

The Altavista Planning Commission held a regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, August 1st, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at Town Hall, located at 510 7th Street, Altavista, Virginia.

Members present: John Jordan, Chairman
 Marie Mitchell, Vice Chair
 Reggie Bennett, Vice Mayor
 Marvin Clements
 Meghan Bolling

Staff present: Sharon D. Williams, AICP, Community Development Director
 John Eller, Town Attorney
 Crystal Hailey, Assistant Town Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman John Jordan called the Altavista Planning Commission Meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

With all Commissioners present, Chairman Jordan confirmed a quorum.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Jordan asked if there were any amendments needed to the agenda, to which there were none.

Upon a motion by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, and seconded by Vice Chair Marie Mitchell, the Planning Commission voted 5-0 to approve the meeting agenda as presented.

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 MINUTES

Chairman Jordan asked the Commission if they saw any amendments that needed to be made to the July 2022 meeting minutes, to which there were none.

With a motion made by Commissioner Marvin Clements, and seconded by Vice Chair Marie Mitchell, the July 5th, 2022, meeting minutes were approved as presented, with a unanimous 5-0 vote.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Chairman Jordan opened the floor for public comment.

Mr. John Porter, residential address at 215 Holman Rd., Cape Canaveral, Florida, came before the Commission representing his employer Clean Footprint Solar Company. He referenced Altavista's marketing phrase "Treasured Past, Innovative Future" and stated that Clean Footprint would like to be a part of the town's innovative future through their renewable energy resources, which he believed would help when marketing the town for economic development. Mr. Porter stated there were always concerns by a locality when introducing a solar farm to its community, such as unsightly views and

taking away residential opportunities for solar farm use. He stated that Clean Footprint had addressed both of those concerns in their Special Use Permit application, which they would like to submit to the town in the near future.

Chairman Jordan thanked Mr. Porter for attending the Planning Commission Meeting. He stated that Altavista would be a difficult locality to get approval from for authorizing a solar farm into its community, as the town would need questions and concerns answered and addressed properly before allowing a discussion pertaining to the matter.

Community Development Director Sharon D. Williams informed the Commission that she and Mr. Porter would need to have additional discussions, including a review of Clean Footprint's proposed text amendment to Altavista's Zoning Ordinance, before being allowed to have conversations with the Town Council. She stated, only if the Commission supported, and ultimately if Town Council elected to allow and approve the said amendment, would Clean Footprint be able to continue the process for their desire to construct a solar farm in Altavista. Otherwise, the matter would be dismissed.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. **Ordinance Amendment #OA-22-01:** An ordinance to amend Sec. 86-139 of the Zoning Ordinance relating to heights of structures in the R-1 Zoning District. Flagpoles removed as exempt structures from Sec. 86-139 and a provision to height of flagpoles is added permitting flagpoles up to 35' in height by right and requiring a Special Use Permit in excess of 35'.

Chairman Jordan opened this public hearing at 5:10 pm.

Ms. Sharon D. Williams, Community Development Director, gave the Commission a brief overview of the proposed amendment and stated this public hearing was advertised as required.

There being no public comments, Chairman Jordan closed the hearing at 5:12pm.

With no comments or questions from the Planning Commission, Vice Chair Mitchell made a motion, that was seconded by Commissioner Clements, to approve the text amendment as presented. The amendment was approved with a 5-0 vote.

- b. **Ordinance Amendment #OA-22-02:** An ordinance to amend Sec. 86-199 of the Zoning Ordinance relating to heights of structures in the R-2 Zoning District. Flagpoles are removed from the list of exempt structures in Sec. 86-199 and the same provision as to the height of flagpoles is added to this section as is stated above for Sec. 86-139.

Chairman Jordan opened this public hearing at 5:13 pm.

Ms. Williams gave the Commission a brief overview of the proposed text amendment regarding this ordinance and stated this public hearing had also been advertised as required.

There being no public comments, Chairman Jordan closed the hearing at 5:14pm.

With no questions from the Commission, Vice Chair Mitchell made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Clements, to approve the amendment as presented. The proposed text amendment was approved with a 5-0 vote.

- c. **Ordinance Amendment #OA-22-03:** An ordinance to amend Sec. 86-327 of the Zoning Ordinance relating to heights of structures in the C-1 Zoning District. The same provision as to the height of flagpoles is added to this section as is stated above for Sec. 86-139.

