



**CITY OF FREDERICKSBURG
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
February 26, 2020
7:30 p.m.
715 Princess Anne Street
Council Chambers**

You may view and listen to the meeting in its entirety by going to the Planning Commission page on the City's website:

<https://amsva.wistia.com/medias/j6chddvc4g>

The Agenda, Staff Report, Applications and Supporting Documents are also available on the Planning Commission page.

MEMBERS

Rene Rodriguez, Chairman
Steve Slominski, Vice-Chairman
David Durham (telephonically)
Kenneth Gantt
Chris Hornung
Tom O'Toole
Jim Pates (absent)

CITY STAFF

Chuck Johnston, Director,
Planning and Building Dept.
Mike Craig, Senior Planner
Susanna Finn, Community Development
Planner
Cathy Eckles, Administrative Assistant

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and explained meeting procedures for the public, as well as expected decorum during public comment.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Six members present, including Mr. Durham by telephone. Mr. Pates was absent.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Hornung moved for approval of the agenda as submitted. Mr. Slominski seconded.

Motion passed 6-0-1

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 12, 2020

Mr. Gantt moved for approval of the minutes as submitted. Chairman Rodriguez seconded.

Motion passed 6-0-1.

6. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There were no conflicts of interest reported.

7. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Area 7 Small Area Plan - The City of Fredericksburg proposes to amend Chapter 10 Land Use Plan and Chapter 11 Planning Areas of the City's Comprehensive Plan to adopt the Area 7 Small Area Plan. The amendment to Chapter 10 would update the land use transects and apply them to Small Area Plan 7 in the General Land Use Plan. The amendment to Chapter 11 would create an expanded Small Area Plan for planning area 7, Downtown, with land use, infrastructure, and transportation policies.

Ms. Finn reviewed the staff presentation along with a Power Point (Attachment A) and noted staff recommended the Commissioners hold today's public hearing open until the Commission's March 25, 2020 meeting.

Mr. O'Toole questioned the height calculations in the transect zones and how stories are defined. Ms. Finn said the zoning code would give the details and this was more of an illustrative description. Mr. Craig said that height is expressed in number of stories but that there are also maximum height limits listed in feet.

Mr. Durham asked about how the character of infill housing was addressed. Ms. Finn said this was discussed on pg. 11(7)-4, T-3, where it is of the most concern. This encourages the creation of neighborhood pattern books or character districts for neighborhood residents to craft their own regulations.

Ms. Finn discussed staff's attendance at the February 20 Darbytown Civic Association meeting to specifically talk about the neighborhoods' concerns regarding Trestle Park and bathrooms for the Train Station.

Chairman Rodriguez discussed his concerns and suggestions for rewording of various sections of the Plan: namely the description of the riverfront in the challenges section and the mention of swaths of asphalt. Mr. Craig explained the plan is to prioritize the City's walkable nature and to emphasize meaningful open spaces in redevelopment.

Chairman Rodriguez questioned the protection of historic resources without dictating architectural style or limiting creativity. Ms. Finn said the Architectural Review Board will ensure that nothing is inappropriate.

Chairman Rodriguez asked who will pay for improvements within the designated walkable urban places within the Plan, such as improving existing alleys. Mr. Craig said that these sections envision the future condition of these areas. The diagrams will be used to craft infill regulations to guide the redevelopment of the area whether undertaken by the City through capital improvements planning or by the landowner if they seek to redevelop their property. He discussed the William Street walkable corridor and changes suggested to reconfigure to better separate the pedestrian and vehicle realms. Chairman Rodriguez asked about public comment from property owners along William Street.

Chairman Rodriguez requested stronger language about building a parking deck shown in the plan in the Train Station area. He also stated that text should be added that the Executive Center needs to be more accessible to make handicap voting more accessible.

Mr. Durham questioned the figures on pgs. 11(7)-7 and 11(7)-8 regarding improvements to existing crosswalks. He asked about crafting a general policy to apply pedestrian improvements at each intersection in the core. Mr. Craig stated that this plan prioritizes certain intersections where pedestrian improvements will serve the highest need. Ms. Finn noted that pg. 11(7)-23 shows the key intersections that were called out to the City of particular concern. Mr. Durham agreed that those were key intersections and of the most immediate need, but didn't want the remaining intersections to get lost.

