

The following minutes are from the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting on Thursday, September 30, 2021 in the Abita Springs Town Hall at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Gruning called the meeting to order, and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners in attendance included Barbara Jackson, Eric Templet, Bryan Gowland, and John Pierce. Kristin Tortorich, Paul Harrison, incoming commission member Chad Hall, and Mark Fancey were also present.

The Commission reviewed the draft minutes from the August 26, 2021 meeting. Commissioner Gowland motioned to accept the minutes of the August 26, 2021 meeting. Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor.

Planning Commission

No agenda items.

Zoning Commission

Discussion:

Draft Stormwater Management Ordinance

The Commission reviewed the September 23, 2021 draft ordinance. Commissioner Gowland said that the ordinance is intended to reduce non-point pollution but should not take a draconian approach. Discussion ensued regarding organic materials in ditches, particularly as a result of storms.

Commissioner Gruning suggested clarifying Sec. 9-906 (5) regarding trash and debris to reference household trash and exempt debris deposited from storms.

The Commission discussed enforcement of the specific prohibitions in the ordinance. Commissioner Templet said he did not want to see the Town Marshal involved with disputes regarding what is garbage or debris. Commissioner Gowland noted that this is the type of issue that can result from ongoing conflicts between neighbors. Commissioner Pierce said the ordinance would make enforcement possible when needed.

The Commission discussed the swimming pool regulations. Commissioner Gruning asked about the “gradual discharge” of water when draining pools. Mark Fancey said the original draft specified the release to be metered, which the Commission felt was not necessary. Commissioner Pierce asked how the pool water would be dechlorinated prior to discharge. Kristin Tortorich replied that chlorine evaporates in several days.

Discussion ensued regarding wash out from concrete trucks discharged to the stormwater system and whether the legal responsibility belonged to the property owner or construction contractor. Kristin Tortorich said that the person obtaining the building permits is the party who is required to sign the Town’s Stormwater Agreement. Paul Harrison said in case of a conflict that Mayor’s Court would be the venue to decide if the homeowner or contractor is the responsible party

Mark Fancey said staff will make the changes discussed by the Commission and present a revised draft at the October 28, 2021 meeting.

Public Comment

Ray Pasqua said he has a lot to say and the time period for public comments is not enough time. He owns more than 100 lots in town that he wants to develop. He would like to have his topic placed on a future agenda for discussion.

He said the contiguous lot rules require larger lots than originally planned downtown. He said the larger lots are ruining the American dream and create sprawl. He said the average household size planned for is 3.3 persons per household while the average household size is 2.5 persons per household.

Paul Harrison said that the Public Comment period is for the Commission to listen to comments and not engage in a dialogue particularly when the topics raised have not been included on the meeting agenda. Kristin Tortorich said if any of the Commissioners makes a request for an agenda item, she will place it on an upcoming agenda. She noted that Mr. Pasqua has discussed the contiguous lot issue with both the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Town Council and neither body was interested in discussing changes to the requirements.

Paul Harrison said if the Commission wants to discuss the contiguous lot law requirement, then that Code section should be specifically stated on the meeting agenda. He said if the Mayor and Council direct the Commission to discuss the law then it should be included on the agenda.

Commissioner Gowland motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Pierce seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Kristin M. Tortorich, Planning Director

Date