

**TAPPAHANNOCK PLANNING COMMISSION  
NOVEMBER 1, 2023  
7:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT**

Chair:	Timothy Bradshaw
Vice Chair:	Dianna Carneal
Commission Members:	Maria Pitts
	Elaine Hilowitz
Community Development/Zoning Administrator:	Connie Dalton
Planning and Zoning Assistant:	Lauren Colley
Secretary:	Patsy K. Scates

**ABSENT**

Commission Members:	Yvonne Vaughan
	Scott Cannady

• **CALLED TO ORDER**

Chair Bradshaw called the meeting to order.

Chair Bradshaw recognized Connie Dalton.

Connie Dalton introduced Lauren Colley, Planning and Zoning Assistant for the Town of Tappahannock.

Lauren Colley gave some background information on herself and her work history. She stated she is looking forward to working with everyone.

• **MINUTES APPROVED**

On motion of Elaine Hilowitz, seconded by Maria Pitts, the Commission voted to approve the September 6, 2023, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes.

**Votes were cast as follows:**

Dianna Carneal:	Aye	Elaine Hilowitz:	Aye
Maria Pitts:	Aye	Timothy Bradshaw:	Aye

On motion of Elaine Hilowitz, seconded by Maria Pitts, the Commission voted to approve the October 4, 2023, Planning Commission Meeting Minutes.

**Votes were cast as follows:**

Dianna Carneal:	Aye	Elaine Hilowitz:	Aye
Maria Pitts:	Aye	Timothy Bradshaw:	Aye

The Tour of the Town Excursion Summary Report has been tabled until the December 6, 2023, Planning Commission Meeting.

Chair Bradshaw asked if anyone had a committee report.

- **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Commission Member Hilowitz reported she attended the Essex County School Board meeting and they mentioned the school maintenance facility that the Town Council members are currently on reviewing.

Commission Member Pitts reported she does not have anything to report on the October 10, 2023, Town Council Meeting because she was not able to attend.

- **OLD BUSINESS**

- *Training – Options and Opportunities*

Chair Bradshaw asked for an update on the status of the training options and opportunities.

Vice Chair Carneal stated she would like some feedback from the council members to see if it is feasible and if it would become a budget item for the Fiscal Year 24/25. She stated she will present a funding request to the council members for training of the Planning Commission Members for their consideration for the FY24-25 budget. She asked if a Commission member had any items to include in the request to give those items to her by February 2024.

Chair Bradshaw asked if the Town received any applications from citizens to volunteer serve on the Planning Commission.

Connie Dalton stated she has not received any applications.

- *Letter of Resignation*

Chair Bradshaw informed the Planning Commission members that Commission Member Yvonne Vaughan has resigned from the Planning Commission.

The Commission Members thanked Commission Member Vaughan for her service to the Planning Commission.

- *Technical Update to the 2014 Comprehensive Plan Update*

Chair Bradshaw asked for an update of the Comprehensive Plan.

Connie Dalton reported she has a meeting scheduled with the consultant to review the edits to the technical update for the Comprehensive Plan. She stated the formal boundary agreement is needed to complete the mapping. This is the holdup to the completion of the technical update to the comprehensive plan. She suggested, as an option, that a draft of the written part of the comprehensive plan may be provided for the members to review and then the maps could be added later before the final approval.

Connie Dalton stated when the official zoning map was adopted and sent to the Essex County GIS Coordinator, he noticed some gaps along the perimeter. She stated a presentation was done by Essex County GIS Coordinator to explain how this happened to the Town Council members. She reported that two members from the Town Council and two members from the Essex County Board of Supervisors have been working on this issue.

- *Mural Document*

Connie Dalton thanked Vice Chair Carneal for working with her on the draft of the mural document. She reported they plan to have another meeting to finalize a draft of the mural document and once they have a draft document it will be shared with Town Manager Pollitt and Town Attorney Lank for approval. She reported once they have approval the goal would be to have a work session with the Planning Commission members to review the draft of the mural document at the December Planning Commission Meeting. Next step would be to make final revisions and plan to move forward with a public hearing to present the document to the public, the Planning Commission and Town Council for their consideration for either approval or denial.

