

The following are minutes from the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting on Thursday, November 17, 2022, in Abita Springs Town Hall. The meeting convened at 6:00 P.M.

Commission Chair Templet called the meeting to order, and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners in attendance included Eric Templet, John Pierce, Chad Hall, Mike Lanaux, and Bryan Gowland. Kristin Tortorich, Mark Fancey, and Heather Hockman were also present.

The Commission reviewed the draft minutes from the October 27, 2022 meeting. Commissioner Hall motioned to accept the minutes of the October 27, 2022 meeting. Commissioner Pierce seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

**PLANNING:**

No items were on the agenda.

**ZONING:**

**Development Clearing Permit- Brighthouse Learning 21464 Clear Creek Drive**

Mark Fancey reviewed the staff report.

**Commissioner Gowland motioned to approve a Notice to Proceed. Commissioner Pierce seconded the motion. All voted in favor.**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**Variance: 101 Abita Oaks Blvd**

Kristin Tortorich explained that the setback for the lot is 25 feet, but due to the irregular shape of the lot, the homeowner was seeking a variance to allow construction of a patio cover at the rear of the property as one corner would fall in the setback area. Commissioner Lanaux asked if trees were in the setback area. Kristin Tortorich said no. Commissioners Templet and Gowland both stated they felt these irregularly shaped lots are the exact reason for variances. Commissioner Gowland added that the house is not any bigger or different than other houses in that neighborhood, the lot just doesn't have right angles making building difficult.

**Public Comment**

None.

Commission Chair Templet closed the Public Comment section of the hearing for the variance.

**Commissioner Gowland motioned to grant the variance. Commissioner Hall seconded the motion. All voted in favor.**

**Resubdivision: 71103 Highway 59**

Commission Chair Templet opened the Public Hearing for this topic and Mark Fancey reviewed the staff report.

**Public Comment**

Stewart Eastman said he didn't believe the reason for the required 120 feet of highway frontage has anything to do with the septic system, and that it must be for access. He also stated the parcel was essentially inaccessible.

Ryan Murphy stated that there is permanent access to the property on record and was included in an Act of Sale roughly 25 or 30 years ago.

**Commissioner Hall motioned to approve the resubdivision of the property. Commissioner Pierce seconded the motion. All voted in favor.**

**DISCUSSION**

**Review Draft Amendments to Abita Springs Code of Ordinances: Traffic Impact Analysis Chapter**

Mark Fancey spoke about Traffic Impact Analysis studies.

Mark Fancey said Highways 59 & 36 are most likely areas to require traffic studies based on the geography of the town.

Commission Chair Templet stated the traffic studies would be helpful in taking the guesswork out of the situation when new developments are being proposed. He went on to say that the purpose of the traffic study is not to say that a project could or could not be built, rather if it is built, these are the impacts you could expect. The town codes could then say based on those impacts these are the development requirements. Mark Fancey then added the improvements typically would be additional stop lights, turn lanes, road widening, acceleration/deceleration lanes, etc.

Commissioner Gowland sought clarification on the threshold table showing 50,000 and 75,000 square feet. Mark Fancey stated those numbers were for the building size.

Commissioner Pierce and Commission Chair Templet both stated they thought the code should be more specific for the section giving the Town authority to require a traffic study even if it doesn't meet the threshold. Commissioner Gowland said he thinks the thresholds for traffic impact studies are very reasonable.

Commissioner Hall said he questioned Part B under the Industrial section. He was concerned about lots of big trucks coming in and out of that type of development but thought the language in Part B would cover that. Mark Fancey confirmed that it would. Commissioner Hall also asked what percentage it would be for defraying the cost of the study. Mark Fancey confirmed it would be 100% of the cost.

**Public Comment**

Stewart Eastman stated he hoped the size of the buildings for the threshold would be lowered.

Commissioner Hall said he thought that the lot size would be a better driver than the building size for the threshold to trigger a traffic study. Commissioner Pierce agreed and added that it would seem as though we would be invoking section B more frequently than intended, although it is a balancing act. Commission Chair Templet stated he also didn't want to seem like it is a punishment to open a business

here. Mark Fancey commented the cost is also something to consider, as traffic studies are very costly and the thresholds were based on the size of the businesses that would likely trigger improvements such as turn lanes, etc. He added he will take another look at that section.

Commission Chair Templet closed the discussion portion of the meeting and opened the Open Comment section.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Commissioner Gowland wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and encouraged everyone to attend the Abita Springs Opry November 19th.

Kristin Tortorich said she would be emailing a set of dates for the Commissioners to review and vote on at the December meeting. The next meeting will be December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**OPEN COMMENTS**

Stewart Eastman said he wanted to address the school development on Clear Creek Drive. He was concerned about the neighbors’ concern about the traffic on their road when it was discussed at previous meetings. He said he feels the ordinances aren’t doing what they are meant to do. He also feels too many parking spaces are being required, especially since the high school students at this school will likely not be driving. He also stated he felt the live oak trees need to be protected.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Gowland motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Pierce seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted in favor. Meeting Adjourned at 6:46 P.M.

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Kristin Tortorich, Planning & Zoning Director

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Date