**Town of Washington**

**Planning Commission Meeting**

**Monday February 28, 2022**

**Approved Minutes**

In attendance: Drew Beard, Judy DeSarno, Caroline Anstey, Jeanne Kauffmann and Constance Bruce. Zoning Administrator Steve Gyurisin was also in attendance.

Chair Caroline Anstey opened the meeting at 7:00 PM. Caroline moved to the first order of business which was the approval of the minutes from the January meeting. Judy moved to approve the minutes, Jeanne seconded, and all voted in favor. Caroline then moved to the second order of business, adopting the agenda for the evening. Judy moved. Jeanne seconded. All voted in favor.

Old Business

1. Pool Ordinance

Caroline began with the first item of Old Business which was a review of the memorandum regarding a Town pool ordinance drafted by the Zoning Administrator, Steve Gyurisin. Caroline thanked Steve for his thorough and comprehensive memorandum on the topic and made two suggestions:

1. Specifically prohibit the draining of chlorinated water into the Town water system.
2. Stipulate that pool lighting conform to Dark Skies requirements

Steve agreed with both recommendations and stressed that the manner and location of disposal for discharged pool water should be spelled out specifically in the ordinance.

Drew recommended that visibility from adjoining properties be clarified to reflect street level, as several properties in Town will have second story sightlines over any fencing. Drew also raised the question of defining front and backyards, given some of the unusually sized lots in Town. Steve clarified that the narrowest portion of the lot is considered front.

Jeanne recommended that we also define “above ground pools” in the ordinance to be thorough.

Finally, Caroline read aloud the list of “Pool Standards” included in the memorandum to ensure all issues and questions had been addressed among the Planning Commission. All members agreed afterward that they had.

Caroline asked about next steps for proposing the ordinance. Steve clarified that we would forward the draft ordinance to Town Council for review and then hold a joint public hearing. Caroline recommended that we finalize the draft ordinance and get it to the Town Council before their meeting on March 14.

Judy moved that we accept the draft pool zoning ordinance revisions with the amendments agreed upon at the meeting and forward the final draft to Town Council. Jeanne seconded. All voted in favor.

1. Comp Plan Next Steps

Caroline suggested that the Planning Commission begin considering the needed revisions to the existing Comp Plan before moving further with any additional public hearings and discussion. Judy volunteered to update demographic data. Steve indicated that significant updates needed to be made to the existing zoning ordinances as a part of Comp Plan revisions.

Caroline emphasized that the existing Comp Plan has plenty of “vision” but not the concrete guidance (i.e. ordinances) to help Town achieve its goals.

Caroline asked Steve for clarification on next steps for the Comp Plan. He indicated that we should notify Town Council of our initial review and intention to make changes and that our initial review has met the intent of the code. Next steps will be actual recommendations to Town Council, but there is no specific requirement to update the Comp Plan nor time limit for delivering a final, revised plan.

Caroline said that, given Steve’s guidance and the continuing evolution of significant Town projects (i.e. boundary line adjustment), the Planning Commission should perhaps concentrate on these and other issues since their resolution will factor prominently into a revised Comp Plan.

Caroline asked Steve to prepare a statement for Town Council regarding the Planning Commissions intended next steps with the Comp Plan.

New Business

1. Discussion of Proposed Solar Ordinance

Constance updated the Planning Commission on her investigation with Drew regarding solar power initiatives for Town. She emphasized that there were lots of good model ordinances available for resources and that the state, with its goal of net zero by 2050, had empowered local governments and their citizens to aggressively pursue a variety of alternative energy infrastructure projects like public charging stations, roof-based solar, shared solar facilities, etc. The Planning Commission therefore needs to decide how wide-ranging it wants our initial solar ordinance to be.

Drew reiterated Constance’s findings and stated that an ordinance covering solar panels, given their growing popularity and availability, was a good place to start. He wondered whether this initial ordinance needed to cover solar facilities given their limited feasibility in town and the more onerous nature of drafting such an ordinance.

Caroline suggested the Planning Commission focus on personal solar initially while also including a broad discussion of alternative energy/carbon reduction initiatives and goals in the revised Comp Plan. Steve recommended using resources available from the Piedmont Environmental Council for such research.

Caroline mentioned that Town Council’s motivation for requesting the Planning Commission explore an ordinance for solar panels had a lot to do with the visual distraction of roof-based solar and concerns about its impact on the historic nature of Town. She said she anticipates some tension among Town citizens over the installation of solar panels.

Drew agreed that such issues were likely and stressed that the ARB would need to be creative in how they managed the issue. He also said that he believed that, given the state’s broad support for such initiatives, it would be difficult to be too restrictive or prohibitive.

Caroline recommended that we focus on drafting an ordinance specific to roof-based solar and then broaden our focus in the future as needed. All agreed. Drew and Constance were tasked with drawing up a list of important issues to consider for crafting the solar ordinance to be reviewed by the entire Planning Commission at the next meeting on March 28.

There being no other business to address, Judy moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:05, Jeanne seconded, and all voted in favor.

Signed:

Drew Beard

Secretary of the Town of Washington Planning Commission