BRISTOL TENNESSEE MUNICIPAL REGIONAL
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
JUNE 17, 2019

Members Present:
Kelly Graham, Chairman
Mark Webb, Vice-Chairman
Joel Staton, Secretary
Mark Byington, Vice-Secretary
Scott Gaynor
Kevin Buck
Jack Young
Tekai Shu

Staff/Others Present:
Tim Beavers
Danielle Smith
Cherith Young
Ross Peters
Heather Moore
Steve Blankenship
Steven Mott
Brittany Fleenor

Members Not Present
Margaret Feierabend

Mr. Kelly Graham called the Bristol Tennessee Municipal Regional Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. on Monday, June 17, 2019. Mr. Joel Staton performed roll call and a quorum was declared present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
Mr. Tim Beavers stated that one change needed to be made to the May 20, 2019, meeting minutes. Mrs. Danielle Smith was shown as present on the roll; however, she was unable to attend the meeting, and her name should be removed from the minutes. Councilman Jack Young made a motion to remove Danielle Smith from the May 20, 2019, meeting roll and approve the minutes as amended; Mr. Mark Webb seconded the motion; the motion carried unanimously.

UNSCHEDULED COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:
None

OLD BUSINESS:
Mr. Tim Beavers updated the Commission on the two items that were considered at the June City Council meeting. The renaming of Pine Circle Drive to Andover Drive passed unanimously on second reading and public hearing with an effective date of August 1, 2019. The rezoning of 1101 Anderson Street from B-1B to RE passed on first reading, and the second reading will be at the July 9, 2019, City Council meeting.
NEW BUSINESS:
A. Subdivision Plat – Egypt Road
The applicants, Donald and Suzanne Johnson, requested preliminary and final subdivision plat approval for 3 lots on Egypt Road. The property is approximately 8.17 acres and is zoned A-1 (General Agricultural/Estate Residential District). The property is located in the Urban Growth Boundary, and the residential lot is currently vacant. Water service is provided by Bristol/Bluff City Utility District, and there is subsurface sewage disposal available. The lot size and density were reviewed under the Sullivan County Zoning Resolution. The plat format meets the requirements of the Subdivision Regulations pending signatures. All lots contain the minimum 50 foot road frontage required and joint ingress/egress easements are utilized. The final plat met all the requirements of the Bristol Tennessee Subdivision Regulations. Staff recommended that the Planning Commission grant preliminary and final approval of the Donald and Suzanne Johnson property pending all required signatures.

Mr. Kelly Graham asked why this item was brought before the Commission since the property is not located within Bristol’s city limits. Mr. Steven Mott replied that this item was brought to the Planning Commission because it is located in Bristol’s Urban Growth Boundary.

Mr. Mark Webb made a motion to approve the subdivision plat pending the required signatures; Mr. Mark Byington seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Rezoning – The Centre, 1 Centre Dr.
Mrs. Cherith Young presented information on the rezoning request. The applicant, Francis L. Leonard Estate, requested the rezoning of the property located at 1 Centre Drive from B-3 (General Business District) to M-2 (General Industrial District). The property is approximately 16.9 acres and fronts Highway 421. The building on site has been utilized as a special events facility. The main building is surrounded by a large asphalt parking lot, and an additional warehouse exists on the site. Given the location of the subject property and the surrounding zoning of manufacturing, staff felt that that rezoning is suitable. Water and sanitary sewer is available to the project via the City of Bristol, but based upon the property lines, private easements may need to be obtained if future development is proposed.

The City of Bristol Future Land Use Map indicated the property will be developed primarily as commercial. One of the key principles of the Future Land Use Plan is to secure the city’s economic future by strengthening cultural tourism and arts, motor sports, medical arts and healthcare, diversified manufacturing, and destination retail. This rezoning would meet both Policy 3 (sustain existing commercial areas while providing for adequate and compatible growth and expansion) and Policy 4 (provide land and infrastructure to sustain and promote industrial growth) of the Future Land Use Plan.

