

The following are minutes from the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting on Thursday, July 25, 2024, in Abita Springs Town Hall. The meeting convened at 6:05 P.M. Commission Chairman Pierce called the meeting to order, and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners in attendance included John Pierce, Chad Hall, Claire Guidry, and Mike Lanaux. Commissioner Lex LeBlanc was absent. Staff members Kristin Tortorich, Mark Fancey, and Heather Hockman were also present, along with Planners Alex Carter and Matt Wilson with Desire Line, and Attorney Adam Davis.

**CALL FOR AGENDA MODIFICATIONS**

There weren't any modifications.

**ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

The Commission reviewed the draft minutes from the July 25, 2024, meeting.

Commissioner Hall motioned to accept the minutes of the July 25, 2024; meeting as presented. Commissioner Guidry seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

**PLANNING:**

There weren't any planning items on the agenda.

**ZONING:**

**DISCUSSION**

**Request for exchange of property for Drainage Servitude**

Commission Chairman Pierce introduced the item and reminded the Commission this was brought before them a few months ago for discussion but was on hold until there was more information. Kristin Tortorich said the property in question borders the north side of the Southwind subdivision and clarified the term "drainage servitude" was being used, however it would not be a servitude, rather an exchange that would result in the Town owning the land, however that may work out through the process of information gathering through appraisal, surveying, etc. Ms. Tortorich stated the Commission is tasked with making a recommendation to the Town Council, whether that is favorable or unfavorable, about beginning the process of information gathering which would result in splitting the cost between the Town and the property owners to determine the value and other items associated with an exchange of property, which is needed to verify the exchange even makes sense for the Town and the property owners. Kristin Tortorich said once values are established, then it would be determined if there would be an even exchange or a purchase of land if it was to move forward. Ms. Tortorich then reminded the Commission

that tonight's item was only for discussion so they could get their questions answered and the next meeting would call for a vote with a Public Hearing.

Commissioner Hall asked if it would make sense to make the square footage equal because of the structure near the property line. Evette Randolph, one of the property owners, said the structure is an old barn that could be torn down, and it would depend on the appraisal. Ms. Randolph then said the owners are asking for more than they would be giving up, so they likely will owe money to the Town. Ms. Randolph also said If the appraisal looks like it would be more beneficial to give 30' width to the Town, then the owners would be open to that discussion.

Kristin Tortorich said the property would need to be walked and it would need to be determined if less than 30' was even an option with getting access to the property for maintenance for proper drainage. Ms. Randolph stated there is an overhang on the barn that could come down if needed. Ms. Randolph said the initial quote for the appraisal was \$2,000.00, however that included another right-of-way and if there is less to be appraised, the cost may be a little lower. Ms. Randolph then said that the future steps would then be to do the survey and title work. Mark Fancey told the Commission the Code sections regarding revocations would be emailed to them to review before the next meeting along with the details of the property.

### **Future Land Use Map (FLUM)**

Alex Carter said the Future Land Use Map presented tonight is just a draft and that there will be opportunities for the public and the Commission to weigh in about the map before it is finalized. Ms. Carter said the FLUM works as a guide to help with the rezoning process. Matt Wilson presented the FLUM. Mr. Wilson said the Master Plan was adopted with a Future Character Area Map included. He explained this was the starting point to identify certain areas or "hot spots" and having a plan for their vision, however it doesn't do much to help with other areas or even permitting and zoning details. The FLUM would better reflect the Town's goals and not be as controversial. Mr. Wilson said the FLUM contains categories that show a vision that help guide the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Board of Aldermen while providing legal justification for decisions on requests, where a Zoning Map contains districts that apply rules and regulations to individual properties. Alex Carter added that sometimes FLUMs and Zoning Maps differ due to shifting uses to promote a vision that is less intense.

Matt Wilson introduced the five categories of the FLUM as Commercial, Industrial, Public, Residential, and Town Center. Mr. Wilson stated these categories were developed by broadening the proposed zoning districts. The Town Center category is a mix of low intensity and commercial uses found in the center of town. The Public category is to

designate any property that is government owned, which could be local, Parish, state, federal, school, Post Office, park areas, cemetery, etc. The Residential category shows any residential area regardless of density. Commercial includes all Commercial Zoning Districts. The Industrial category is shown where there is currently active industrial use. Mr. Wilson explained that some additional categories are being considered to act as a density guide. Apartments could be with lower density residential or broken out to a capped density suburban or multi-family residential category, but that would reduce flexibility and make the map more complex. A general Mixed-Use category could be added along corridors where there could be residences and commercial businesses. A Historic Overlay could also be added as a reference and help in decision making. Mr. Wilson said there would be a public meeting on September 4, 2024, where feedback can be provided from the public regarding the draft of the FLUM.

Alex Carter asked for discussion from the Commission about the items presented so far. Commission Chairman Pierce said he thought the Historic Overlay would be good to add and asked if it is possible to have an existing Land Use Map. Matt Wilson said creating a current Land Use Map would be extremely time consuming and expensive. Alex Carter said it would also have to be constantly updated.

Ms. Carter said there would be a current Zoning Map and the FLUM available at the public meeting for comparison.

Matt Wilson gave an update on additional projects. Desire Line is working on an Historical Overlay update to make sure issues are cleared up to make the next step of the process easier. Subdivision Regulation edits are being worked on and they hope to provide a draft later this fall. The Safe Streets for All Action Plan is being worked on to try to help reduce traffic injuries and fatalities in town. Community engagement kicked off recently, a survey is live, and the meeting on September 4<sup>th</sup> will include community feedback on the Safe Streets for All Action Plan. Alex Carter said the importance of the Action Plan is to help show there is a plan in place when applying for funding for projects dealing with transportation. Ms. Carter explained that they are looking for problem areas, crosswalk recommendations, sidewalk recommendations, speed suggestions, etc. Kristin Tortorich emphasized the importance of having a plan in place, as it is a requirement of obtaining funding.

### **Public Comments**

E.J. Boudreaux said he was interested in the Penton (and Randolph) property being developed for commercial use and liked Dover Kohl's ideas in the Master Plan for that property. Mr. Boudreaux said he was pleased with the Town Center area on the FLUM. He also said he was in favor of smaller businesses and not big box stores in Abita.

Evette Randolph asked how a possible mixed-use overlay would work as to a distance from the roadway. Matt Wilson said that the concept for mixed used is targeted at properties fronting the corridors, not necessarily a set amount of footage like the current zoning map uses for an overlay. Alex Carter added those details would be determined as the Zoning Map is later developed.

**OPEN COMMENTS**

E.J. Boudreaux said he feels like the town really needs the land at the Penton/Randolph property for drainage, but he would prefer the Town buy the land rather than “swapping” land.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Kristin Tortorich announced there would be an open house style community meeting to get feedback for the Safe Streets for All Action Plan and the Future Land Use Map. The meeting will be held on September 4, 2024, from 5:30-7:00 PM at the Town Hall and residents are encouraged to drop in throughout the meeting time.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Hall motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Guidry seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 P.M.

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Kristin Tortorich, Planning & Zoning Director

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Date