

The Altavista Planning Commission held a regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, November 6th, 2023, at 5pm, in the Council Chambers of Town Hall, located at 510 7th Street, Altavista, VA.

Members present: John Jordan, Chairman
 Marie Mitchell, Vice Chair
 Reggie Bennett, Vice Mayor
 Meghan Bolling, Commissioner
 Rayna Steele, Senior Student Commissioner
 Conner Mattox, Junior Student Commissioner

Absent: Ashby Robinson, Jr.

Staff present: Gary Shanaberger, Town Manager
 Matt Perkins, Assistant Town Manager
 John Eller, Town Attorney
 Crystal Hailey, Assistant Town Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman John Jordan called the Altavista Planning Commission Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. He welcomed new member Conner Mattox, as the Junior Student Commissioner.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & INVOCATION

Chairman Jordan delivered an Invocation for the meeting and afterwards, the Planning Commission and Staff recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The November 6, 2023, meeting agenda was approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Jordan informed Staff of two spelling corrections needed to the October 2nd minutes.

With a motion by Vice Chair Marie Mitchell, seconded by Commissioner Meghan Bolling, the Altavista Planning Commission approved the minutes of the October 2023 meeting as amended.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

There were no citizen comments at this meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING

There were no public hearings scheduled for this meeting date.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Assistant Town Manager Matt Perkins referenced two topics the Commission mentioned at their October meeting that they wanted to discuss further: 1) rezoning parcels on and around 5th Street, and 2) reviewing Town Code for potential amendments needed regarding residential solar panel usage. Mr. Perkins stated that he was currently researching a plan for both matters and would introduce the items to the Commission at a future meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- 2024 Meeting Calendar

As done annually at the end of each calendar year, the Planning Commission reviewed their monthly meeting calendar for 2024, and found no changes needed.

There was a unanimous consensus of the Planning Commission to adopt the 2024 Meeting Calendar as presented; continuing to meet on the first Monday of each month, unless that day is a holiday, then the meeting is held the next day (the first Tuesday of the month), at 5pm in the Town Council chambers of the Town Hall building, at 510 7th Street.

- Zoning Text Amendment Discussion – Aviation Facility: Private

Assistant Town Manager Matt Perkins informed the Commission of a Special Use Permit application, requesting a zoning amendment to allow private-plane usage on their property. Mr. Perkins stated, while the Town Code contained a definition for Aviation Facility - Private, it was not currently listed as a “permitted use” in any of the Town’s zoning districts. He also informed the Commission that the Federal Aviation Administration did not regulate private landing strips; however, plane manufacturers specify minimal take-off distances required for all aircraft, which he recommended be a required document for this type of Special Use Permit.

After a brief discussion, the Altavista Planning Commission concurred unanimously to hold a public hearing for the aforementioned request; and at that time, to consider what restrictions and/or requirements should be part of this Special Use Permit. The Commission will also consider at their next meeting whether to leave helicopters as a permitted use in Town Code.

- Zoning Text Amendment Discussion - “Correction Facility” in Town Code

Correction Facility, as defined in *Section 86-32* of Town Code: "*a public or privately operated use providing housing and care for individuals legally incarcerated, designed to isolate those individuals from a surrounding community.*"

Assistant Town Manager Matt Perkins informed the Commission that, in Staff’s recent review of permitted uses in Altavista’s Zoning Districts, Staff noted that "Correction Facility - Special Use Permit Required" was a permitted use in both the C-2 (General Commercial) and M (Industrial) Districts; and currently, there were no development standards for this use listed in Town Code.

The Altavista Planning Commission concurred unanimously to hold a public hearing during their December 5th meeting, and to consider whether to remove Correction Facility as a permitted use in Altavista’s Town Code.

MATTERS FROM THE COMMISSION

Vice Chair Mitchell asked that a Staff Report be included in the agenda of each meeting, to update the Commission on the Community Development Department’s monthly activities.

MATTERS FROM STAFF

As requested by the Commission at their last meeting, Town Attorney John Eller referenced State Code, Section 15.2-288.7, regarding residential solar use, and explained the definition/allowances.

Mr. Eller stated, under State Code, homeowners were allowed to have rooftop solar panels, staying within height restrictions; and stand-alone solar panels, through a Special Use Permit, if their locality's ordinance allowed the structures, and setbacks were abided.

Assistant Town Manager Matt Perkins informed the Commission that solar usage was only mentioned in Altavista's Town Code under the Downtown Revitalization Overlay (DRO) District, but nothing was mentioned in the rest of the Code regarding residential or otherwise. He stated that the Commission would be addressing this matter in the upcoming year.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Chairman Jordan adjourned the meeting at 5:35pm.

John Jordan
Planning Commission Chairman

Matthew Perkins
Assistant Town Manager