the street from me; Spring and Hawksbill. If you want to see where their land is, you can go to the actual map. Mr. Webb stated another big thing that is getting ready to come about now is the flood insurance program and the U.S. is changing a bit. We are custodians of the flood map. They actually have the flood plain map here. Over here is what they call your layers, so you can take off layers or add layers.

Commissioner Malone asked are all lots in here? Mr. Webb stated right here you go on and just simply click on the lot. They even try to match the zoning. They have a picture of the house. It's user friendly; it's not too complicated; doesn't have to many bells and whistles but it has enough to give you what you need to know; address, who owns it; year built; they have the zoning on it. Just having a good digital inventory of this is good public information but also it's good for making sure you collect the taxes and you know what's out there. Believe it or not, it is not unusual for localities to sometimes miss taxing the land because they hadn't been transferred in a long time or whatever the reason is. Sometimes that does happen.

Commissioner Malone stated you talk about overlays; is that where it says this is a historic district. Mr. Webb answered no, but they can put it in. They could easily digitize that. Commissioner Malone stated as far as LDI, it would be helpful. Mr. Webb stated they can go out and actually mark the points and come back and upload the data and do whatever they do and put almost any layer on there. They have the files for this flood zone. They get the files shipped to them from the FEMA and they load it basically. There's a lot that goes in between of getting it and putting it on the web. Commissioner Malone asked who is maintaining it. Mr. Webb stated a guy named Josh Hahn. He has been doing it for seven years. This is also good for people who are looking to come to the area and are interested in property or anything; it's a good tool to be

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able to use. This zoning map is kind of matched up with all that stuff. There were a few changes.

Mr. Malone stated there is talk about the old map not showing the property with the school house on it. Mr. Webb stated we made a replication of the historic district map. He could show it on here if we adopted a historic district. He could most definitely do an overlay; Town of Luray Historic District. It would be very easy to do because all you have to do is go and take the points. Commissioner Malone stated particularly if the thing goes any further where the Planning Commission would talk about demolitions in that area. Mr. Webb stated it also would become if you were in a historic district sort of like a code at the Commissioner's Office too. Commissioner Malone asked is this open to anybody; anybody can log on to this. Mr. Webb stated yes.

Mr. Webb stated what we would do is put an ad in the paper and basically invite people that are interested; and there probably won't be any; but we will keep the old map; I'll put it right behind the new map.

Commissioner Dofflemyer asked what is a PND? Mr. Webb answered Planned Neighborhood Development and that's from 2007. Commissioner Nowak asked what are their names. Mr. Webb stated they call it Luray Heights and the one here behind Wal-Mart. Commissioner Nowak asked what about the property over on Fairview and Antioch. Mr. Webb stated I have never heard. Commissioner Nowak stated part of it is in the town and part of it is in the county and I don't know how he would apply the sewer and water. Mr. Webb stated to me it would probably be best; it would be a little more creative in the way you lay your lots out but basically it's going to develop in this same pattern as this right here but the issue is you are kind of in a bottom; you have drainage through here, you have some water issues; I think there is a sink hole over there; you've got a lot of environmental concerns that you have to be very thoughtful about. My understanding is that the owner; we've never talked to them; never discussed with them about town utilities, they have never been interested. Commissioner Nowak stated they are very poor stewards of the property because they have let all of the buildings become termite infested. There are three houses; one is half demo; somebody was taking the wood planks off to build a hunting cabin somewhere and then there's a big house and a small house and then there's a chicken coop and several sheds; big long shed and there's a big red barn. All of those buildings are termite infested and falling apart. That's why I had to move from there because they hadn't treated the termites. The small house is where I lived and it used to be a little hamburger drive-in or something.

Commissioner Malone stated the map where the hospital is, B-1 up in there, there's a little yellow speck in the middle of all of that. Mr. Webb stated I'm glad you caught that because it

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needs to be taken off; there's not a house there. Commissioner Malone asked is that where it extends out? Mr. Webb stated I think that's a service road or something that comes out. I think they bottleneck it because at the time they just wanted to have another access point if they ever needed it; they didn't want to be totally landlocked. I think they worked at a deal at some point. I'll make a note to take that off of there. So we will have a public hearing on this next month and then we'll take July off. Clifton, Ronnie and Larry's term will be up; the rest is 2016.

