

The following are the minutes from the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting held on March 28, 2024, in Abita Springs Town Hall. The meeting convened at 6:04 P.M.

Commission Chairman John Pierce called the meeting to order. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners in attendance included John Pierce, Chad Hall, Mike Lanaux and Lex LeBlanc. Kristin Tortorich, Mark Fancey, Heather Hockman, and Planners Alex Carter and Julia Marshall were also present.

Agenda Modifications

There were no agenda modifications.

Acceptance of Minutes

The minutes from the March 11, 2024, joint meeting with the Planning and Zoning Commission and Board of Aldermen were reviewed. **Commissioner Hall motioned to accept the minutes as submitted. Commissioner Lanaux seconded the motion. All voted in favor.**

The minutes from the February 29, 2024, meeting were reviewed. **Commissioner Hall motioned to accept the minutes as submitted. Commissioner Lanaux seconded the motion. All voted in favor.**

PLANNING:

Short-Term Rental Applications:

71297 Keller Street

Kristin Tortorich presented the application for the short-term rental permit and stated all requirements were met. Commissioner Lanaux mentioned it is a great location near the Trace.

Commissioner LeBlanc motioned to accept the Short-Term Rental Permit Application. Commissioner Hall seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

22195 6th Street

Kristin Tortorich presented the application for the short-term rental permit and stated all requirements were met. Commissioner LeBlanc stated he had no issues with the application and noted that these two permits would bring the number to eight permits out of the fifteen allotted.

Commissioner Lanaux motioned to accept the Short-Term Rental Permit Application. Commissioner Hall seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Resolution No. 2024-002 to adopt the Master Plan, as amended, for the physical development of the Town, specifically to guide the Town’s future growth and development.

Commission Chairman Pierce introduced the item. Kristin Tortorich explained the changes that were previously discussed were made and the edited version was posted to the Town website for review. Chairman Pierce asked the Commission for any questions, discussion, or objections. Commissioner LeBlanc asked for clarification about the edits, relocating Appendix A to the front and Appendices B-D being removed.

Commissioner LeBlanc stated many people he spoke to in town have objections or cold feet about the adoption. He said he would like to have people think of it as a master guide that has good insight. Commissioner LeBlanc said he hopes that in two years it looks differently than it does today, as they take the time to review the details to prioritize sections to move forward with implementation that allows the infrastructure to keep up and allow more revenue from business development.

Chairman Pierce said an item they discussed that would require later action is the prioritization that would align with the Town’s operating budget.

Commissioner Hall motioned to adopt the Master Plan. Commissioner LeBlanc seconded the motion.

Commission Chairman Pierce opened the Public Comment period.

Public Comment

Sandra Slifer said she was thrilled the Master Plan is moving forward and thanked the Commission. Ms. Slifer said she thinks getting a buy-in from the plurality of the population is important but reminded them that you will never get 100% in agreement.

Chairman Pierce called for a vote on the standing motion. All voted in favor. 4 yeas, 0 nays, 0 abstentions. 1 seat is currently vacant.

Resolution No. 2024-003 to adopt short-term amendments to the Subdivision regulations for the Town of Abita Springs, with the intent to comprehensively amend regulations in the long term in coordination with the Town Planner, Town Engineer, Board of Alderman, and Community input.

Chairman Pierce noted the changes that were made to multiple sections. Commissioner LeBlanc said his questions were addressed earlier in the day.

Alex Carter clarified the subdivision definitions. Ms. Carter stated the administrative subdivision process is established in an ordinance as having up to ten lots, less than two acres, must front a public street and must have infrastructure. Ms. Carter then described minor subdivisions as consisting of up to five lots, over two acres minimum with no maximum limit on size, Planning Commission approval with one Public Hearing, and it must have public infrastructure. Ms. Carter raised awareness of the fact that even though the minor subdivision is only five lots, it is more land than an administrative subdivision which can be up to ten lots and encouraged the public to weigh in on such subdivisions. Ms. Carter then explained that a major subdivision is everything other than the other two categories and includes multiple phases, construction document reviews, and multiple public hearings.

