

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
MAY 16, 2022

The Planning Commission for the City of Covington meet on Monday, May 16, 2022 at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall located at 333 W. Locust Street, Covington, Virginia.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tad Robertson, with the following members present: Wayne Lamb, Jerry Morgan, Max Shawver and Mike Wickline. In attendance was Krystal Onaitis, Covington City Manager.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Robertson asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of February 22, 2022. There were no changes or additions to the minutes. Mr. Shawver made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Morgan. The minutes were approved.

UPDATES ON ACTIVE DEVELOPMENTS

Patrick Madigan, Covington Director of Public Works/Interim Building Official gave an update of projects in the City.

Mr. Madigan and Michael Mines, Maintenance Technician & Mechanic/Deputy Interim Building Official have completed 21 inspections and approved 31 permits. The Maple Avenue Phase 3 project has been approved by VDOT. This phase is from the corner of Main and Maple to Riverside. The contractors and advertisement have also been approved. There is a due date that work must begin by October 1, 2022 for funds to be used in the project. The bid will go out soon. The project will be for new sidewalks, utility relocation, street lamps and other improvements. It will depend on the bids if additional work can go past Riverside to the Jackson River.

The old People's bank building on Main Street has been purchased and work for renovation is scheduled to begin soon. The construction at the new Wendy's restaurant has begun. There have been many plans approved with construction and E & S (Erosion and Sediment). Mr. Madigan and Mr. Mines are working with the franchise company and property owners on this new build. They have poured footings. They are targeting July 4, 2022 to open. The current Wendy's building will be repurposed. Ms. Onaitis stated that the City will keep a watch on the traffic count/flow. The owners will market it as commercial.

There have been CO Certificates of Occupancies for: Hope Counseling, CSB and the Mexican Restaurant on Main Street (they are waiting on VDH and ABC permitting). T-Mobile will be renovating soon and have requested a trailer nearby their business.

Ms. Onaitis advised that the former Gordman's building on Main Street, which is the Sparkle project, has a developer that has helped develop downtown White Sulphur Springs, WV. The building is being maintained by a grant from the Alleghany Foundation. The developer will work to keep the historic facade such as possibly bringing back the windows on the front of the upstairs of the building from around the 1960's.

The Timmons Group has helped with projects such as the traffic calming. Ms. Onaitis noted that there have been requests from local organizations for crosswalks. Crosswalks are approximately \$60,000 for signage, lighting, and to be ADA-Americans with Disabilities Act compliant. There is a possible cost share that the City could have with a business. There can be too many crosswalks that can hinder traffic flow. Ms. Onaitis thanked Mr. Madigan and Mr. Mines for all they are doing for the Development Services office. They are continuing to take classes.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Onaitis is the Interim Zoning Administrator, she spoke about some of the recent Zoning Applications that she has received. Mr. Robertson stated that the applications should be reviewed on a case by case basis. That

PLANNING COMMISSION
MAY 16, 2022

there are reasons to have residential and business districts. The City should not get into spot zoning. Mr. Morgan stated that just because a permit may be denied for that location, they can apply to put it somewhere else in the City. Some businesses are grandfathered. There needs to be many things considered on the applications such as: parking (work vehicle/employee/customer), traffic and safety. The planning commission will review any new applications at their meetings. If they do several at a time it will be more cost effective for the applicants.

Ms. Onaitis stated that the new Alleghany County Administrator, Reid Walters, may want to review the Comp Plan with the City. Mr. Morgan meet with the County on the last review and it is a clearer plan than the previous one. Mr. Robertson would like to keep the Comp Plan on the agenda each month they meet.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The Ordinance O-20-14 in reference to amending and reenacting certain sections of appendix B, Zoning, of the City Code to repeal Chapter 36, signs was review by the former Building Official and the City Attorney, Mark Popovich. Mr. Popovich had sent his changes and the Planning Commission has review. There was a minor typo/rewording of a sentence on page 2 Article VI. There was a motion by Mr. Wickline and seconded by Mr. Morgan to accept this Ordinance with the typo/sentence change, all members agreed by consent.

The Ordinance 0-20-13 in reference to amending and reenacting certain sections of Appendix A, Subdivisions, of the Code of the City of Covington, was review by the former Building Official and the City Attorney, Mark Popovich. Mr. Popovich had sent his changes and the Planning Commission has review. There was a motion by Mr. Wickline and seconded by Mr. Lamb to approve this Ordinance, all members agreed by consent.

Mr. Robertson asked about the status of the hiring process for Development Services office. Ms. Onaitis stated that the City is still in a recruitment process for building and inspections. The Administrative Secretary could be assisted by the City Manager's office, or there is an advertisement for hiring an employee that will be in the Citizen Services office by the side door of City Hall.

Mr. Wickline spoke about applications for zoning to be emailed with a zoning map or other information to Planning Commission members. That way they could do their homework before a meeting.

Mr. Chris Pyle was in the audience, he spoke about a zoning application to renovate the former Dr. Powell's office into apartments. Mr. Robertson said they would not approve or disapprove this request today and asked about parking. Mr. Pyle stated that he would move a fence in the back and it would allow 6-8 cars, he would leave the garage. There is also a driveway in the front of the house on the side.

With no further business to be addressed by the Commission, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mr. Wickline and seconded by Mr. Shawver.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca B. Nuckols, Interim Planning Commission Secretary