

The Altavista Planning Commission held a regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, May 4, 2010 in the Council Chambers at Town Hall at 5:30PM.

Members present - Jerry Barbee, Chairman
Laney Thompson
John Woodson
Not present - Bill Ferguson
Tim Wagner
Also present - Cheryl Dudley
Webb Henderson
Aubrey Rosser
Dan Witt

The agenda was reviewed and approved as presented. A motion was made by Mr. Woodson and seconded by Mrs. Thompson. All members were in favor with none opposing

The minutes from the April 6, 2010 meeting were reviewed and approved as presented. A motion was made by Mrs. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Woodson. All members were in favor with none opposing.

Mr. Witt stated that one of the expectations in the zoning rewrite contract was an evaluation of the current ordinance by Mr. Greg Baka, which he passed out to the PC members. Mr. Witt also provided a 'list of concerns' that he has compiled over the past few years. These concerns are related to issues that he's experienced with the current ordinance.

The PC discussed the items on the list Mr. Witt had compiled.

1. The Town of Altavista ordinance does not clarify if an uncovered porch, deck, or stairway can encroach or go into a side or front setback. Mr. Witt is currently enforcing it in a different way than the previous Zoning Administrator so Mr. Witt would like this included in the current rewrite. He asked the PC what their thoughts are. Mr. Woodson asked if a house originally met the setback requirements and if the road was widened and it was cut into, what would happen then. Mr. Witt said it would automatically become a nonconforming and but the encroachment would be grandfathered. Mr. Henderson said that he has run into the situation several times with someone wanting to put a porch on their house that could not be done because of the setbacks. Mr. Henderson also stated that he did not see why the homeowners cannot put in handicap ramps because of the growing population of the elderly in the town. Mr. Barbee said public input would be beneficial on this matter. By consensus the Commissioners agreed.
2. Storage units are currently located on Ogden Road in the M2 zoning district, on Main Street in the C2 zoning district, and on Lynch Mill Road in a C1 district. These units are not a by- right use in any district; however, each time an application for storage units has been submitted, they have been approved. In what zoning district should they be a by-right use? Mr. Witt asked if

the PC had a preference and if they wanted to include conditions? Mr. Woodson had a question about turning an old existing building into storage units, like for instance, the former Lane Company. Mr. Witt said that there is potential for that building to be turned into that type of business such as was done with the U-haul building on 12th Street in Lynchburg.

3. Mr. Witt stated that there is confusion between what is permitted in the various zones. He used the example of a coffee shop, which is a by-right use in a C2 zone but also permitted in a M2 Industrial Zone. Also any use not specifically permitted and not prohibited may be permitted with the issuance of a Special Use Permit. Wording to correct these issues was recommended by Mr. Witt, i.e. "not specifically permitted nor specifically prohibited or not already permitted in another zoning district".
4. Off street parking was updated when the parking ordinance was updated but there are some issues that need reviewed. The former Virginia TV and Appliance was provided as an example of a business location that does not have enough parking for the size and number of businesses at this site.
5. Multifamily lots with 3 units require 14,000 sq. ft. of space. If 4-12 units are built then 1 acre is required. Also, in the current ordinance more than 12 units cannot be built per acre. Mr. Henderson stated that a change should be considered because of the limited number of building lots in town. He suggested this limit was instituted because of some town houses that were built on Bedford Avenue and there was a petition that was signed by several residents.
6. Industrialized trailers have been an issue in the past but staff inquired into this and because they are built according to the uniform state wide building code and when they are properly secured, there is nothing that can be done about them being in town. They are no different than a modular home in a residential district.
7. AVOCA and the adult group home located on Avoca Lane are in a M2 zone. Mr. Witt said that he doesn't see where a museum and an adult day care center should be located in an industrial district and suggested this be changed to C2.
8. Vehicle storage isn't listed as a by- right use in any zoning district and Mr. Witt said it was brought to his attention when the cars were taken to the parking lot at the former Lane Company building. He stated that such a use is a reasonable use in the M2 district. Chairman Barbee expressed concerns because of prior issues with cars being stored at the Frazier Lumber Company Property.
9. ID signs for a residential district have to be attached to the building. Examples for this are for Bed & Breakfasts.
10. There are many unopened alleys and streets in Altavista. They are designated but there are no regulations that prevent someone from using them as a driveway without bringing them up to VDOT code. This should at least be considered.
11. Mr. Witt is going to bring a recommendation to TC for the size of advertising signs for a SUP application. The plan is to look at other communities and make the recommendation based on this research.
12. There is no restriction for fencing height in front/side or rear yards in the residential zoning districts. Anything over 6', which is a standard fence height, must have a building permit but Mr. Witt posed the question, 'do we want a 6' fence in a front yard?'

13. The zoning for part of the parking lot at the former AO Smith building- now VTI- on Ogden Road is R1. Mr. Witt suggested that this needs to be corrected to M2.
14. The M2 section contains contradictions, i.e. the statement of intent prohibits residential but then permits residential uses; C2 uses are also permitted in the M2 zone.
15. Mr. Witt suggested adding a boat shop, ATV, and motorcycle shops as these uses are similar to a car/mechanics shop or car dealership.
16. Should smaller lots be considered by the PC? Mr. Witt suggested that since town water and sewer are available to all residential lots a reduction in the lot size to 80' should be considered.
17. Many more definitions are needed.
18. Zoning districts that have no land in town such as RLD (residential low density) and RMHP (residential mobile home park) should be removed from the current ordinance- if permitted by state code.
19. The frontage regulation does not currently require frontage on a street. It can be on an unopened alley, street or any public way.
20. Dance halls, amusement halls, recreation centers have their own code section (Section 14). They aren't included in the zoning ordinance. Mr. Witt stated that this is something that needs to be considered to see why they are not included in the zoning ordinance.
21. A homeless shelter was one idea for the former Mosley Heights Elementary school location. Mr. Witt posed the question, 'should we consider a by-right zoning district for this type use?'
22. Second story housing in the Central Business District, which is located in the DRO and C2 zoning districts, is only permitted with the issuance of a SUP. Should this be a by-right use with conditions?

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01PM

Jerry Barbee, Chairman

Dan Witt, Assistant to the Town Manager