Chairman Jordan opened the public hearing at 5:15 pm.

Ms. Williams gave the Commission a brief overview of the proposed text amendment and stated that this public hearing was advertised as required.

There being no public comments, Chairman Jordan closed the hearing at 5:16 pm.

With no comments or questions from the Planning Commission, Vice Chair Mitchell made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Clements, to approve the proposed text amendment as presented. The text amendment was approved with a 5-0 vote.

- d. **Ordinance Amendment #OA-22-04:** An ordinance to amend Sec. 86-356 relating to heights of structures in the C-2 Zoning District. A provision as to height of flagpoles is added, permitting flagpoles up to 40' in height by right and requiring a Special Use Permit in excess of 40'.

Chairman Jordan opened this public hearing at 5:17 pm.

Ms. Williams gave the Planning Commission a brief overview of the proposed text amendment and stated this public hearing was also advertised as required.

There being no public comments, Chairman Jordan closed the hearing at 5:18 pm.

With no comments or questions from the Planning Commission, Vice Chair Mitchell made a motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Clements, to approve the proposed text amendment as presented. The amendment was approved with a 5-0 vote.

- e. **Ordinance Amendment #OA-22-05:** An ordinance to amend Sec. 86-388 of the Zoning Ordinance relating to heights of structures in the M Zoning District. A provision as to height of flagpoles is added permitting flagpoles up to 50' in height by right and requiring a Special Use Permit for flagpoles in excess of 50'.

Chairman John Jordan opened this public hearing at 5:19 pm.

Ms. Williams gave the Planning Commission a brief overview of the proposed text amendment and said the public hearing had been advertised as required.

There being no public comments, Chairman Jordan closed the hearing at 5:19pm.

With no comments or questions from the Planning Commission, Vice Chair Mitchell made a motion, and Commissioner Clements seconded the motion, to approve the proposed text amendment as presented. The amendment was approved with a 5-0 vote.

- f. **Initial Zoning #RZ-22-01:** This parcel was brought within the corporate limits of the Town of Altavista from Campbell County by a Boundary Line Adjustment, ordered by the Campbell County Circuit Court on June 24, 2022, and was effective July 1, 2022.

Chairman John Jordan opened this public hearing at 5:20 pm.

Ms. Williams stated the parcel was in a well-established commercial corridor, with the properties adjacent to the parcel already being zoned industrial. She said the parcel was just recently purchased by the town and not yet on Altavista's Future Land Use Map (FLUM), but it was on Campbell County's FLUM and zoned as industrial. Ms. Williams said it was staff's recommendation that the Planning Commission approve recommending to Town Council the initial zoning of Tax Parcel #69-4-4-3 into to the Industrial (M) Zoning District.

There being no public comments, Chairman Jordan closed the hearing at 5:25 pm.

With no comments or questions from the Planning Commission, Vice Chair Mitchell made a motion, and was seconded by Vice Mayor Bennett, to approve recommending to Town Council the text amendment to initially zone Tax Parcel #69-4-4-3 as M-Industrial. The recommendation was approved by the Planning Commission with a 5-0 vote.

Chairman Jordan said, for those watching at home that may not know the definitions of the zoning districts, he asked Ms. Williams to explain the definition of each zoning district in Altavista.

Ms. Williams informed the Commission that the town's current zoning map showed an MP District standing for mobile home park, however, the town had not allowed additional mobile home parks in several years, so the MP District would need to be removed when Altavista's Zoning Ordinance was updated. She then gave a brief definition of Altavista's five zoning districts.

- R1 District: typically, single-family dwellings
- R2 District: single-family and multi-family dwellings
- C1 District: typically, small/local businesses
- C2 District: larger, more intense, businesses
- M District: Industrial facilities

OLD BUSINESS

- a. 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update – Continued Review and Discussion

Community Development Director Sharon D. Williams welcomed Ada Hunsberger, Central Virginia Planning District Commission (CVPDC), back to Altavista and informed the Commission that Mrs. Hunsberger would be presenting this portion of the agenda.

Chairman Jordan asked that the draft documents/chapters not be read in their entirety, but that the review be conducted with a brief description and highlights of the additions or changes made.

