

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN OF VINTON PLANNING COMMISSION  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2008, AT 6 P.M., IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT  
THE VINTON MUNICIPAL BUILDING LOCATED AT 311 SOUTH POLLARD STREET.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bruce Mayer, Chairman  
Joan Drewery, Vice Chairperson  
Dave Jones  
Dawn Michelsen  
Bob Patterson

**STAFF PRESENT:** Anita McMillan, Planning and Zoning Director  
Julie S. Tucei, Planning and Zoning Coordinator  
Consuella Caudill, Interim Town Manager  
Barry Thompson, Treasurer

**WORK SESSION AGENDA**

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Capital Improvement Program FY 2008 - 2012**
- III. Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment for RB Residential Business District**
- IV. Planning Commission Tentative Meeting Dates for April through December 2008**
- V. Other Business**
- VI. Adjournment**

The meeting of the Vinton Planning Commission was called to order at 6 p.m. by Chairman Mayer. All members were present.

Ms. Caudill began the meeting with the presentation of the Capital Improvement Program for 2008 to 2012. She stated that it had been done differently this year by bringing in another staff member, Beth Austin, to help her and Mr. Thompson evaluate the projects and to offer a different perspective to them. Ms. Caudill stated that there were a total of 45 projects submitted this year for funding. The total monetary amount of the requests equaled \$1,296,489, with \$162,000 being in the Utility Fund and \$1,134,489 being in the General Fund. She said there were only three requests in the Utility Fund, and that all three of the requests would be funded. She provided each Commissioner with a list of the Budget Team's prioritized projects. Chairman Mayer asked if Mr. Thompson had gotten the new countertop he had requested in last year's CIP. Mr. Thompson stated that the work in the Treasurer's office had been completed. Ms. Caudill said that some of the projects that have been requested are the second half of some projects that had been funded earlier. One of those was the diesel exhaust removal system for the Fire and EMS. She said that another one was the pool filtration equipment that had been requested by Mary Beth Layman. Ms. Caudill said that they had felt that it was important to look specifically at projects that address health, safety, or welfare issues of employees. She said they thought that projects that fall into that category deserved to have the most consideration for funding. She said they also looked at projects that may have legal mandates now or in the future from the state government. Other projects they considered were ones that would enhance the lives of Vinton's citizens and give them a higher level of service by Town employees. Mr. Thompson said they also tried to apply the funding in an equitable way across the departments. Out of the 45 projects that were submitted, they recommend the projects on the list she had provided to them

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which had nine projects in the General Fund and three in the Utility Fund. Ms. Caudill stated that they tried to keep the figures around previous years' figures for what would be funded, and they had also looked at projected revenues as well. She briefly went over the list of items that were recommended for funding in the General Fund: 1. Technology Escrow/\$10,000; 2. Building Assessment of the Municipal Building, Senior Center, Firehouse, and Public Works/\$20,000; 3. Police Vehicles Lease Program/\$49,784; 4. Town-wide Accounting Computer System Upgrade Lease Purchase/\$50,000; 5. Exhaust Removal System for Fire/\$21,000 (plus previous funding of \$18,000); 6. Replace 2000 Chevrolet Pick-up Truck for Public Works/\$27,000; 7. Farmer's Market Painting of Stage/Restroom Building/\$5,000; 8. Locker Update for Police/\$23,300; 9. Vinton Business Center Sign/\$12,500. Chairman Mayer asked if there was a need for some additional directional signs for the Vinton Business Center. Ms. McMillan said that would wait until the Town as a whole decides what to do about the issue of directional signs. For the Utility Fund, there were only three projects submitted: 1. New Compact Pickup Truck/\$17,500; 2. Replace 1992 Chevrolet Kodiak Dump Truck with (2) 1-1/2 ton/\$89,500; 3. Replace Sewer Video Inspection Camera/\$55,000. Mr. Thompson pointed out on the main list of projects that had been provided in their packets, the replacement of the Health Department's three furnaces will be done. He said it would be moved to the operating budget since that building generates revenues from the rent. Mr. Jones had several questions about the CIP. He inquired about the projects listed on the main list that had zeros in the funding column. Mr. Thompson stated that those projects had been funded already by bond issues. He said bonds had been issued for \$2,750,000 in December. Mr. Jones asked if they would still be able to operate the swimming pool even without the requested funding. Ms. Caudill stated that the request for the pool filtration equipment had been in the CIP for several years. However, closing the pool for one day per week, on Mondays, as they did last year helps with the filtration of the water. Ms. Caudill said the pool will be closed one day per week this year as well. She stated that the pool is always a question mark with Town Council as to whether it will continue to remain open due to its age and need for major repairs. Mr. Jones asked if the pool would be looked at during the building assessment. Ms. Caudill stated that it would not be included in the assessment. Chairman Mayer said he thought it had already been determined that the pool was beyond repairs. Mr. Jones said that he felt that it was something that needed to be looked at differently. He stated that it could not be looked at as a revenue stream. He said it is important to the Town's lower income children. Mr. Jones said it is conveniently located where people can walk to it. Chairman Mayer stated that he thought they had commented last year that the next major project should be the pool. Ms. Drewery agreed that it would not be good to take that away from the people in her neighborhood, as well as other Town neighborhoods. She said the kids would not have anything to do that they could afford. Chairman Mayer said one of the biggest complaints from kids is that they don't have anything to do. Chairman Mayer and Mr. Jones both asked Ms. Caudill to relay the Planning Commission's comments about the importance of the pool to Town Council. Next, Mr. Jones asked about the Walnut Avenue bridge improvement that used to be listed in the CIP. Mr. Thompson stated that it had been moved to VDOT revenue sharing fund and is now listed in VDOT's six year plan. He assured Mr. Jones that it had not been removed and forgotten. Lastly, Mr. Jones said the next issue he was going to talk about was very important to him and that the Town had made a mistake by not fixing it sooner. He felt that the storm sewer system at Lee and Pollard and Lee and Poplar need to be fixed. He stated that water runs across Pollard during rains and causes a dangerous situation, especially in the winter. He said Council once considered reworking the downtown storm sewer system, but due to cost, it was removed when the actual work was done. Ms. McMillan stated that, on an annual basis, under the

