

**TOWN OF MIDDLETOWN
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
July 15, 2024 | 7:00 P.M.**

The Town of Middletown Planning Commission meeting was held on Monday, July 15, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the town council chambers located at 7875 Church Street, Middletown VA.

Planning Commission Members Present

Chairman Mark Klein
Anothony Boring
William Kircher
Angela Morelock
Councilor Jeffrey Pennington
Vice Chair Rebecca Anderson

Others Present

John Hotaling, Owner, Wayside Inn
Tamara Bullard, Presenter

Planning Commission Members Absent

Staff Present

Amanda Kerns, Regional Planner NSVRC
Taryn Logan, Principal Planner NSVRC
Town Manager Les Morefield

1. Set Agenda

Commissioner Klein requested a motion to amend the agenda to add Kevin Walker to item 11.a. as a presenter, no motion was made. Chairman Klein then asked for a motion to set the agenda as presented. Commissioner Morelock made a motion to set the agenda as presented. Commissioner Boring seconded the motion. All Commissioners were in favor and the agenda was set.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Chairman Klein requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the May 20, 2024, meeting. Vice Chair Anderson made a motion to approve the Planning Commission minutes from May 20, 2024. Commissioner Morelock seconded the motion. All Commissioners were in favor and the minutes were approved

3. Public Comments

Audrey Snoberger: Ms. Snoberger expressed support for the I-81 screening efforts. She mentioned that VDOT had previously discussed the possibility of installing sound barriers many years ago, but no action had been taken. Ms. Snoberger emphasized that if sound suppression measures, such as tree planting, are provided for new subdivisions, older neighborhoods should also receive similar treatment. She briefly addressed the Steel Dog development, noting that the adjacent ProLift business was developed in a way that made it almost unnoticeable, suggesting that Steel Dog might have a similar impact. She also expressed confusion as to why many residents are upset about the development.

Cynthia Armstrong: Ms. Armstrong, who resides across from the Wayside Inn, voiced concerns about the proposed RV park and campground. Her concerns included the safety of entering and exiting the property on Route 11, pedestrian safety, the security of local residents, and the potential impact on property values. While she is opposed to more houses being built, she speculated that closing the property might result in better ownership. Additionally, she raised the issue of what might happen if the RV campground doesn't succeed financially, worrying that the owners might then demand more from the town to resolve their financial difficulties.

Kevin Walker, CEO, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation: Mr. Walker expressed his support for the Wayside Inn's proposal to establish an RV campground. He mentioned that the Foundation is in discussions with the property owners to get involved in the project, as they are committed to seeing the Inn succeed. Mr. Walker emphasized that the Battlefields Foundation's potential partnership would contribute to the longevity of the operation, given their strong track record in managing similar sites. He believes that this collaboration would enhance both the proposed project and the Foundation's existing partnership with the Town. Additionally, he stated that they aim to provide a safe and attractive option for downtown Middletown.

Tim Thompson: Mr. Thompson, who lives across from the Wayside Inn, expressed concerns about the proposed RV campground. His concerns included the potential impact on sewer and water connections, increased noise, and access to emergency services. He also questioned how the campground would attract visitors, noting that a previous campground in the town had failed. Mr. Thompson suggested that the owners consider revisiting popular activities, such as brunches or attracting cycling groups, to increase activity at the Inn. He also expressed the view that the proposal detracts from the town's atmosphere.

4. Chairman Comments

Chairman Klein asked that everyone in attendance take a moment to reflect on the recent assassination attempt against former President Trump. Chairman Klein emphasized that at times like this, engaging in good civil discourse is how we should come together as a society to solve problems and make decisions.

5. Report from Planning and Zoning Administrator

Ms. Kerns stated she had no updates for the ongoing tasks under this item.

Ms. Kerns let the Commission know that they were ready to move forward with the Comprehensive Plan Update. Chairman Klein recommended that staff develop a draft scope of work and set a date for the Plan Review Committee to meet and review before the August meeting. Ms. Kerns agreed to develop the scope of work and reach out to the Plan Review Committee to set a meeting date.

6. Update from Council Liaison Jeffrey Pennington

No Updates

7. Unfinished Business

No Unfinished Business

8. New Business

Mr. Hotaling introduced Mrs. Tamara Bullard, who presented a proposal to establish an RV campground in the vacant rear portion of the Wayside Inn property. The purpose of the project is to improve conditions and keep the historic Inn operational. Following the presentation, staff provided details on the process required to move forward, which includes a zoning text amendment to allow campgrounds in the B-1 district by Special Use Permit and an application for the Special Use Permit itself. These applications would go through the usual adoption process via the Planning Commission and Town Council. Staff also noted that the Virginia Department of Health regulates campgrounds, and the applicant would need to meet those requirements and obtain a permit.

The Planning Commissioners asked questions regarding various aspects of the project, such as RV sizes, nightly rates, sanitary facilities, grey water management, and screening and vegetation plans. A brief discussion ensued.

Chairman Klein then invited feedback from each Commissioner. Councilor Pennington emphasized the historical significance of the Wayside Inn to the town. Commissioner Kircher expressed a desire for a

detailed briefing from the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF) about their potential partnership in the project. Commissioners Morelock and Boring agreed that they would like to see a more well-thought-out proposal before providing further input.

9. Announcements

Ms. Kerns shared that staff received two applications for Planning Commission membership. Those applications were provided for review and would be on the next meeting agenda. Ms. Kerns also shared that an updated Special Use Permit was created and that she would forward it to the Commissioners. Chairman Klein reminded the group that Ms. Kerns would be reaching out to schedule a Plan Review Committee meeting and that the next Planning Commission would take place on August 26, 2024, at 7 p.m.

10. Adjournment

Chairman Klein adjourned the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Christina Smith
Municipal Clerk

Mark Klein
Chairman