

The Altavista Planning Commission held a regularly scheduled meeting at 5:00 PM on Monday, January 7, 2019 in the Council Chambers at Town Hall.

Members present - John Jordan, Chairman
Marvin Clements
Tim George
Marie Mitchell
John Woodson

Also present - Waverly Coggsdale
Cheryl Dudley
John Eller

The agenda was reviewed and approved as presented. A motion was made by Mr. Woodson and seconded by Mrs. Mitchell.

The first order of business was for the Commissioners to elect Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2019. Mr. George nominated Mr. Jordan for Chairman. A second was made by Mr. Clement. There were no further nominations. All members were in favor with none opposing. Mr. Jordan abstained from voting.

Mr. Clements nominated Mr. Woodson for Vice-Chairman. A second was made by Mr. George. All members were in favor with none opposing. Mr. Woodson abstained from voting.

The minutes from the meeting held on December 3, 2018 were reviewed and approved as amended. A motion was made by Mr. Woodson and seconded by Mr. George. All members were in favor with none opposing.

The Commissioners reviewed the Annual Report for Council. It was agreed upon by the Commission that Mr. Jordan and Mr. Coggsdale would meet and fully develop the annual report. A motion was made by Mr. George and seconded by Mrs. Mitchell. All members were in favor with none opposing.

The next order of business was for the Commission to review the Code Sections which include Chapter 21 – Buildings and other structures, Chapter 34 Article II – Abatement of Public Nuisances, and Chapter 62 – solid waste; weed control (Secs. 62-2, 62-42 & 43, 62-81 & 82, 62—111 – 120 and 62-151).

Mr. Coggsdale stated that the conversation in the last Commission meeting was that they wanted to look at different Code Sections for derelict and nuisance properties. He stated that he thought the Commission needed to start with knowing what the laws, rules and regulations are now to see if the right tools are in place. He provided the Commission with the Code Section to look over. He also stated that a lot of the issues deal with public nuisance, public health, safety or welfare. He indicated that Mr. Eller can help to understand where the benchmark to this is and what is the burden of proof that has impacted each area and help apply the code to it. But until the Commission knows what the code has in it, it will be hard to know what needs to be done.

Chapter 21 – Buildings & Other Structures – Sections 21-1 & 21-2

Mr. Coggsdale stated that the Town can have buildings or structures removed or repaired. In Section 21-2 it explains what a derelict building is. It goes on to explain a residential building or non-residential building or structure whether the structure has been completed or not might endanger public health, safety or welfare and for a continuous period in excess of six months it has been (1) vacant, (2) boarded up in accordance with the building code or (3) not lawfully connected to electric service or water and sewer service from a utility service provider. There is also a process that if it qualifies then the Town has certain processes and procedures to go through.

Mr. Eller stated that there was a program at one time that the Town Council had appropriated some money to be advanced to the owners in form of an interest free loan to have buildings demolished.

Chairman Jordan asked if the requirement that must be met is that it might endanger the public health or safety of the residents.

Mr. Eller stated that the authority the Town has, is to be able to say that in some way there may be a danger to the public safety or health.

Chairman Jordan asked if there were any buildings in town that are derelict.

Mr. George stated that he has looked over the ordinances and didn't see where commercial property was excluded. He is concerned about the former Lane Company property. He asked why something can't be done about it by the Town.

Mr. Coggsdale stated that they have a current demolition permit with the County. An inspection is needed every six months to keep it current. The next inspection is February 22, 2019. He feels like we can work with the building inspections office and address the accumulation of debris on the site. Piles of debris can be expected during demolition, but he thinks we can address removal of the piles.

Chairman Jordan asked if there needed to be any discussion on Chapter 34, Article II, Sections 34-31 through 34-38.

Mr. Coggsdale stated that this is the area that covers a wide range of issues. It talks about grass, weeds, rubbish, and refuse.

Mr. George stated that he remembers Town Council giving full consensus that staff has the authority to enforce what is in the code and a lot of the things that are noticed or reported meets the criteria.

Mr. Coggsdale stated that he is working on reminders of Codes that are in place in reference to setting trash cans back in place, leash laws, signs, etc. through the utilization of the newspaper and social media. For instance, if a business has been closed for 6 months or more, they need to have a letter sent to them for removal of the sign.

Chairman Jordan stated that there is a training opportunity for the Planning Commission members at the end of January with the Regional Commission.

Mr. Coggsdale stated that Mike Chandler will be doing the training from 4:30 – 7:00 PM on January 31, 2019 at the Greater Lynchburg Transit Company Operation Maintenance Facility on Bradley Drive in Lynchburg. There is no charge for the event, but they are asking that anyone attending the training to register. It can be done online or to email him and he will register anyone that asks him to. Chairman Jordan said that he encouraged any of the PC members that can attend to do so.

The staff report was included in the annual report and will begin with a monthly report in February.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25PM.

John Jordan, Chairman

Waverly Coggsdale, Town Manager