

**Town of Amherst
Planning Commission Minutes
March 1, 2017**

A meeting of the Town of Amherst Planning Commission was called to order by Chairperson June Driskill in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall at 174 S. Main Street at 7:30 PM on March 1, 2017. It was noted that a quorum was present as indicated below:

P Kevin Belcher	P William Jones
P June Driskill	A Kenneth Bunch
A Ted Finney	P Clifford Hart

Deputy Town Clerk Vicki Hunt and Town Manager Jack Hobbs, in his capacity as Secretary to the Commission, were present.

The minutes from the February 1, 2017, Commission meeting were approved on a motion by Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Hart, and carried 4-0 according to the following:

Kevin Belcher	Aye	William Jones	Aye
June Driskill	Aye	Kenneth Bunch	Absent
Ted Finney	Absent	Clifford Hart	Aye

Comprehensive Plan

The Secretary reported as follows on the updated Comprehensive Plan.

The Code of Virginia requires the Town of Amherst to have a comprehensive plan. The Code also requires that the Planning Commission review its comprehensive plan every five years to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan. The current plan was last officially revised on November 10, 2009. A quick survey of Commission's minutes for when the current review/update cycle started found mention of a project "kickoff" session with Kelly Hitchcock from Region 2000 on April 2014.

The proposal before the Commission included:

- Commissioners have been directly involved in the development of the document since 2014. This work was supported by the Town's administrative staff and two "consultants" in Region 2000 (census update) and Renaissance Planning Group (UDA study);
- Due to lack of growth and no general change in conditions, the approach has been to update the existing plan where appropriate instead of "creating" a completely new document;
- Statistics, particularly in the front portion of the document, were updated with figures from the 2010 census;
- The document has been "scrubbed" in an effort to make it appear less rigid and regulatory and more positive and promotional; and
- A section to meet the requirements of the Urban Development Area study has been included.

The Secretary reminded the Commission that the Town agreed to incorporate an Urban Development Area, if recommended, into its comprehensive plan within one year after the completion of the consultant's UDA study work. The final UDA document is dated June 3, 2016.

There being no one present who wished to speak, the public hearing was closed at 7:33 PM.

After discussion, on a motion by Mr. Hart which was seconded by Mr. Jones and carried 4-0 according to the following, the Commission agreed to recommend that the Town Council adopt the proposed Comprehensive Plan.

Kevin Belcher	Aye	William Jones	Aye
June Driskill	Aye	Kenneth Bunch	Absent
Ted Finney	Absent	Clifford Hart	Aye

Variance Application Review: Clemson Investments, LLC – 195 Mt. Olive Road

After noting that §18.1-1006.02 of the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance indicates that the Planning Commission “may consider the proposed request and may present its recommendations to the Board of Zoning Appeals, or appear as a party at the hearing” in these matters, the Secretary gave a report on a variance application that will be received by the Board of Zoning Appeals hearing on March 7, 2017, at 6:00 PM, in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall at 174 South Main Street, as follows:

The application by Clemson Investments, LLC involves property located at 195 Mt. Olive Road. (TM#96A3-2-5, zoned Light Commercial District B-1) that would support the conversion of an existing accessory building into a multifamily dwelling. If approved:

1. The 25’ yard on the right side of the lot required by Section 18.1-804 of the Town Code would be reduced to 7’, and
2. A gravel parking lot and driveways for the proposed total 7 dwelling units on the site would be allowed instead of constructed from concrete, asphalt, brick or paving stones as required by Sec. 18.1-602.04.1 of the Town Code.

Applicant/property owner James Newman and representative Tommy Brooks from Acres of Virginia, were present to answer questions.

Mr. Hart made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Jones to recommend that the Board of Zoning Appeals approve the Clemson Investments proposal as requested. The motion carried 4-0 according to the following:

Kevin Belcher	Aye	William Jones	Aye
June Driskill	Aye	Kenneth Bunch	Absent
Ted Finney	Absent	Clifford Hart	Aye

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM on a motion by Mr. Belcher seconded by Mr. Hart, and carried 4-0 according to the following:

Kevin Belcher	Aye	William Jones	Aye
June Driskill	Aye	Kenneth Bunch	Absent
Ted Finney	Absent	Clifford Hart	Aye

June Driskill, Chairperson

Attest: _____