Discussion ensued over Flood Plain Management and ways to make changes over time.

Sandra Slifer stated that Mandeville adopted the preliminary FIRM, although St. Tammany Parish has yet to accept it. Ms. Slifer said she thought Abita Springs should accept the preliminary FIRM and have a no net fill ordinance. Alex Carter said the Town Council must be the body to adopt it and that flood insurance rates would be affected.

Chairman Pierce said he felt the change to the language regarding cul-de-sacs was a good change. In the current draft, cul-de-sacs would be allowed, but extremely limited.

Commissioner Lanaux motioned to accept the amendments. Commissioner Hall seconded the motion.

Commission Chairman Pierce opened the Public Comment period.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Commissioner LeBlanc asked if the amendments were to be accepted, was the plan to still amend them in the near future? Alex Carter confirmed and said the changes made now were just quick, easy fixes, but the deeper issues would need to be reviewed and amendments made to the Regulations.

Chairman Pierce called for a vote on the standing motion. The vote was unanimous. 4 yeas, 0 nays, 0 abstentions. 1 seat is currently vacant.

ZONING:

Discussion: Repeal of the PUD Zoning District, development of a Resolution recommending Code amendment to the Board of Alderman for consideration, and development of such amendments.

Chairman Pierce said the Town Council seemed to support the idea of a repeal of the PUD zone during the joint meeting earlier this month. Chairman Pierce also said if the Commission wants the repeal process to move forward, they'd forward a recommendation to the Board of Aldermen.

Alex Carter said there could be a draft of the recommendation at the April meeting to address repeal of the PUD and add a section that applies to the nonconforming use which would clearly address how existing PUDs would be handled moving forward.

Commissioner LeBlanc said he thought the Commission needs legal counsel regarding how changes to the PUD zoning district could impact the PUD that is currently underway.

Alex Carter said "grandfathering in" the existing PUD would be done by addressing nonconforming use standards. Ms. Carter said there is a precedent to address this situation, and legal counsel would be needed to write that section. Ms. Carter said the next step is to create a draft for consideration for the next meeting.

Kristin Tortorich stated a Public Hearing would happen when a draft can be presented. Alex Carter asked for suggestions of things to address to work on revisions. Chairman Pierce said he thinks everyone understands the intent yet has the same confusion as to how to move forward with a repeal without repealing previously approved PUDs while holding the standards of the previously approved PUDs. Alex Carter said she thinks seeing a draft with everything laid out in writing would make it clearer.

Commissioner LeBlanc asked if the Subdivision Regulations would have a section on PUDs. Chairman Pierce said that the Subdivision Regulations are much like the Master Plan in the way that the document can be updated over time as they incorporate changes they think should be made.

Quality Plumbing Commercial Conditional Use Request 22278 10th Street

Kristin Tortorich gave a staff report and shared the presentation from Quality Plumbing. The property is currently zoned Commercial District. Quality Plumbing is looking to purchase the property where BEI, a General Contractor business, was previously located on over 5 acres. The business would use the existing building as an office and would store machinery and materials on site.

Commissioner LeBlanc asked for the hours of operation. Mike Cefolia, the business President, and applicant, stated office staff would be on site from seven a.m. to three p.m. or seven a.m. to four p.m. The applicant said the office is closed late nights and weekends. He shared the business has operated out of the Historic District in Mandeville since the 1980s and his family are former residents of Abita Springs.

Sandra Slifer asked if there would be any outdoor storage on the property and if so, what would that look like? Mr. Cefolia said there would only be machinery outside.

Public Hearing to follow next month.

OPEN COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sandra Slifer announced Keep Abita Beautiful would have compost for sale at the Whole Town Garage Sale. Kristin Tortorich announced Busker Fest and Autism Awareness events were coming up and to check the website for details.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner LeBlanc motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Lanaux seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 P.M.

Kristin Tortorich, Planning & Zoning Director

Date