

The following minutes are from the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting on Thursday, July 29, 2021, 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 Barbara Jackson, Eric Templet, and Bryan Gowland. David Gruning and John Pierce were absent. Kristin Tortorich and Mark Fancey were also present.

The Commission reviewed the draft minutes from the June 24, 2021, meeting. Commissioner Jackson motioned to accept the minutes of the June 24, 2021, meeting. Commissioner Templet seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor.

Planning Commission

No agenda items.

Zoning Commission

PUBLIC HEARING:

Commissioner Gowland opened the public hearing.

Proposed amendment to Code of Ordinances Sec. 9-223 regarding side yard setbacks for corner lots

The Commission reviewed a draft amendment that would reduce the required side yard setback for corner lots (street side) from 30 feet to 20 feet. Commissioner Gowland reviewed the proposed amendments and explained that the current setback requirement had presented problems recently. He said reducing the setback from 30 feet to 20 feet doesn't seem problematic in any way.

Commissioner Gowland reviewed a table provided with the staff memo showing the required setbacks in residential zones in other jurisdictions in the area. He noted that even if the proposed amendment is adopted the Town's required setback standard would still be greater than that required in these other communities. Commissioner Templet said that the current setback reduces the buildable area on corner lots.

No testimony was presented. Commissioner Templet motioned to close the public hearing. Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor.

Commissioner Jackson motioned to forward a recommendation for the Town Council to adopt the proposed amendments. Commissioner Templet seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor.

Discussion:

Proposed rezoning 71000 block of Dundee Street

The property is currently zoned Historic – Residential District. The property was recently subdivided into two 2-acre lots. Jasmine McClain, property owner, explained that her family would like to construct a new home on one of the lots. She said the proposed rezoning would remove the property from the Historic District. She presented information showing that the west side of Dundee Street is in the Historic District, but the east side of the street is not. She noted several homes in the area that were not constructed to historic design standards and explained that it would not be possible to create a cohesive historic appearance for the area. Commissioner Gowland summarized that removing the Historic District designation would allow a house to be constructed on the property with an appearance consistent with other developed properties in the area. He noted this is a discussion item only.

Proposed subdivision 22503 Level Street

The property is 2.14 acres in size and the proposed subdivision would create three (3) lots on a cul-de-sac street. The Commission reviewed a proposed subdivision plat. It was noted that Lot 1 did not meet the minimum lot depth requirement of 150 feet. Mark Fancey suggested the Commission could grant a variance for the lot with substandard depth. Commissioner Gowland questioned what the necessary hardship would be for granting a variance.

Draft Stormwater Management Ordinance

Discussion of the draft ordinance was deferred to the August 26, 2021, meeting.

Public Comment

Ray Pasqua presented a handout. He owns about 100 lots of record near Hwy. 59 and Harrison Avenue. He stated he is protesting the current contiguous lot law. He wants to reinstate lot of record provisions and repeal the contiguous lot law. He said that under current standards, full blocks with 10 platted lots can only be developed on six (6) lots without any compensation for the “lost” lots. He said that the Town’s comprehensive plan calls for smaller lots.

Commissioner Gowland said that at the time the contiguous lot law was enacted Abita springs was being overrun by growth. He said the ordinance was a growth management regulation. Ray Pasqua responded that Abita Springs was built on small lots and times have changed. He said that larger lots encourage sprawl.

Mr. Pasqua presented a site plan for the portion of his property at the Hwy. 59 and Harrison Avenue intersection that is zoned Highway Commercial. Discussion ensued regarding historic design requirements for commercial buildings. Commissioner Templet suggested Mr. Pasqua share the plan for the commercial development with the Town Council.

Commissioner Templet motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion. All commissioners were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Kristin M. Tortorich, Planning Director

Date