Economic Development (ED) Chapter

Ms. Williams informed the Planning Commission that, per their direction, staff presented this draft chapter to the Altavista Economic Development Authority (AEDA) for review and input; and the AEDA did not have any concerning comments regarding the draft document.

Mrs. Hunsberger emphasized that Altavista served as a regional service center for its surrounding localities, as a place of employment, commerce, and personal/professional services for the region, which she believed to be a large driver of economic development and contributed to a sustainable future. Ms. Hunsberger gave an overview of each section in the Economic Development chapter of the Comprehensive Plan update: Industry, Community Partnerships, Education, Tourism, and the new Spark Innovation Center, and referenced the updates/changes made to the draft document. She asked for the Commission's input regarding this draft chapter.

Chairman Jordan asked Commission Members if they had any questions or comments for this item.

Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett asked if the Economic Development chapter would address the high poverty rate in Altavista or would that subject be referenced in another chapter of the plan.

Mrs. Hunsberger stated the matter would be referenced in the Demographics chapter of the Comprehensive Plan update, but could also be incorporated into the Economic Development chapter if the Commission so desired.

Ms. Williams informed the Commission that the town had reached out to Liberty University, Abbott Laboratories in Altavista, and Virginia Career Works for information and ideas for programs; as well as the Central Virginia Community College, Lynchburg, VA, to inquire about them offering classes in Altavista, potentially utilizing the new Spark Innovation Center.

Vice Chair Marie Mitchell stated the draft document insinuated that Altavista residents did not want to take advantage of higher paying jobs, but she believed the issue was needing more educational programs to help town residents achieve employment.

Ms. Williams stated the draft document would be revised to reference the item more clearly.

Chairman Jordan asked, if not having available childcare was part of the unemployment issue in Altavista; and if so, how the matter could be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan update.

Ms. Williams stated, in conversations with Social Services and looking at demographic data, there was a vast number of citizens on assistance programs and the current cost of childcare was a primary issue when considering employment opportunities.

Vice Mayor Bennett said, although the local YMCA offered assistance with childcare costs for low income families, a lot of jobs were only available for late shifts, when the YMCA was not open. He referenced BGF and Abbott Laboratories and said both run their facilities seven days a week, 24 hours a day, which would be a disadvantage for someone without available childcare for evening or night shifts.

Chairman Jordan said he thought a large corporation like Abbott would offer childcare assistance for their employees.

Vice Mayor Bennett said Abbott did have the benefit in some of their facilities, but not Altavista.

Mrs. Hunsberger asked if the Commission believed the childcare issue should be included in the Economic Development chapter of the Comprehensive Plan update, or in a different chapter.

Chairman Jordan stated, if not having access to affordable childcare was part of the town's high unemployment rate, then it adversely affected economic development, so he believed the matter should be addressed in this chapter of the plan.

Ms. Williams concurred with Chairman Jordan that the lack of available childcare to all citizens was an important issue that could be mentioned in both the Economic Development and Demographics chapters of the Comprehensive Plan update. She referenced the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and stated both may have grants available to help with this issue.

Vice Chair Mitchell suggested that workforce development also be included in the Economic Development chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

Chairman Jordan and the other Commission members concurred with Vice Chair Mitchell.

Mrs. Hunsberger said that she would revise the Economic Development chapter to include workforce development as requested.

Ms. Williams referenced the Goals & Objectives for the Economic Development chapter. She said it was staff's intent to capture the essence of the town's other (nine) individual plans into one cohesive document, the Comprehensive Plan; and therefore, it was important to talk about partnerships in the Economic Development chapter.

Transportation Chapter

Mrs. Hunsberger informed the Commission that the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) maps and crash data were both missing from the draft of the Transportation chapter, but she was working with VDOT and would incorporate the maps and data when completed.

Chairman Jordan referenced the Six-year Improvement Program (SYIP) between the Town of Altavista and VDOT and suggested adding a column to represent "completed" projects in the plan.

Mrs. Hunsberger said she would add the requested column to the document.

Vice Mayor Bennett reminded everyone that the Town of Altavista was now a Smart Scale community and asked if Smart Scale projects were included in the Transportation chapter.

Mrs. Hunsberger answered they were and directed the Commission to the section in the Transportation chapter that mentioned the most recent project being sought by the town, a roundabout at the intersection of Clarion and Lynch Mill Roads. She said the application for the project was submitted after the draft was written, but that she would add the item to the list.

