

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Marion Planning Commission held in Council Chambers at the Municipal Building on May 14, 2018 at 5:30pm.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Wolfe called the meeting to order.

**INVOCATION:** Mr. Hicks rendered the invocation.

**VISITORS:** None

**PRESENT:** Chairman-Cameron Wolfe, Bob Ramsey, Jim Barker, Alice Freeman, Trey White and Kimberly Austin Planning Commission Members; Town Manager/Zoning Administrator Bill Rush, Assistant Town Manager/ Town Engineer Cecil Hicks, Deputy Clerk Anita Catron and Town Attorney Mark Fenyk.

**ABSENT:** Ben Reedy.

**DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM:** The meeting was called to order, and with 6 voting members present, the Commission has a quorum.

**MINUTES:** Upon motion of Mr. Barker, seconded by Mr. Ramsey and vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting April 9, 2018 were approved as written. Messrs Wolfe, Barker, Ramsey, Freeman, White and Austin voted affirmatively.

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY:** No Report.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES:** No Report.

**REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES:** No Report.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBER:** Chairman Wolfe noted there was a new member to the Planning Commission Board and requested Mr. Rush to make the introduction. Mr. Rush stated Mrs. Austin is a Professor at Southwest Virginia Community College, wife of the Director of Social Services and had been a candidate for Town Council in the last election. He had approached her and inquired if she would be interested in serving on the Planning Commission Board to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Mr. Dan Surface. She agreed to serve and Town Council has appointed her to this position.

**CONTINUE REVIEW PROPERTY MAINTENANCE/ABANDONED VEHICLES RFP:** Mr. Rush gave each member a copy of the 2012 Virginia Maintenance Code which is the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code effective July 14, 2014. He briefly reviewed the discussion from last month for new member Kimberly Austin. He stated the need to move forward with the abandoned vehicles issues, but would have that discussion later. He wanted to discuss with members the need to move forward with the discussion on building inspections, blight and property maintenance enforcement. There has been success with clean-up of properties, but it has been limited. The town needs to move forward with finding someone who can be on the job to enforce regulations. Mr. Rush discussed the need for the town to hire an inspector or partner with Smyth County or the Housing Authority for someone to do these inspections while having a definite plan in place for enforcement. This would not only be for new building inspections, but rental properties also. This will ensure that property owners are keeping all properties they own up to code. If the town chooses to hire someone for this job, they would be responsible for inspections of all properties new and otherwise, permits and enforcement of the new code.

Smyth County is not interested in doing these inspections for the town and, in a letter some months ago, indicated the possibility of no longer doing any inspections in the town limits. Mr. Rush contacted Marion Housing Authority regarding the inspections and that one also is questionable. Discussion ensued regarding the number of staff this would require, the estimated average income from permits, the estimated number of inspections that would be performed in town and how many warnings should be issued before taking action, and who would be notified of the pending inspection. Members agree this is a project that is needed. Mr. Rush stated this will not be an easy project and the 1<sup>st</sup> year will be the hardest. After word gets out he feels that landlords will begin to take care of some problems. One

of the main concerns is to clean up neighborhoods that have been allowed to slide by. With someone in place to enforce this, in time this will improve.

Mr. Rush stated the document was only a guideline for what will be needed in order to move forward with clean-up of properties and abandoned vehicles. He requested members to review this and e-mail their thoughts and suggestions to him. They will discuss how best to implement this at a later date. Mr. Fenyk explained that a property maintenance code must be adopted before the town can use it for enforcement.

Mr. Rush briefly reviewed the RFP for towing services inside town for abandoned vehicles, noting town council has approved this and the request for interested towing services has been mailed. A letter will be mailed to all citizens that have been identified as having abandoned vehicles.

Chairman Wolfe requested Mr. Rush to send a letter to both Mr. Surface for Planning Commission and Mr. Buchanan for Board of Zoning Appeals thanking them for their service.

Upon motion of Mr. Ramsey, seconded by Mrs. Freeman and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned at 6:20pm.

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Chairman

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Secretary