



**TOWN OF OCCOQUAN**  
**Town Hall - 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125**  
**MEETING DATE: 2019-04-23**

**MEETING TIME: 6:30 PM**

**Present:** Ann Kisling, Jenn Mathis, Eliot Perkins, Ryan Somma

**Absent:** Daryl Hawkins

**1. Call to Order**

The Planning Commission Meeting was called to order by Eliot Perkins on 2019-04-23, at 6:45 p.m.

**Secretary for Meeting**

Ryan Somma took minutes for the meeting.

**2. Citizen Comments**

There were no citizen comments.

**3. Approval of Minutes of March 26, 2019.**

Ann Kisling moved to approve the Planning Commission meeting minutes of 2019-05-26. Jenn Mathis seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**4. Planning Commission Priorities Update**

Eliot Perkins opened the discussion. He said this was part push as a group to get things done and would be a quick meeting.

*Beautification, Town Entrances, Streetscaping*

Eliot Perkins updated the Commission that the Town's main entrance from 123 is cleared. Dominion Power cut trees and removed vines. Landscaping would occur tomorrow. Lance Houghton, the property owner, was okay with cutting back eight feet without an agreement finalized. The Town was coordinating on the number of boards needed for fence. The Town will plant cherry trees because they are native plants.

Ann Kisling expressed some concern about the messiness of cherry trees. Jenn Mathis noted that it was nice that there is no parking there so no cars will be marred. Eliot Perkins said there would be between eight and ten trees. The cost was \$10,000 for landscaping that does not go onto next year's budget. The Town will set dates for volunteers and chain saws would be needed to clear trees. Jenn Mathis noted that the Town would need liability waivers for Lance Houghton. Eliot Perkins agreed this was needed.

Eliot Perkins said the other Town entrance needs attention, specifically the privately-owned portion with signage. He asked if Ann Kisling could think about what could go there. Ann Kisling agreed she could take that task on.

Jenn Mathis asked if the Town could plant cherry trees to match entrances. Eliot Perkins suggested possibly using the wisteria vines already growing there. Ann Kisling asked if they could construct an arbor that could support the wisteria and if there was a budget for such a construction. Eliot Perkins said there was always a budget, but to keep the project economical, find something attractive, and move from there.

Eliot Perkins noted dissatisfaction with the current signage at the 123 entrance and that VDOT has control over what the Town can put there. There was a possibility for nice stone sign on left side of the road coming into Town being adopted and maintained by volunteers. But he didn't know how that would work with a sign already on one side to have another sign on the opposite side of the road.

#### *Parking and Traffic*

Eliot Perkins said the restriping of Town parking was moving forward. A 2001 study of 8.5-foot spots vs 8.0 spots would cost the Town eight spots to expand the spaces. He asked Commission members to please look at the study, know how many spots it gets rid of, take a look at the spots, and formulate an opinion.

Ann Kisling and Ryan Somma said they had no opinion at this time. Jenn Mathis noted she will only parallel park downtown. Ryan Somma said it was tough with so much parking not being used. Eliot Perkins said that signs were coming soon to enforce timed parking. Anne Kisling noted that the Kiely Court development would cost more parking. Jenn Mathis said Kiely Court would cost two spots. Eliot Perkins said to consider spots that are maybe 8.25 vs 8.5 wide.

#### *Strategic Relationship Building*

Jenn Mathis said that she met on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019 with Chris Price, Deputy County Executive & Acting Director of Economic Development, and Rebecca Horner, Planning Director, as a new Occoquan Planning Commission member about the Town's relationship with Prince William County and how to improve that relationship. She said it was a great meeting. Highlights included PWC targeting life sciences, IT, government contractors, government facilities, and logistics companies because of the tax revenue these businesses bring in and how that keeps citizen taxes low. It costs the County less to service a business than it does to service a single-family home.

She said that she learned about how PWC has programs to hand-hold businesses through the zoning process. Occoquan has several businesses for rent and this could be a good resource for Occoquan businesses. Eliot Perkins said the Town could give these resources to new businesses.

Jenn Mathis said PWC has several small area planning efforts. The "North Woodbridge" planning effort includes Occoquan. There would be a meeting to adopt the plan on May 8pm. It includes road improvements and commercial planning along the Route 1 corridor. She suggested Occoquan could attract locals to town for lunch or to live here. Specifically, the Occoquan focus areas are pedestrian

improvements, old bridge road improvement, and a \$600M bond for parks, roads, and trails to relieve congestion.

Jenn Mathis asked the representatives how the county chooses what events to do? PWC does nothing that competes with private entities within the county and focuses on events that bring tax revenue to town from retail, hotels, meals.

She asked how they decide what projects to invest in. They look at a return on investment in 3-5 years typically. An example is "Wet labs" startup incubators, where graduates must locate their businesses in PWC.

She asked about PWC's big picture plans. They were looking at autonomous shuttles and commuter lot charging stations.

She asked about advice for new Planning Commissioner. They said don't fear disagreement. It's healthy and a part of government.

She asked about how Occoquan could help PWC? They said to add to their online historical marker storyboard. Communicate what's going on in Town. Participate in PWC planning and to improve the permitting process "get permitting right solves most of the conflicts." And that it all comes down to communication.

Jenn Mathis mentioned that there is sometimes a shuttle service to Town. Possibly they could set up a more formal shuttle service during Saturdays and Sundays when Town has most visitors. VDOT is typically very amicable about using lots during off-peak times.

Eliot Perkins asked Jenn Mathis to look out to next options like Occoquan Regional Park and the Workhouse.

## **6. Town Code Discussion**

Eliot Perkins said that because exceptions for height and setback can now be considered, there was a need to strengthen language in the code concerning the criteria for those exceptions. The Town will work with the Town Attorney to get stronger language. Possibly have the Attorney here one night to work on it and get a recommendation to Town Council in order to be in a strong legal position.

## **6. Chair/Town Council Report**

Eliot Perkins said the budgetary process has been long and trying in getting everyone on same page with same numbers. The Town passed two budgets. One was a base budget same as 2019. The second was a Town Priority budget that doubles town police hours, increases fines and keeps residents safe. Town Staffing will look to a get new part-time events person and an additional maintenance person. The third driver was Maintenance; previously each town-owned property had a separate maintenance line item in the budget. Going forward, Maintenance will be one budget item to increase flexibility. There would be no increases in meals, property, or transient taxes.

In conclusion, Ann Kisling will work on the Town entrance. Members will seek to have an opinion on parking. Jenn Mathis will continue work on strategic relationships. Eliot Perkins will work on the town code.

## **7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

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Eliot Perkins  
Chair, Planning Commission

*Submitted by Ryan Somma, Planning Commission Secretary*