

The Richlands Town Council held a joint “Public Hearing” with the Planning Commission on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022, in the Richlands Council Chambers at 5:30 pm with the following present:

Mayor: Rod D. Cury

Town Manager: John O’Daniel

Town Clerk: Rebekah Hackworth

Council Members: Gary Jackson, Kristen Thompson-Whitt, Seth White, and Jordan Bales.

Town Attorney: Michael Thomas

Mayor Cury opened the meeting.

Mayor Cury gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Cury- Our first public hearing is, we have the request for the Rezoning of 106 Augusta Avenue from M-1 to R-2. John, can you explain this a little more?

John- Actually, the owners of this property just sold this property as a M-1. So, they have requested that we cancel this hearing.

Mayor Cury- Okay, this public hearing #1 is closed.

Closed!

Mayor Cury- We will open public hearing #2 and this is a request for Rezoning 3150 Clinch Street from M-1 to B-3, which is industrial to mixed-use business area. We will review this and will ask for any comment. This is the parcel that is next to the clinic down there.

John- This is a request from the Planning Commission. As we adopted the B-3 zone a couple weeks ago, they wanted to expand that to also include this parcel. In addition to what was already added. This was not a request by a property owner, this was something the Planning Commission has recommended. But the owner has requested this in the past.

Mayor Cury- Okay, thank you, John. Does any member of the Commission want to add anything?

Mayor Cury- Is there anyone here in the Council chambers who would like to speak on the rezoning of 3150 Clinch St from M1 to B3? It might be helpful for those who don't understand what is happening. We might have people here who do not know what a B-3 is. Kristen, would you like to expand, or do you have anything to add to this?

Kristen- A B-3 zone is a special use permit opportunity for people who wanted to come in with additional things like the counseling center and stuff that we recently added. This was just another area that we wanted to add to that, so if someone came that needed it, we would already have something in place. This is already zoned for that. It was something that the owner of the building had asked for previously at one point. It was something he was interested in doing. It would still leave it as the clinic/hospital use. It just adds to it.

Mayor Cury- Is there any comments from members of council or citizens in the audience?

Okay, there being no comments, public hearing #2 is closed.

Closed!

Mayor Cury- Public Hearing #3 is now open and this is concerning Zoning Ordinance Amendment to add Roof Top Solar. This is to hear any concerns about the zoning ordinance amendment to add Roof Top Solar.

John- Yeah, I will add that this public hearing as well as the next one, we have sent these items over to legal. They are still reviewing those, and they have requested that we hold off until our January meeting when they have had more time to review this ordinance. This was already advertised for our public hearing, so I didn't want to take it off the agenda in case someone wanted to come and speak on this as we move through the process. However, we will do the public hearing next month as well, and the first reading in January.

Mayor Cury- Mike, do you want to speak to that, or would you rather wait for our regular council?

Michael- We actually just finished the ordinance draft. So, we did ask to not have a first reading for this month since we just finished the ordinance draft and haven't had much time to look at it.

Mayor Cury- So, is anyone present who has any comments or concerns or input of any kind regarding the zoning ordinance amendment to add Roof Solar into our town?

There being no comment, this public hearing #3 is closed.

Closed!

Mayor Cury- We are on public hearing #4 regarding Solar Use Ordinance (Interconnection). Is there anyone here who would like to speak on this?

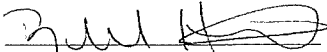
Phillip Horton- I would.

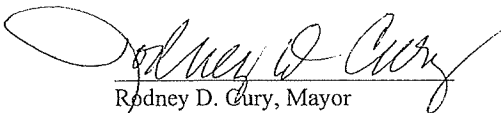
Phillip- Just got off the phone with talking to Senator Hackworth and he said that we need to of course the first thing is the ordinance and then provisions and statements in support of this and then we can present that to the Governor and get things rolling because it will take us several months to get the effectiveness for the Town of Richlands, but it's very, very important. I want to say again, like Radford, most of Radford University is tax exempt. So that puts the city of Radford in a really hard financial spot. So, they have the dam there and they had a hydro generator and that flooded in 2014 destroyed their generator. So, they were trying to make their budget without that added electricity that they were able to produce, and they were sinking financially. So, I think it was 2019, they got their generator system repaired and the mayor said this is the only way that Radford can make it going forward. As I've told you before, I went with Senator Hackworth to his bill signing and I asked him, could we not put a solar array in Richlands? Could we not tap into the natural gas pipeline and start generating our own electricity instead of Richlands being dependent upon AEP and their rate increases. How about us generating electricity at much less cost and then we can have extra money that we can put into infrastructure development for Richlands. It is a win, win situation for us to be able to do this. Mr. Mayor and Council I'm begging you to help us do all that we can, and we have got the ball rolling and that is exactly what we need to do. Thank you very much.

Mayor Cury-Thank you. Is there anyone else who would like to speak on the Solar Use Ordinance (Interconnection)? There being no other citizens to step forward this public hearing #4 is closed.

Closed!

Mayor Cury- This joint public hearing is now adjourned!

  
Rebekah Hackworth, Clerk

  
Rodney D. Cury, Mayor