Ms. Williams stated, since Altavista was in the Central Virginia Planning District Commission's (CVPDC) region, the CVPDC's Long Range Transportation Plan for 2045 was part of the Transportation chapter of Altavista's Comprehensive Plan. She said, the number beside each Altavista project was the number it was associated with in the CVPDC's long range plan. She said this reference was staff's intent to show that there were other plans available that were also applicable to Altavista.

Mrs. Hunsberger referenced the 2010 Region 2000 (now the Central Virginia Planning District Commission) Bicycle Plan that was previously completed for the Town of Altavista and asked for the Planning Commission's input and for Town Staff's recommendation whether to keep the item in Altavista's Comprehensive Plan, or remove it.

Ms. Williams said it was staff's recommendation to leave the Bicycle Plan in the Transportation chapter, however, since 2010, some regulations had changed, and the Comprehensive Plan update was a good opportunity to review and update the Bicycle Plan, and to incorporate new information, such as the green bikeways information that staff recently received from the Vice Mayor.

Commissioner Clements referenced a previous conversation whereas the Commission discussed needing/wanting an additional access point from Main Street into English Park, and asked if the desired project should be mentioned in the Comprehensive Plan update.

Ms. Williams stated it was a good idea to include any project desired by the town in its Comprehensive Plan, for future reference if the opportunity ever arose to implement the project.

The Commission had a conversation regarding bicycle safety on town roads and sidewalks and there was a consensus of the Commission to add this subject to the Transportation chapter, including information regarding designated bike lanes.

Mrs. Hunsberger suggested there also be information added regarding education for bike safety between vehicle drivers and bicycle drivers, to which the Commission agreed.

Town Attorney John Eller referenced *Section 46.2-905* of State Code and said that riding bicycles on sidewalks was permitted in the State of Virginia, and it was up to each individual locality whether they wished to allow or prohibit riding on sidewalks.

Mr. John Porter, Clean Footprint, raised his hand to be recognized and Chairman Jordan allowed him to give a comment. Mr. Porter suggested the Town of Altavista consider adding electric-car charging stations in town and to mention the potential project in their Comprehensive Plan.

Mrs. Hunsberger informed Mr. Porter that the project was already in the Transportation chapter and the Natural Resources chapter of Altavista's Comprehensive Plan update.

Ms. Williams referenced Objective #2 for the Transportation chapter, which discussed the town's desire to offer its citizens transportation to adjacent localities for work, doctor appointments, etc. She stated that she recently attended a meeting with the Greater Lynchburg Transit Company (GLTC) and they discussed the possibility of extending their transit service to localities adjacent to Lynchburg for the same reasons. Ms. Williams said the GLTC was eager to collaborate with Altavista on this subject. She said that she would keep the Planning Commission updated on the progress of these discussions.

There were no additional comments or questions regarding the Transportation chapter of the Comprehensive Plan update.

NEW BUSINESS

There were no new business items to discuss.

UPDATES

a. Comprehensive Plan Work Session

Mrs. Hunsberger reminded the Commission of their additional work session scheduled for Thursday, August 4th. She said that she would be going over the Town Services chapter of the Comprehensive Plan update at that meeting and that Ms. Williams would be reviewing Altavista's Future Land Use Map with the Commission.

Ms. Williams stated that staff continued to work on the Public Services chapter and the Demographics chapter of the Comprehensive Plan update and would present the draft documents to the Planning Commission soon.

Chairman Jordan referenced the Comprehensive Plan having a pre-amble chapter at the beginning of the document and asked if there would also be an "end" chapter to the plan.

Ms. Williams answered that the Comprehensive Plan would have both, including photos to help visually tell Altavista's story and history.

Commissioner Bolling asked how the public would be made aware of this update.

Ms. Williams stated, once the plan update was complete, the town was required to hold a public hearing to adopt the plan. She said staff also intended to have a public meeting regarding the plan being updated, and when completed, the 2040 Comprehensive Plan would be available on the town's website, electronically, and in paper form, if needed.

Mrs. Hunsberger suggested having a copy of the document at the Staunton River Memorial Library in Altavista, to which the Commission concurred.

Adjournment:

With no further business to discuss, Chairman Jordan adjourned the meeting at 6:24 p.m.

John Jordan
Planning Commission Chair

Sharon D. Williams, AICP
Planning Commission