Staff felt that the requested rezoning is suitable for the following reasons:

1. Observance of policies included with the Future Land Use Plan.
2. The parcel is surrounded by the M-2 zone and is accessible only via an arterial road on a route that already contains truck traffic.

3. The site is isolated because of the terrain, and thus, industrial impacts to surrounding properties should be somewhat mitigated based on this factor.

Due to the industrial character of the surrounding properties within the region of the rezoning request, the City of Bristol Future Land Use Plan presenting a projected concurrence of commercial and industrial uses in the immediate area, and in following Policy 3 & 4 of Bristol’s Future Land Use Plan to promote commercial and industrial growth, staff recommended the Bristol Tennessee Municipal Regional Planning Commission send a favorable recommendation to City Council for this request.

Councilman Jack Young wanted to know some other uses for M-2. Mrs. Cherith Young stated that some other uses of M-2 include; all manufacturing, animal clinics with outdoor kennels, boiler and tank work, plaining mills, public and private utilities, and more.

Mr. Mark Byington made a motion to send a favorable recommendation to City Council for this request; Mr. Scott Gaynor seconded the motion; the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Tim Beavers stated that this item will be brought before City Council for consideration at the July 9, 2019 meeting.

C. Sullivan County Rezoning – 571 Buncombe Rd.

Mrs. Cherith Young presented information on the rezoning request. The applicant, Sandra Smith, requested a rezoning of the property located at 571 Buncombe Road from R-1 (Low Density/Single Family Residential District) to A-1 (General Agricultural/Estate Residential District). The property is located in Bristol’s Urban Growth Boundary and is approximately 2.88 acres. There is roughly 231 feet of road frontage along Buncombe Road. A single-family residential house appears to have burned down almost 3 years ago. The property is served by the Blountville Utility District for water services. Sanitary sewer service exists through sanitary sewage disposal service (SSDS), overseen through Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC). Electric and gas utilities are also available for this property.

A mix of A-1 and R-1 zoning designations is located in the neighborhood. Properties in R-1 designated areas of Sullivan County are designed suitable areas for single-family residential development within areas that are predominantly characterized by low-density suburban residential development. Properties in the A-1 designated areas of Sullivan County are designed to provide suitable areas for single-family residential development located within a rural environment.

The proposed rezoning is in harmony with the zoning of the surrounding properties. The current and requested zoning districts are similar in description, in allowable density, and in allowed uses. Both districts have minimum lot size requirements of 20,000 square feet for lots served by public water supply and private sewer service (SSDS/septic). Both districts have similar lists of allowable
residential uses. The use of singlewide mobile home is not allowed in the R-1 district, and is allowed in the A-1 district.

The City of Bristol Future Land Use Map indicates that the area will be developed as low density residential. The A-1 district would be in effect a down zoning action from the R-1 district, to move from low density single-family residential district to a zone allowing general agricultural and estate residential use. Rezoning the property to A-1 (General Agricultural/Estate Residential District) will agree with the Future Land Use Plan.

Due to the single-family residential character of the surrounding properties and the similarity of the two districts, staff recommended the Bristol Tennessee Municipal Regional Planning Commission send a favorable recommendation to the Sullivan County Commission to rezone 571 Buncombe Road from R-1 (Low-Density/Single-Family Residential District) to A-1 (General Agricultural/Estate Residential District).

Mr. Kelly Graham asked why this would not be considered spot zoning. Mrs. Cherith Young started that given that there is not a big difference in the zoning classifications staff felt this would not represent spot zoning. Single family residential uses are allowed in both zones.

Councilman Jack Young made a motion to send a favorable recommendation to the Sullivan County Commission for this rezoning request; Mr. Kevin Buck seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Sullivan County Rezoning – Weaver Pike

Mr. Steven Mott presented information on the rezoning request. The applicants, Ronald and Cynthia Ramsey, are requesting the rezoning of their property located on Weaver Pike from M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing District) to R-1 (Low Density/Single Family District). The property is located in the Urban Growth Boundary.