Mr. Hornung noted he received calls regarding Trestle Park questioning specific details about what may be happening there. Citizens are concerned regarding the mention of the Park possibly including bathrooms and bike parking space (pg. 11(7)-14.) Mr. Craig said that including that text in the discussion of what happens inside the square colored green on that page was confusing and that it would be removed. He said nothing would change in the open space and on pg. 11(7)-25 it shows the possible expansion of the train station, which will not encroach on Trestle Park (south of the existing concrete wall).

Mr. Slominski asked about the volume of traffic through the Downtown core. Mr. Craig stated that the current system was designed in the 1960s when there were no bypasses around downtown to facilitate the movement of vehicles quickly through the Downtown. The goal before the bypasses was to move traffic through the City as fast as possible. This is no longer the situation and while he didn't have traffic volume numbers for comparison, the policy of the City over the last few years has been to remove some of the infrastructure like stop lights that were a part of that system but are no longer justified.

Chairman Rodriguez questioned the proposed roundabouts on Lafayette Boulevard and their effect on truck traffic. Mr. Craig said they would check on the design and report back.

Chairman Rodriguez opened the public hearing.

Ed Sandtner, 132 Caroline Street: Spoke regarding three areas of concern: The Darbytown residents feel the area north of the concrete wall should be part of Trestle Park and they are concerned with plans to use this area for expansion of the train station, public restrooms, and bike storage racks. He felt viable solutions are to take back the old 1910 train station, put the bike storage racks in the City lot between Caroline Street and Sophia Street, and possibly use self-cleaning toilets. He also spoke about his concern for a parking deck on the City lot (between Caroline and Sophia Streets) and felt it will wall off Darbytown.

Rebecca Hanmer, 138 Caroline Street: Spoke regarding the desire of Darbytown area residents to designate the green area by the Train Station as Trestle Park. She said the Darbytown Civic Association had filed a petition with the City to preserve the green space and urged permanent protection of the park. Ms. Hamner brought an updated petition with revised signature pages (Attachment B). She said the Association disagreed with the City's plans to use the space north of the concrete wall and feels this area should be preserved with Trestle Park. She said the Darbytown Civic Association felt it should be consulted on all train expansion plans as it is right on its doorstep.

Maureen Widic, 119 Caroline Street: Spoke regarding concerns that the train station development area is going to significantly encroach on Darbytown. She agreed with Mr. Sandtner that the City should look at taking back the old 1910 train station and make an adaptive reuse of the building.

Frank Widic, 119 Caroline Street: Spoke regarding meetings between the Darbytown Civic Association and members of the City Council, Planning Department, Transportation Department, and Mayor Greenlaw to discuss amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and its effect on the future of the Darbytown area. He said the Darbytown Civic Association seeks to have it included in all future plans for their area in order to preserve Trestle Park.

Linda Coker, 308 Caroline Street: Spoke regarding Darbytown residents' efforts to keep this green space by the Train Station, not only for those in the neighborhood but the large amounts of non-Darbytown residents who also enjoy the use of it as a park.

Mary Deadman, 214 Princess Anne Street: Spoke in opposition regarding the proposal to make the 200-400 portion of Princess Anne Street two-way traffic. She believes this will have an adverse effect on the safety and lifestyle of this area by bringing more traffic, negatively impacting parking, and making exits from driveways too difficult.

Paula Ching, 132 Caroline Street: Spoke in opposition to public restrooms and bike storage racks being located by Trestle Park. She believes the solution is to employ standalone toilets, put the bike storage racks in the City lot, and adaptive reuse of the old 1910 train station.

Amy Olney, 601 Amelia Street: Spoke regarding her concerns about the traffic in the Winchester Street and Amelia Street area due to the William Square/Liberty Place project. She urged the City to change Amelia and William Streets to two-way traffic to alleviate the issues.

Forrest Dickinson, 300 Caroline Street: Spoke in opposition to the proposal of putting public restrooms in the Train Station area.

Ann Little, 726 William Street: Spoke regarding her approval of the Comprehensive Plan amendments; urged the City to convert William Street to two-way traffic; and encouraged bump-outs for stormwater mitigation with trees and shrubs for traffic calming. Ms. Little expressed her concerns about paving alleys because adding impervious surface increases stormwater. She requested wording be added to the Plan regarding preserving existing trees wherever possible. Her final concern was that the downtown street lights should be fixed to allow additional lighting to be plugged in.

Adam Lynch, Friends of the Rappahannock, 3219 Fall Hill Avenue: Spoke in support of the City's proposed amendments to the Area 7 plan. He discussed the three best areas of the plan making this plan river friendly: (1) expanded uplands open space which helps stormwater management; (2) expanded Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to encourage responsible development by creating density incentives in targeted areas while preserving our historic and environmentally sensitive areas; and (3) the elimination of artificial density caps within the T-5 transect zone in the historic district to encourage sustainable growth.

