

The following minutes are from the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting on Thursday, July 30, 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 Grunning and Dan Underwood. Kristin Tortorich and Mark Fancey were also present.

The Commission reviewed the draft minutes from the June 25, 2020 meeting. Commissioner Underwood asked if the minutes could be provided to the Commission prior to the meeting. Commissioner Gowland said the agenda and minutes can be e-mailed to the Commission before each meeting. Kristin Tortorich said she would make sure the Commission received the materials in advance of the meetings. Commissioner Templet motioned to accept the minutes of the June 25, 2020 meeting as presented. Commissioner Underwood 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. Commissioner Underwood motioned to close the Planning Commission portion of the meeting. Commissioner Templet seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor.

Zoning Commission

Discussion: Old Louisiana Church 22376 Main Street

The Commission discussed a proposal from Annie Vilardo to use the Old Louisiana Church property as an event venue. Mrs. Vilardo and her husband are interested in purchasing the property. The property is zoned Residential District and is in the Residential-Commercial Overlay District. An event venue is not listed as a permitted use in either district. The Commission discussed options for allowing the use. These include:

- Amending the Residential -Commercial Overlay District to allow the use;
- Re-zoning the property as C-2 – Highway Commercial District, where gathering places are a permitted use;
- The Residential-Commercial Overlay District does allow that other uses may be permitted with the approval of a majority of the property owners within a 500 feet radius of the property, and approval by the Zoning Commission.

Commissioner Gowland noted that several of the options would take several months to complete. He also said that the Residential-Commercial Overlay District does not allow business activity after 7:00 p.m. Commissioner Jackson expressed concerns about parking and traffic near the Main Street and Hwy. 435 intersection.

Ms. Vilardo was encouraged to meet with staff to discuss the various options.

Discussion: Low Density Residential Zone

Mark Fancey reviewed a series of maps showing property sizes for land located in the Residential District. The review focused on the availability of water and sewer services and the adequacy of local transportation networks. The general land use pattern is that residential land north of the Abita River consists of larger residential parcels without water and sewer readily available and with substandard transportation system. Fancey suggested that one low density residential zone be adopted that could be applied to this area of town. He noted that this process is to develop an additional residential zone that would be adopted as part of the Town Code and that the actual re-zoning of property is a separate process. Commissioner Gowland said that a minimum lot size needs to be determined. Kristin Tortorich forwarded a recommendation from the Town administration that the low density zone require a 2-acre minimum lot size. The Commission asked staff to

provide an estimate of the maximum residential buildout in areas north of the Abita River with a 2-acre minimum lot size and a 3-acre minimum lot size.

Commissioners were given a take-home exercise to review a list of possible permitted uses that could be included in the new low-density residential zone for discussion at the next meeting.

Donna Caire presented an e-mail that she had sent to several Commissioners. She asked the Commission to adopt a 3-acre minimum lot size. She said that more density is not needed on Brook Forest Road.

Mary Davis E-mail

Mary Davis presented two concerns – regarding the size of a home constructed on the corner of 7th Street and St Charles and potential flooding issues at a development site on the corner of St. Charles and Hwy. 36.

Kristin Tortorich addressed both issues.

The Commission discussed how to handle discussion of items not included on the agenda. Bryan Gowland noted that the Commission can amend the meeting agenda. Commissioner Underwood said he does not feel the Commission should discuss items not on the agenda. He felt it does not allow for those with opposing views to respond.

Re-schedule August 27, 2020 meeting

The Commission agreed to re-schedule the August 27, 2020 meeting to Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Grunning motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Templet seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Kristin M. Tortorich, Planning and Zoning

Date