The owner’s application stated that their intended purpose of the rezoning is to utilize the property for residential purposes. The property was formerly used as a junk yard, which has been vacated. The subject parcel has roughly 200 feet of road frontage along Weaver Pike. The subject property contains approximately 15.3 acres and was formerly utilized as a junk yard, but is now vacant. Low density single family property surrounds the property, with commercial property to the south/southeast of the subject property. The property is served by the South Bristol/Weaver Pike Utility District. Public sanitary sewer service is not available.

The City’s Future Land Use Map indicates the area will be developed as low density residential. One of the key principles of the Future Land Use Plan is to utilize land resources in a manner that contributes to community health, safety, and quality of life. One of the key elements within Policy 2 of the Future Land Use Plan is to protect the character of residential neighborhoods.

As the subject property aligns with the single family residential character of the surrounding properties and the City of Bristol Future Land Use Plan projecting low density residential use in the subject area, staff recommended the Bristol Tennessee Municipal Regional Planning
Commission send a favorable recommendation to the Sullivan County Commission for this request.

Mr. Mark Byington made a motion to send a favorable recommendation to the Sullivan County Commission for this rezoning request; Mr. Kevin Buck seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

OTHER MATTERS:

A. Signage Standards Discussion

Mrs. Cherith Young presented information on the history of the signage standards discussion.

1. Electronic message boards are currently permitted in the B-3 (General Business) and PBD (Planned Business District) zones.

2. Expansion of allowance of electronic message boards into the following zones was proposed:
   - B-2 (Central Business) District and the
   - B-2E (Central Business Expansion) District
   - M-1 (Light Industrial/Business) District
   - M-2 (General Industrial) District
   - M-3 (Heavy Industrial) District

3. Planning Commission discussed if electronic message boards should also be allowed as a wall sign on a building. Currently they are only allowed as a free-standing sign. The Commission proposed to allow them as one or the other, but not both.

4. Planning Commission discussed if electronic message boards should be allowed in residential zones on properties with schools, religious institutions or businesses. Discussion indicated the Planning Commission was not comfortable allowing electronic message boards in residential districts.

5. The possibility of creating a maximum amount of total signage allowed towards electronic message boards was brought up. The portion of a sign utilized for an electronic message board with changing copy is limited to 40% of the total sign advertising area, except as otherwise provided herein for Regional Entertainment Facilities. If 100% of the total allowed square footage of the sign is comprised of an electronic message board, 60% must remain fixed and the copy or image for this portion may only be changed one time per month.

6. Animation on electronic message boards should be not allowed.

In order for the definition of Electronic Message Board to carry out the intent of the signage conversation, verbiage indicating that wall signs are permitted would need to be added to the draft definition language.
In the Sign Regulations, zoning information would need to be updated to include zones where electronic message boards are permitted: B-2, B-2E, B-3, B-2E, PB, M-1, M-2, and M-3. Also, the following information would need to be added to the general provisions for signage:

1. An electronic message board may be allowed as part of the lot or parcel’s free-standing or wall signage but not both.
2. Animation is prohibited.
3. Electronic message boards may not be used for off-premises advertising.
4. The portion of a sign utilized for an electronic message board with changing copy is limited to 40% of the total sign advertising area, except as otherwise provided herein for Regional Entertainment Facilities. If 100% of the total allowed square footage of the sign is comprised of an electronic message board, 60% must remain fixed and the copy or image for this portion may only be changed one time per month.
5. Electronic Message Boards used in Outdoor Advertising Structures are governed in accordance with Section 216 E.

Discussion ensued on electronic message boards. The consensus was split between 100% of a sign being electronic or 60% being electronic and 40% being static. Staff recommended making signs 100% electronic in order to make things easier to regulate. Staff decided to write language for both options and present them to the Commission at the July meeting for a vote.

