

# Richlands Planning Commission

April 6, 2021

## Members Present

Rod Cury  
Michelle Elswick  
Elliot Joyce  
Randy Smith  
Richard Smith

## Staff and Town Officials

**Present**  
Connie Allen  
John O'Daniel

## Guests

Rick Barton  
Ervin Davis

- I. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Richard Smith at 7:30 pm.
- II. Randy Smith gave the invocation.
- III. Michelle Elswick led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- IV. The agenda was presented. There were no additions/deletions; Randy Smith made the motion to accept the agenda; Elliot Joyce seconded the motion. All members voted "aye" and the agenda was accepted.
- V. The Minutes from the March 4, 2021 regular meeting were presented. Randy Smith made the motion to approve the minutes as written and Elliot Joyce seconded the motion. All members voted "aye", and the minutes were approved.
- VI. New Business:
  1. Rod gave an update on the Flood Remediation Task Force. The following people have attended a meeting: Shae Cook, Joe McCracken, Nathan Keen, and Curtis Breeding.
  2. Because Rod has been appointed Mayor, we must appoint a new Planning Commission Representation to the Flood Remediation Task Force. Elliot Joyce agreed to be the Planning Commission Representative.
    - i. Notify Nathan to add Elliot to the email list.
- VII. Old Business:
  1. Connie updated on the letters being sent to landowners about the Walking Trail. Mr. Davis is in attendance to speak. Bob Tatum, owner of 2200 Front Street, stated that the land may be used in any way needed for this project.
  2. Rick Barton updated us on the Railroad. He spoke with Nick Lavrusky, Railroad Senior Project Manager. He stated the Railroad would not grant an easement. They would, instead, require a lease agreement. They, also, may require something like they did in Appalachia, where they were required to build a tunnel under the railroad to protect walkers from any kind of falling debris. Rick needs the exact size and Mr. Lavrusky is contacting others for clarification.
  3. Ervin Davis spoke concerning his land. He stated the Clinch River Walking Trail could be the reason a company would locate in Richlands. He stated he is very willing to use his property in any way to better the community.
  4. Rick Barton urges us to contact the Thompson Foundation about funding. He stated CRWT looks very possible.
  5. Richard Smith explained to Mr. Davis each phase.
    - i. Phase 1 goes from Critterville to 2<sup>nd</sup> St Bridge. Phase 2 goes from Frazier's to McDonalds. Phase 3 from McDonalds to Richlands Mall.
    - ii. We want Phase 1 to be a showcase to make sure Phases 2 and 3 happen.
    - iii. The CRWT was conceived by the Planning Commission in 2010 or 2011.
    - iv. CDAC grant with Virginia Tech did the conceptual plans.
    - v. We are at the point now that we are ready to start seeking funding.

vi. We want to:

1. Attract people into our town.
2. Make the trail safe.
3. Increase property values while maintaining privacy and safety with fencing and private access for homeowners along the trail.
4. Improve the quality of life for everyone.

6. Mr. Davis said he was extremely excited for the trail. He and his company will do their utmost to contribute and benefit our town. We have his support 100%.
7. Rick Barton talked about the access points and how excited the kids were to be kayaking on the Clinch using these points. He encouraged us to contact Dominion Power and Land & Water Conservation.
8. Richard says the landowner approval will give us the go ahead to begin applying for grants. Thompson and Litton have the plans ready. The town will supply electric, lighting, etc. to save money. He is excited to see it come to life finally. He, also, suggested we check into Health Grant funding.
9. Rick said the Community Health Assessments has funding available to fight health problems in a community.
10. Rod stated the landowners we need to contact are Dr. Willis, Mr. Davis, Mullins Family (Mary Ann Strong), Maxine (Bob) Tatum, and the Railroad.
11. Mr. Davis stated that the VHDA has expressed interest in developing the East and West end of town after they are finished with the Richlands Professional Building Project. He stated within the next 5 years, the landscape of this town has potential to change for the good. We need to invite VHDA to a meeting to speak. He said what our town needs is what we have with the planning commission- a group of people willing to work together with a vision. He will contact Mr. Millirons with VHDA on behalf of the Planning Commission about coming to speak with us. The Richlands professional building expects to have every unit pre-leased before completion.
12. Richard said our project along with Mr. Davis's project will be great for our town.
13. Mr. Davis said there is VHDA funding available as well.
14. Randy thanked Mr. Davis for attending our meeting.
15. Connie said she would talk to Wayne about drawing something up for landowners. The new numbers are almost \$4 million more than the original numbers.
16. Rod said we need to have Wayne involved and be in contact with Mr. Davis.
17. Rick suggested we start with the Land and Water Conservation funding. He told the commission that the donation of the land needs to come after Land and Water Conservation funding. There are VDOT grants available.

VIII. Richard talked about what a great event Connie had on Saturday representing our town with the help of Ramp up Richlands.

IX. With no other business, Randy made the motion to adjourn; it was seconded by Elliot and all members voted "aye". Meeting was adjourned.

X. The next meeting for the Planning Commission is scheduled for Tuesday, May 4, 2021 at 7:30 pm.

Submitted by: Michelle Elswick, Secretary

*Michelle Elswick*