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stormwater requirements they make repairs to different sections of the Town. Lastly, Mr. Jones recommended that the Post Office be moved out of the downtown. He suggested that they consider relocating it to the former Winn Dixie parking lot. He said people don't come to the post office and then go shopping downtown. Chairman Mayer stated that that particular issue did not relate to the CIP, but that perhaps they could consider it for the Comprehensive Plan update. He asked for a motion on the CIP items, with the additions as noted by the Commission. A motion to recommend approval with the additions was made by Mr. Jones, and seconded by Mr. Patterson. A roll call vote was taken and all members voted in favor of the motion. Ms. McMillan mentioned that the Planning and Zoning Department had finally gotten a new vehicle, which had been in the CIP for several years but was never funded until last year. The Commission then took a short break to tour the renovated Treasurer's office.

The next item on the agenda was the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment for the RB Residential Business District. Ms. McMillan stated that the Town Council feels that the Planning Commission needs to make a decision on the special use permit for duplexes. She mentioned that she had received some calls from Council members regarding this issue. Chairman asked how many calls she had received from Council members. Ms. McMillan stated that one Council member had called and one had stopped by the office to inquire about the status of the request. She also said that the Council members mentioned that they had received phone calls from a citizen about the issue. Ms. McMillan informed him that in their packets they had been given information on all the uses currently located in the RB zoning district. Chairman Mayer stated that, when the citizen called him about the request, the citizen told him that he had already talked to a Council member and that the issue was going to be approved. Mr. Jones stated that he thought Mr. Cranwell would have jumped at the chance to prove it had been a duplex all along so he wouldn't have to go through this process. Chairman Mayer said he probably was not able to prove it. Ms. McMillan said she did ask a Town meter reader who has worked for the Town for over 30 years, and he told her that it was a single family house all these years and was owned by an elderly couple. She stated that he said that, to his knowledge, it had never been a duplex. Chairman Mayer mentioned that a duplex doesn't have to have two electric meters. Mr. Jones said that Mr. Cranwell could've converted the house to a duplex and the Town would have never known unless a complaint was received. Chairman Mayer suggested that they study the lot size for duplexes and try to come up with a recommendation for Council tonight. He mentioned that they may want to hold off on studying the rest of the RB uses when they have more time to look at it. Mr. Jones said the report on the RB uses was a lot more than he expected. He said he was looking for a report that covered the area from Kroger down to Precision Fabrics Group. He said he had come to the conclusion that four houses would be involved in that area. Ms. McMillan pointed out that some of the area that Mr. Jones was referring to is zoned GB General Business. She pointed out on the zoning map that there are really only two blocks that would be affected in the area of Mr. Cranwell's property. They discussed the current uses of properties in that area. Chairman Mayer mentioned that the Town's RB District is truly a buffer between the busy thoroughfares and neighborhoods which won't be going anywhere—those neighborhoods are permanent. He said the buffer is important to those neighborhoods. He added that the report was well done because it addresses the whole RB District. Ms. McMillan mentioned that there is interest by a citizen in rezoning the property at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Virginia Avenue from RB to GB for a restaurant. They briefly looked over the RB uses and again mentioned the need to go over those to see what revisions need to be made to them. Ms. McMillan mentioned that in their packets she had given them the comparable ordinances from Roanoke County and