Matt Kelly, 1309 Hanover Street: Spoke in his capacity as the VRE Operations committee member for the City and how the plan relates to the train station. Mr. Kelly discussed the three

components: current improvements, State initiatives, and the DC to RVA rail plan (previously called the high speed rail). He clarified that the current station platform is owned by CSX and will stay within the boundaries of what they own. He further discussed this is not a City project, it is a state/federal project and funded by them.

Rupert Farley, 1305 Caroline Street: Spoke regarding his approval of Area Plan 7, which embraces mass transit. However, he was against the following aspects of the plan: expanding parking in the train station area, which discourages mass transit; preserving current community densities as that doesn't benefit the City with neighborhood character preservation, he would instead recommend increasing densities to permit more sustainable living; and the plans for beacons on the riverfront.

Jon Gerlach, 809 Charlotte Street: Spoke regarding the cutting edge nature of the Area 7 plan and recommended that the public hearing be kept open for further public input.

Written statements were received from Pete Morelewicz, 222 Princess Anne Street and Denise Malczewski, 220 Princess Anne Street (Attachments C and D, respectively).

No further public comments were made. Chairman Rodriguez closed the public hearing.

Mr. Hornung motioned to keep the public hearing open until the Planning Commission's March 25, 2020 meeting. Mr. Gantt seconded the motion.

Mr. Durham spoke regarding the Darbytown residents' desire to interact formally with planning staff in any future train station developments.

Motion passed 6-0-1.

Chairman Rodriguez recommended that the train station committee meet prior to the March 25, 2020 Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Gantt questioned whether all wording regarding public restrooms and bike storage racks would be stricken from the plan. Mr. Craig stated it would be stricken from the Land Use part of the Plan (pg. 11(7)-14), but will remain in the Train Station Expansion section of the plan (pg. 11(7)-26) to clearly differentiate the area of the block to be used as a green space and the area devoted to train station improvements. Mr. Hornung noted that the language should be kept general in order to keep the community involved and have time to work on a solution to the public restroom issue. Ms. Finn said that this issue actually relates more to the train expansion, which will be a state or federal project.

8. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There no public speakers.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Appoint Commissioner to Small Area Plans Consultant RFP Review Committee. The Chairman appointed Mr. Gantt.

B. Create subcommittee for FY2021 Capital Improvement Plan recommendations. Mr. Hornung nominated Mr. Gantt and Mr. Durham, who both agreed to serve. This was approved by the consensus of the Commission. Mr. Johnston noted that the FY21 Capital Improvement Plan will be presented to the Commission at its March 25 meeting.

C. Planning Commissioner Comments

Mr. Durham discussed a letter to the Free Lance-Star editor subsequent to the February 12, 2020 Planning Commission meeting, which took several Commission members to task on a vote and incorrectly stated that Mr. Gantt had voted negatively in a matter. Mr. Durham noted that Mr. Gantt was not present at that meeting and Mr. Durham wanted that on the record. (Attachment E)

Mr. O'Toole asked about the status of the Veterans Administration Clinic applications. Mr. Johnston reviewed the process and timeline. He noted that one of the submissions by Rappahannock HP, LLC involved a rezoning application that is not complete and will not be forwarded to the Commission at this time. Mr. O'Toole asked if the incompleteness affected this property's VA Application. Mr. Johnston noted that if the land use issues are not resolved before the final decision in July or August, the VA will not consider this property.

D. Planning Director Comments

Mr. Johnston noted that at the Commission's March 11, 2020 meeting, the following items will be considered:

- Special Use Permit public hearing for a retail use at 915 Lafayette Boulevard: Eufloria Floral;
- Creative Maker District text amendments public hearing;
- Creative Maker District rezoning public hearing;
- Parking text amendments public hearing; and
- Residential Definitions text amendments public hearing.

A work session on the Area 1 and 2 Small Area Plans is now scheduled for March 25 .

Mr. Johnston said the Commission's March 25, 2020 meeting will continue the Area 7 public hearing.

Chairman Rodriguez asked for staff to contact the property owners on William Street, between Littlepage Street and Kenmore Avenue, regarding the Downtown Plan proposals for this area to encourage these property owners to make any comments. Mr. Craig noted that staff would do that.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items to be discussed, the Planning Commission adjourned at 9:17 pm.

Next meeting is March 11, 2020.

Rene Rodriguez, Chairman