B. Access Standards
Mrs. Cherith Young presented information on Access Standards. The Planning Commission discussed residential driveway width requirements in the public right-of-way on March 19, 2019. Impetus for discussion was a request to the BZA for a 24 foot driveway. The BZA denied the request and the property owner requested a review of this regulation by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission directed staff to work on revising the access standards to address this issue. The key elements of the proposed draft included reorganizing and editing for clarity, clarifying that the standards apply to the portion of the access way within public right-of-way, changing the maximum width for residential structures from 20 feet to 24 feet, and adding language to address circular drives. Staff will bring this item to the Planning Commission at the July 15, 2019, meeting for consideration to send to City Council.

C. Design Standards
Mrs. Cherith Young presented information on the history of the Design Standards discussion. The concept of Design Standards initiated with the B-2E project. The current design standard that exists is related to the prohibition of materials within certain zoning districts and all overlays. At the conclusion of the B-2E creation, City Council asked staff to refine the use list included in the Ordinance. Planning Commission spent the summer of 2018 revising this list. Staff requested guidance from the Planning Commission on the list of uses with the B-2E District, the menu option to be included in the Zoning Ordinance, which districts the design standards should apply, and how these standards will be applied in regard to the size of development, renovation, and/or addition.
Mr. Kelly Graham voiced his concern about boarding houses being permitted in this zone. Mrs. Cherith Young stated that boarding/rooming houses and RV parks would not be permitted in this zone. However, other accommodations, such as bed and breakfast, would be permitted.

Mr. Scott Gaynor requested that self-storage facilities be taken out of the approved special permit uses for B-2E. Mr. Kelly Graham stated this is a valid concern because the Commission would be compelled to approve the special use permit if the provisions are compatible with the zoning. Mr. Byington and Mr. Gaynor suggested removing the verbiage that would allow self-storage or mini warehouse facilities in the B-2E zone by special use permit. These facilities are permitted in the B-3 zone by special use permit. The Commission requested that Staff bring this item back at the July 15, 2019 meeting with the self-storage and mini warehouse special use permit verbiage removed.

Mr. Beavers asked the Commission in which districts should the design standards apply. The current design standard that exists is related to the prohibition of materials within certain zoning districts and all overlays. Architectural feature examples were presented to the Commission, and Mr. Beavers asked if the Planning Commission would be comfortable expanding these design standards into all the business zones because these standards are not overly restrictive. This item will be brought before the Planning Commission at the July 15, 2019 meeting for consideration.

D. Tiny Houses
Mrs. Cherith Young presented information on the tiny home development discussion.

Staff discussed that a tiny home may be a bit bigger than 400 square feet and suggest a range from 250 to 1,000 square feet. Mr. Kelly Graham asked how many feet are in a single wide mobile home. Mr. Beavers stated that a standard single wide mobile home is 1,200 square feet.

In the proposed draft, all tiny homes will require site plan review by the Planning Commission. Minimum acreage for tiny house development is 1 acre. Density is 12 tiny houses per acre (mobile homes require 4,000 square feet spaces). The required common recreation area/open space per tiny house is 400 square feet. The minimum setbacks are 10 feet between tiny houses, no tiny house can be located within 20 feet of any exterior boundary or street, and tiny houses must be 10 feet from any interior drive.

Mrs. Cherith Young stated that quite a few people have expressed interest in tiny home development in Bristol. There are currently no provisions in our regulations to allow tiny home projects unless they are constructed as a multifamily in one of the zoning districts which allow multifamily projects.

Discussion ensued on sizes and building structure of mobile and modular homes in comparison to tiny homes. The Commission also expressed concern about shipping container homes and how these structures will appear in the future. Staff will continue to refine and work through the process of tiny homes with the Planning Commission.
STAFF UPDATES:
Mrs. Danielle Smith is working on regulations for sun setting special use permits.

With no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Chairman, Kelly Graham