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Roanoke City for them to review. Ms. McMillan suggested that they make a decision on the duplex issue tonight. Chairman Mayer agreed that they needed to do that. He reminded them that there are reasons for the lot size requirements for duplexes—to keep the smaller yards from being cluttered with items that belong to the tenants. Chairman Mayer felt that the person who had requested this change to the ordinance has reasonable use of his property as it is now. Mr. Jones asked if the property could be used as an office with a residence also. Ms. McMillan said it could be used that way and that the property owner had been informed of that possibility. Ms. Tucei also mentioned that a variance could be applied for to have the duplex. Chairman Mayer said he may have a difficult time proving the hardship. He stated that they needed to communicate to Town Council that there are still a lot of things that can be done with the property. The Commissioners felt that the size requirements had come from Town Council and to change them now would be back-peddling on it. Mr. Jones mentioned that Council is somewhat different than when they began. He said they should just leave it like it is and asked if staff could hire a professional to look at RB regulations and give recommendations to the Commission on it. Ms. McMillan said she could ask the consultant, Jon Weersing, to review the RB District to see what his recommendations would be for it. Chairman Mayer agreed that they need an expert to look at the RB District, but that they needed to make a decision about the duplex issue now. He said he thought it would be difficult to have the special use permit hearings and to know what would be fair as far as deciding the outcomes on a case-by-case basis. He said they really need to work on the phrasing of this to Town Council. Chairman Mayer stated that they had originally suggested to Council that the lot size be 10,000 square feet, but Council had decided it should be 12,000 square feet. He also mentioned that it was set-up as a transitional area where residential is not the most desired use; therefore, they don't want to encourage it. He mentioned that if the lot size were changed to 7000 square feet for a special use permit, they could have about 45 single family houses that could apply for a special use permit to convert to duplexes. He said this would be their recommendation and saw no point in having a public hearing on it as they would probably not be changing their decision. Ms. McMillan said she could draft something for them to be presented to Town Council. Chairman Mayer mentioned that there is a twelve year history of increases to the lot size required for duplexes. Mr. Jones again suggested that they hire a consultant to help with this issue and the general review of the RB uses. Ms. McMillan said that, at the beginning of next year, they will need to also start reviewing the comprehensive plan again. She said she will draft something for them about the duplex issue and will email it to them for review before it is sent to Town Council. Chairman Mayer said they should also make some sort of a motion on it tonight. Ms. McMillan mentioned that the Mayor would also like them to look at regulations for parking areas for duplexes so developers can't just pave the whole yard or pave right up to the street. She said it would help with stormwater runoff as well. Ms. McMillan also mentioned that they might need to look at the option of providing for mother-in-law apartments for people who take care of their elderly parents. Chairman Mayer asked for a motion on the RB District duplex requirements. Ms. Drewery made a motion that they leave the requirements as is with the comments that they have it checked by someone to see if it is reasonable. Chairman Mayer reminded them that Ms. McMillan will draft their official response to Town Council and email it to each of them to review before it is sent to Council. Mr. Jones seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and all members voted in favor of the motion. Chairman Mayer reminded Ms. McMillan to call Mr. Weersing as soon as possible.

The Planning Commission set their next meeting date as May 7, 2008. Ms. McMillan mentioned that there might be two applications for special use permits submitted between now and then. One would be for

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additional mini-warehouses for Charles McCarty and the other would be for Robert Young for an impound lot.

In other business, Ms. McMillan mentioned some upcoming events including Clean Valley Day (April 5<sup>th</sup>), Spring Clean-up Week (April 7<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup>), Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days (May 4<sup>th</sup>, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, November 2<sup>nd</sup>), and Arbor Day (April 18<sup>th</sup>). Ms. Tucei also mentioned the upcoming Relay for Life (April 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>). With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Ms. Michelsen and a second by Mr. Jones at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anita McMillan  
Planning Commission Secretary