

THE TOWN OF UNION BRIDGE
PLANNING AND ZONING
COMMISSION MEETING

November 18, 2021

The meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission was called to order by Commission Chairman Tom Long, on Thursday, November 18, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. Notice of the meeting was given by posting the agenda at the Town Hall, on the Town's website and provision to the Carroll County Times. Commission members Amy Kalin; Martin Ward; Bret Grossnickle; Ed Williar; Town Attorney, Mandi Porter; and Commission Chairman, Tom Long were present. Commission Alternate, Tom Marble, were absent. Also in attendance was Carroll County Planning liaison Abigail Rogers. The attendance sheet is attached to and made a part of these minutes.

Commission Chairman Tom Long asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the meeting for October 21, 2021. **Commission member Martin Ward motioned to approve the October 21, 2021 meeting minutes as distributed. Commission member Amy Kalin seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

COMMISSION MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

-There were no commission member announcements.

TOWN ATTORNEY – MANDI PORTER

-Town Attorney opened up discussion on Mayor and Council's, October 25, 2021, direction to amend the text in the Zoning Ordinance of the Town Code to not allow first floor residences in the "B-L, Business Local" district, and to permit only retail and service shops on the first/street level areas of buildings front facing, Main Street that are located in the BL district.

- Chairman Long questioned if there was any discussion on a time limitation for a property that is sitting vacant, unable to get a business to inhabit the area, if after a specified time, they can be exempt from having to provide the space for retail/service shops. Ms. Porter stated that hasn't been discussed, but she can bring it up at the November 22, 2021 Council meeting.
- Chairman Long is concerned that the Town doesn't have an active program to solicit businesses into town and, by not having this type of solicitation, could leave the property area vacant costing the property owner money.
- Chairman Long questioned that, after the Jackson Ridge Development commercial property is developed, whether there will be easy access (in and out) and ample parking for patrons in the current Union Bridge downtown BL district.
- Chairman Long would like to see the Town offer more business incentives.
- Commission member Bret Grossnickle wanted to know if the proposed change to the ordinance would be court defensible. Town Attorney, Mandi Porter confirmed that the recommended changes would be legally defensible and that both Mount Airy and Sykesville have similar ordinances permitting only retail and service shops on the street level in their BL district.
- Commission member Bret Grossnickle recommended that we leave the ordinance alone, as much as he would like to see Union Bridge Downtown restored, he doesn't think it is possible with the way society shops via the internet. The lack of available parking is also an issue for businesses on Main Street.
- Town Attorney Mandi Porter stated that the Town's Comprehensive Plan supports the growth, economy and keeping Main Street businesses afloat.
- Commission member Amy Kalin stated she is a business owner and that she wants downtown B-L area to keep its vintage appeal and keep businesses local, follow smart growth and keep business on the first/street level and apartments on the top levels above street level.
- Commission member Martin Ward stated that in the past 30 years he hasn't seen much business growth on Main St.
- Commission questioned what would happen if an existing Main Street facing apartment located in the B-L district becomes vacant. Would it then change to retail space, making it no longer viable for an apartment? How long would the property have to be vacant to lose its grandfather status?

Town Attorney Mandi Porter will take the Planning and Zoning Commission comments and concerns back to the Mayor and Council at the November 22, 2021 Council meeting and see how they wish to proceed.

CARROLL COUNTY PLANNING LIASON – ABIGAIL ROGERS

- Ms. Rogers stated that the County Planning office is currently working on the Triennial update to the 2019 Carroll County Water and Sewer Master Plan. Ms. Rogers asked the Clerk-Treasurer who the County should contact to go over current chapters and maps pertaining to Union Bridge. Clerk-Treasurer provided her with email addresses for the Town's Water and Sewer Superintendent, Jeff Glass; Town Attorney, John Maguire and Planning and Zoning Consultant, Edmund Cueman.

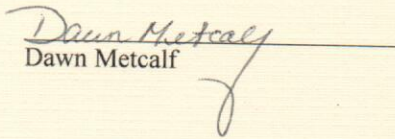
NEXT MEETING

The next Planning and Zoning meeting will be held on December 16, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Commission Member Bret Grossnickle motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commission Member Marty Ward seconded and the motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted


Dawn Metcalf