

ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

Date: May 25, 2010

IN Attendance: Council Members Terndrup (Chair), Le Vine, Redmon, and Vena; Town Planner Rex, Clerk Keller, and Amber Marra, of the Northern Virginia Daily.

I. The minutes from the April 27, 2010 meetings were approved as presented.

II. ACTION ITEMS

a. Section 74.5: Alteration and vacation of public rights-of-way

Planner Rex said this will be voted on during the June Council meeting.

b. Section 204: Code revision to bonding

Planner Rex is working on this and had nothing new to report at this time.

c. Refusal to issue zoning permits to any applicant having unresolved complaints on existing projects that are deemed to be “founded” complaints by the town, until such complaints are resolved

Planner Rex is consulting with Town Attorney Neal on this matter.

d. Mandatory installation of individual water meters for all townhouse and duplex units

Planner Rex said this has been an “unwritten” policy for the Town for a number of years, but it is a good idea to adopt this formally. He feels this should be worded so as to say any unit connected vertically is not required to have individual meters. Questions were asked about buildings which share a floor and ceiling and Planner Rex said one meter could serve several units and rates would be based on the size of the meter. It was asked if it is the responsibility of the Town to let the people know about the charges on the water meters and the consensus was that it is not the Town’s responsibility. Planner Rex said he, Town Manager Fauber, and Mayor Taylor had met with Joe Spriggs, Signal Knob Condos, and Mayor Taylor told Mr. Spriggs the issue with the condos would be discussed at the next Council Work Session.

III. Updates

a. Blight abatement: Planner Rex showed pictures of the house on West King Street and explained what Mr. Strother Adams had told the ARB regarding the renovations.

He also showed pictures of the old hotel on Washington and Fort Streets. He wants the Shenandoah County Building Inspector to come and look at it to make sure if it is structurally fit, but he does think this is a candidate for blight abatement as it is a very visible structure in the Town. He does not think this building is in as bad of shape as the others, but he does not want it to get to that point. It was thought this building is occupied and Planner Rex said this will be more difficult to deal with if it is occupied.

The last property discussed is the Campbell property, located on Capon Road and Planner Rex said the property has been cleaned up considerably. The main problem is the lack of Town water and sewer, but he is happy with the progress that has been made. Sewer connections could be brought to the house, but the problem is the cost of the tap fees. He feels the blight problem has been addressed. Following discussion of tap fees, Planner Rex said he will check on the ordinance regarding this to see what rate would apply.

- b. Meeting with Architectural Review Board in June: Council Member Terndrup said it is possible the Ordinance Committee will be phased out in June and he thought it might be intimidating to ask the ARB to meet with the entire Council so he would like to meet with them before the change. Planner Rex said the ARB is planning to walk the Historic District at their next regularly scheduled meeting, but the joint meeting could follow at 6:30 p.m. on June 17. It was said this joint meeting would mainly be a “feedback” session for the ARB.

Council Member Terndrup said he had talked to Gloria Stickley about hosting a meeting of the historic district residents at the Strasburg Museum. Planner Rex said this could possibly be in conjunction with the Enhancement Project Open House. More information will be forthcoming.

IV. Discussion Items

- a. Continuation of sign ordinance:

Permit Process for Permanent Signs: Planner Rex proposed this be changed so that a sign plan is submitted with a Site Plan. This will allow the Planning Commission to review this and make sure it ties in with the surrounding area. This will also force the applicant to think about signs earlier in the process. Nonconformities would need to be addressed before the site plan would be approved. All agreed with this. Sign permits would still be required when the sign is actually put up.

Permit Process for Temporary signs: Planner Rex said these currently require a permit. He gave ideas for these such as a permanent sign must be applied for before a temporary sign is allowed. Also, a business license would be required before a permit is given.

Planner Rex asked what kinds of temporary signs should be allowed in the entrance corridor. It was suggested banners not be over a permanent sign or affixed to the outside of the building. Window signs are currently allowed and there is no time limit, just a size limit. It was discussed the business needs to have some sort of way to advertise and it was not felt you can ban all signs. It was said anything that can be seen from the outside would be considered a sign. If a permanent sign is in place and window signs are used, then no other temporary signs would be allowed.

The committee thought a standard design for directional signs should be in place to help get people to the business. This would eliminate the current hodge-podge of signs in place now. The committee suggested finding out what types of signs would be acceptable to businesses and the use of a marketing consultant could be considered, but it was said the Council would ultimately have to make the

decision. Planner Rex said a marketing person might press for more signs so there should be some middle ground.

In the entrance corridor, the committee suggested not having any temporary signs affixed to the outside of the building, but allows window signs. An “icon” sign could also be allowed, whereby the content could be changed. The look would need to stay the same, but the message could be changed.

The committee discussed how banners are used to advertise big events. Wording was read from the Staunton Code, but not all were in agreement with this. Planner Rex said he would not be opposed to banners if they are used in certain areas where the Town designates. The committee suggested not to allow the banners to become permanent and permits would be required for banners. If banners are allowed, they could be “stickered” as to the date of expiration; if no sticker is present, then staff knows that a permit has not been issued for the sign. The committee said a banner might not be acceptable in the historic district, but may be allowed in other areas of the Town.

Grand Opening signs: What would be allowed? These would be different from those allowed for banners.

Real Estate signs: These are usually a standard size, design, etc. All must be on premise.

Sandwich signs: These should be the only temporary signs permitted in the Historic District.

Suggested Prohibited Signs:

Wind signs: in the entrance corridor and historic district.

Snipe signs: signs on utility poles (yard sale signs)

Roof signs: signs cannot go above the eave line

Pole Signs: should not be allowed anywhere in Town.

Off-premise signs, including billboards: not allowed. VDOT permits any off premise sign along state highways. If the locality does not allow, then VDOT will not.

V. Adjournment

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.