OLD BUSINESS:

Review: Proposed Changes to Town Sign Ordinance

Mr. Webb stated on your question today about signs. I'm sending the Sign Ordinance to the Town Council; they are going to look at it at their Work Session. It's called feather signs; that's what they are called. I noticed three or four at Holtzman; across the street Grace had mentioned there were several at the BBQ place; that is in the county. Flotzie's is in Town. I personally am fairly lenient minded but Grace brought up a good point; I think one thing is for sure, we need to probably make a definition for feather flags part of our recommendation. Regardless of how many you can have, they have to be in good shape. Once they get in bad shape they have to go. The two that are down here just need to be pulled up and if you replace them, that's a different conversation we can have. That's the first thing; the second thing is we probably want to limit it to a number. Commissioner Malone stated there also should be a dimension. Mr. Webb stated you can go on line and there's a big photo flag, feather sign and you can look at their sizes. We probably want to talk about limiting it to somewhere in there; 12 foot; 15 foot. I'd probably split the difference and say 12 foot. Then the question is, how many do you allow. I think it's probably something that can be just auxiliary to what you are allowed to have; just kind of an add-on. I would limit it to a number. If there was a fee associated with it, maybe that would change people a little bit. I hate to just charge people, but if they really want to put the signs up. It would be a fee per sign. When you get your permit, you have to pay for every certain type of sign. When you are talking to people who have businesses and all these questions are going on and people think especially retail oriented businesses really will say their signage makes all the difference. Commissioner Nowak stated the problem I have with them is when they are not maintained; when they are half down and it just looks so trashy. I can't imagine if they are spending that kind of money that if they see they are half way down that somebody would run out there and fix it. Mr. Webb stated let me see what their fee schedule is. Their fee is just based on the size of the sign. It has nothing to do with the ordinance. Commissioner Sours asked right now a sign permit is free. Mr. Webb said yes, but a lot of times the signs; some of the time you are also getting a building permit so you would be paying a zoning permit fee. Commissioner Malone asked so why do we bother with having exempt signs if you don't have to pay anything for them. Mr. Webb stated I was just putting out ideas for these feather signs. I don't think we want everyone to go buy these signs, but also I don't think it necessarily should count against you

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in your monument sign; it's just an add on. Maybe a way to do it is say they are allowable, they have to be in good shape and you can only have so many based on the size of your property. I think Holtzman has four or five down there now. Most people don't think that it's anything that the town thinks about. Commissioner Norwak stated and Flotzie's has all of those and then McDonald's has added two or three. Mr. Webb stated so maybe we will define it; it has to be in good shape and then let's maybe set a limit to the number based on the size of your property; maximum maybe three. We'll see it again before there is a hearing and at this point it looks like it will be sometime late summer or early fall before this goes to a public hearing. In the historic district again just wait until we get back and in August we can make that our fall project.

Commissioner Good stated if we are going to discuss signs, I hate to feel like I am oblivious to these things, but I don't pay attention to what they say – Flotzie's, McDonald's; I don't pay any attention to them. I agree that they should be in good condition. It's like sometimes you see an American flag that's tattered on the ends and that's terrible. As far as signs, I just don't get real excited about this whole discussion. Mr. Webb stated I think we need clearer dimensional requirements and things like that.

Mr. Webb stated the County has a sign ordinance. Maybe someone just needs to call and ask them what it is. Maybe you can just pull up a mobile sign and turn it on and let it start flashing. I have a feeling that's it's not allowed. Commissioner Sours stated I think it's a dangerous situation right there at the stop light because it's bright and advertising Burger King. It's in a terrible location. Commissioner Malone asked its advertising Burger King across the highway. Commissioner Sours said it's big. Mr. Webb stated I think that's one we need to look into. I probably need to call the folks at the county and see. They have a sign ordinance and off premise signs are not permitted. So it's an off premise sign for a sign in town and it's not permitted in the town either, so tomorrow I'll make that point.

Commissioner Good stated Ligon, if I understand correctly, after the council looks at this at their work session, then at some point it will come back. Mr. Webb stated what I will do is we'll have a look at it one more time before it goes to a public hearing.

Mr. Webb stated in closing, I'll show you a video. I thought this was pretty interesting.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Ligon Webb
Town Planner

ATTEST:
