

The following minutes are from the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting on Thursday, September 24, 2020 in the Abita Springs Town Hall at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Gowland called the meeting to order and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners in attendance included Bryan Gowland, Barbara Jackson, Eric Templet, David Gruning and Dan Underwood. Kristin Tortorich and Mark Fancey were also present.

The Commission reviewed the draft minutes from the September 3, 2020 meeting. Commissioner Gruning motioned to accept the minutes of the September 3, 2020 meeting as presented. Commissioner Templet seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor.

Commissioner Gowland reviewed the meeting agenda. He noted that no items are included in Planning Commission portion of the meeting.

Zoning Commission

Discussion: Annexation – Abita Brewery

Abita Brewery has submitted a request for annexation of nine (9) parcels totaling 24 acres. David Blossman and Trey Ashley from the Abita Brewing Company discussed the request with the Commission. Commissioner Gowland asked why the brewery wished to annex. David Blossman said that the company has been here since 1986 and has always felt that it is part of the community. The company has an emotional and economic connection to Abita Springs would like to see the firm's sales and property taxes benefit the Town.

Commissioner Gowland asked if the company had any expectations for the Town after annexing. David Blossman replied that the company would not want to incur any hidden taxes.

Commissioner Gruning asked how the annexation would impact zoning in the area. It was noted that the property is not contiguous to the existing town limits and zoning in the area would remain the same. The property would be zoned Light Industrial when annexed.

The public hearing to consider the request is scheduled for the October 29, 2020 meeting.

Discussion: Low Density Residential Zone

Commissioner Gowland explained that the Commission's intent is to create a low density residential zone. He said the zone would apply to areas north of the Abita River without water and sewer services. The Commission reviewed a list of possible permitted uses that could be included in the new zone.

The Commission discussed allowing commercial agricultural activities as a permitted use, including farm stands. Commissioner Underwood warned of allowing commercial activities that generate more traffic. The Commission asked staff to look at options for including "small-scale" commercial agriculture.

The Commission discussed including churches and day-care centers as permitted uses. Both uses can create additional traffic. Mark Fancey noted that the sample ordinance language reviewed included a 4,000 square foot building size limitation for churches, which could limit traffic impacts. Commissioner Gowland noted that Town Hall is approximately 5,000 square feet and can accommodate a large crowd. The Commission discussed limiting day-care centers to those conducted within a home. Commissioner Underwood said that churches and day-care centers should not be included as permitted uses. He said that uses which increase traffic should not be allowed in a low density residential zone. Commissioner Templet said that low density does not necessarily mean low traffic and that residential uses create traffic. Staff will research options regarding churches and day-care centers.

The Commission discussed allowing schools as a permitted use. Schools are permitted in the residential district. Commissioner Templet said the proposed new zone should allow all the uses allowed in the current residential district and should include some form of commercial agriculture. He said there should be no limitations on day-care centers. Commissioner Jackson said the uses permitted in the new residential zone should be tailored to fit the area. Commissioner Templet said that all uses should be allowed and should only be limited by what each property can support related to water and septic capacity. Commission Jackson said that some uses are not appropriate and should not be included as allowed uses. Commissioner Underwood agreed and said infrastructure factors need to be considered along with flooding.

Since the Commission did not reach consensus regarding the permitted uses, staff will provide several options regarding permitted uses for consideration at the next meeting.

Commissioner Underwood motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Gruning seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Kristin M. Tortorich, Planning and Zoning

Date