Connie Dalton reported while reviewing the mural document there has been some discussion about the mural being only be a painting and no words. She reported that they have been looking at different options for the Planning Commissions members to consider which can be discussed at the work session.

Commission Member Pitts stated if she was a business owner, she would want the ordinance to be designed so that it would allow the mural to indicate what the business sells or provides.

Connie Dalton asked them to consider what the approval process would be for the mural document and if a business would be allowed to state in words the product they offer on their building. She stated she will provide a draft of the mural document for their review before the work session.

There was some discission.

Commission Member Hilowitz stated that the Town Council read the Proclamation Recognizing Community Planners Month at their last meeting.

The Commission members had positive feedback from the community at the Farmers Market on the projects that are moving forward in the Town and the members had citizens discuss traffic concerns and the lack of sidewalks within the Town.

- **NEW BUSINESS**

- *Review of zoning projects*

Commission Member Hilowitz asked what the status of the traffic survey was.

Vice Chair Carneal stated the members should ask themselves what is the purpose of the survey. She stated that anything involving the roadways would involve the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Commission Member Hilowitz feels that we need to gather the information to include in the Comprehensive Plan and she feels that information could come in a survey.

Vice Chair Carneal stated she received feedback on the questionnaire from two people.

Vice Chair Carneal stated that the discussion about the traffic survey will be discussed at the next meeting.

Commission Member Hilowitz stated she wanted to know about the properties being identified by the Town Council for the beautification of the Town. She reported at the October 2023 Town Council

meeting a realtor and a property owner attended and had no idea that the Town wanted to make a park out of her private property but she wanted to know what the properties were.

Connie Dalton stated she attended the meeting and the grant that was applied for prior to her time with the town. She stated it was her understanding the grant was a general approach, identifying if the Town of Tappahannock had properties that could benefit from recreational development. She stated no specific details have been made to develop the inquired about property into a park. She reported the only projects the Town is physically working on are Tappahannock Central Park, Hoskins Creek and the Old Airport property into an industrial park.

There was some discussion about the old airport project such as the access road, traffic and the type of business would be located on that property.

- *Planning Commission By-Laws*

Chair Bradshaw stated the members should have a copy of the Planning Commission By-Laws. He encouraged the members to read the document and focus on Article II Members Section 2-1 (see below)

### **Article II - Members**

**2-1.** This Commission consists of ten (10) members as established by the Town Council.

Three (3) shall be nonvoting members and seven (7) shall be voting members. The nonvoting members shall be the Town Manager, the Mayor, and a member of the Town Council. The remaining seven (7) members shall hold exclusive power to vote on all matters which may come before the Planning Commission for consideration.

Chair Bradshaw asked if the number of the Planning Commission members should be reduced to five or should it remain at seven.

Commission Member Hilowitz asked what was required by the Virginia State Code.

Connie Dalton stated in the Virginia State Code it states that a local planning commission shall consist no less than five and no more than fifteen members. (Reference Virginia Code Section 15.2-2212). She stated an amendment would be required if the members would like to change the number of members.

Chair Bradshaw stated that since we are a small community and there is a challenge to add new members, we may want to consider this.

- *Planning Commission Meeting Date Change*

Chair Bradshaw stated he has been asked to discuss changing the meeting date from the first Wednesday of the month to the second Wednesday of the month.

Commission Member Hilowitz stated she feels that the proposed change would benefit the planning commission members because they would have more time to gather research and get an item on the Town Council's agenda.

Chair Bradshaw stated he likes having the meeting the first Wednesday of the month he does not see a need for the change.

Commission Member Pitts stated either day would be fine for her but she feels that we should consider the staff and their schedules.

Connie Dalton stated before a vote is taken, she encouraged the members to reach out to Town Manager Pollitt to make sure the staff needs can be met. She reminded them there is one secretary that supports the Town Council, Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals.

Chair Bradshaw stated that we will table this item until the next meeting and he will reach out to the Town Manager.

- **ADJOURNED**

On motion of Dianna Carneal, seconded by Maria Pitts, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

**Votes were cast as follows:**

Dianna Carneal: Aye  
Maria Pitts: Aye

Elaine Hilowitz: Aye  
Timothy Bradshaw: Aye

  
Timothy Bradshaw, Chair

  
Patsy K. Scates, Secretary

