

The Town of Washington

"THE FIRST WASHINGTON OF ALL"

May 23, 2021

1:00 p.m.

APPROVED Work Session Minutes

- CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Fred Catlin opened the meeting at 1:02 p.m. Council members Jean Goodine, Mary Ann Kuhn, Patrick O'Connell, Gail Swift and Joe Whited were present. Brad Schneider arrived at 1:26 p.m. Town Attorney John Bennett and Town Clerk Barbara Batson were present.

Mayor Catlin motioned to open the special work session and Ms. Kuhn seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Ms. Goodine voted "yes"

Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"

Mr. Whited voted "yes"

Ms. Kuhn voted "yes"

Ms. Swift voted "yes"

Mayor Catlin voted "yes"

And the motion passed 6-0 with Mr. Schneider absent.

Chairwoman Caroline Anstey motioned to open the Planning Commission meeting at 1:04 p.m. and Jeanne Kauffmann seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Beard voted "yes"

Ms. Kauffmann voted "yes"

Ms. DeSarno voted "yes"

Ms. Anstey voted "yes"

And the motion passed 4-0 with Constance Bruce absent.

Ms. Anstey motioned to have Town Council and the Planning Commission meet jointly at such times as may be agreed, to review, hold any required public hearings and act upon, in their respective capacities, the application of Black Kettle LLC for a Special Use Permit for a Planned Unit Development known as Rush River Commons; provided, if there not be a quorum of either body at any such meeting, the body with a quorum present may continue with its meeting singly and take such lawful actions singly, as it may determine; and provided further, the adoption of this motion shall not diminish each body's option to meet singly or lawful requirements for it to act singly in relation to the application. Ms. Kauffman seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Beard voted "yes"

Ms. Kauffmann voted "yes"

Ms. DeSarno voted "yes"

Ms. Anstey voted "yes"

And the motion passed 4-0 with Constance Bruce absent.

Chuck Akre, Black Kettle property owner and creator of Rush River Commons, gave a presentation of the Rush River Commons project. He shared that he had purchased the property 1½ years ago and began asking Town residents what they would like to see done with the property. He has had several discussions with groups and conducted a couple of Zoom meetings to get other people's opinions. There is a portion of the property that is outside the Town's boundary line. He decided to move forward with Phase I only because he was having challenges getting a boundary line approval from the County for Phase II. They identified 11 wetlands on the property and have included these in the design to make an asset of the wetlands. Phase I will include walking paths, a commercial building, 8 townhomes, and 20 apartments. The plan includes laying a pad for the food pantry to build upon. The food pantry would then own the building. The housing units will be developed as affordable housing. The site will include underground stormwater storage, stormwater retention ponds and retention walls to avoid flooding.

Ms. Anstey said the building plans show two-story housing units but the packet says they will be three stories. Mr. Akre responded they will be two stories. She also commented that the commercial building backs to Warren Ave and will be seen from the road when entering Town. She asked if there will be landscaping on the back side of the building facing the road. Mr. Akre responded that he is sensitive to the issue and there will be landscaping done in that area.

Ms. Kauffmann asked if the rental housing would be affordable housing in perpetuity. Mr. Akre said if they receive federal funding there is a requirement that affordable housing rates be in effect for thirty years. Ms. Kauffman asked if there would be an agreement that the rentals would remain affordable housing if private funds were used. Mr. Akre said that was their intention but there was no formal agreement.

Mr. Beard asked if there would be a homeowner's association (HOA). Mr. Akre said there would be some sort of HOA that would be responsible for maintaining the property.

Ms. DeSarno asked if the developers were planning on widening Leggett Lane. Mr. Akre stated there was no plan to widen it but they would adhere to whatever Town ordinances were regarding this topic.

Ms. Anstey asked if the maintenance plan would be finalized when Black Kettle LLC submitted the final plan and Mr. Akre said it would.

Ms. Goodine asked for clarification on what businesses would be in the commercial building. Mr. Akre replied the second floor would be office space. The lower level may have a retail store with fresh food and sundries, perhaps a coffee and sandwich shop or a shared meeting space. There is not a firm plan for occupants yet.

Brad Schneider joined the meeting at 1:26 p.m.

Mr. Whited expressed his hope that the developer would be mindful that the Town would not like a big-box store in the building.

Ms. Swift commented that as a naturalist she wanted to thank the developer for protecting the wetlands. Mr. Akre said there are three types of wetlands, forested, emergent, and constructural.

Ms. Kuhn asked how long the project would take from start to finish. Mr. Akre did not have an estimate, he mentioned that building costs are up 40%. The food pantry's lease runs out in August of 2022 and he hopes to have the pad for their building completed before then. She also asked if there would be any County office space in the building and Mr. Akre said there was not. He said there was a possibility of flexible work space.

Mayor Catlin said he felt the project was a benefit to the Town. He mentioned a recent study that showed the disparity between the medium price of housing and medium income. In this study Rappahannock had the greatest disparity of over \$20,000. Mayor Catlin asked why were there only 20 or 24 units in the plan. Mr. Akre said the site space for Phase I is very tight and he doesn't know if any additional housing units would fit. He said there was a possibility of more housing in Phase II. Mayor Catlin also mentioned further study would be needed to determine if Leggett Lane should remain a private road or if it needed to be turned over to VDOT based on the amount of expected traffic. Mayor Catlin also noted that the plans showed setbacks but the application was requesting no setbacks. He asked Mr. Bennett to work with Mr. Stephen Plescow on this topic. He also shared that the Comp Plan calls for more users on the wastewater system to help it run more economically.

John Sullivan, Town resident and former mayor, asked what demand would Phase I put on the wastewater system. Mr. Schneider responded that the Town can run 65,000 gallons a day and was currently running 23,000 gallons on average. He feels there is sufficient capacity for Phase I. He said that if a commercial kitchen was in the plans for Phase II that would require further consideration.

Gary Aichele, county resident, said this was the first plan he's seen that is a reasonable development that's called for in the county comp plan. He feels the population in the county has declined, especially families with young children. The housing proposed would begin to help encourage young families back to the county.

Ms. Anstey asked how long the back of the commercial building will be and Mr. Akre responded 120 feet. Mr. Bennett suggested making the back of the building look the same as the front.

Mr. Whited asked how many days did the Town have to consider the application. Mr. Bennett replied, 90 days.

Ms. Anstey motioned to continue the joint work session to June 12 and Ms. Kauffmann seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Beard voted "yes"

Ms. DeSarno voted "yes"

Ms. Kauffmann voted "yes"

Ms. Anstey voted "yes"

And the motion passed 4-0 with Constance Bruce absent.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Catlin made a motion to continue the joint work session to June 12 and Ms. Swift seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Ms. Goodine voted “yes”
Mr. O’Connell voted “yes”
Ms. Swift voted “yes”
Mayor Catlin voted “yes”
And the motion passed 7-0.

Ms. Kuhn voted “yes”
Mr. Schneider voted “yes”
Mr. Whited voted “yes”

THE NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL IS
June 14, 2021

Barbara Batson, Town Clerk