

Northumberland County Planning Commission
March 15, 2012
Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Northumberland County Planning Commission was held on March 15, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the Courthouse at Heathsville, VA with the following attendance:

Chris Cralle	Present	Garfield Parker	Present
Kevin Elmore	Present	Albert Penley, Jr.	Present
Alfred Fisher	Present	Charles Williams	Absent
Ed King	Present		
Bill Kling	Present		

Others in attendance:

Richard Haynie (Board of Supervisor Liaison)
Luttrell Tadlock (Assistant County Administrator)

RE: CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Garfield Parker, Chairman.

Ed King gave the invocation.

Garfield Parker led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

RE: AGENDA APPROVAL

With a motion from Albert Penley, seconded by Ed King, and approved by all, the March 15, 2012 agenda was approved. The vote was as follows:

Chris Cralle	AYE	Garfield Parker	AYE
Kevin Elmore	AYE	Albert Penley, Jr.	AYE
Alfred Fisher	AYE	Charles Williams	Absent
Ed King	AYE		
Bill Kling	AYE		

RE: MINUTES- February 16, 2012

With a motion from Alfred Fisher, seconded by Albert Penley, and approved by all, the February 16, 2012 minutes were approved. The vote was as follows:

Chris Cralle	AYE	Garfield Parker	AYE
Kevin Elmore	AYE	Albert Penley, Jr.	AYE
Alfred Fisher	AYE	Charles Williams	Absent
Ed King	AYE		
Bill Kling	AYE		

RE: COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

There were no Commissioner's comments.

RE: STAFF MEMBERS' COMMENTS

There were no Staff comments.

RE: CITIZENS' COMMENTS

There were no comments received.

RE: PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. (Tabled from last month) An amendment to the Northumberland County Zoning Ordinance to define Pawnbrokers Shop and Precious Metals Dealer Shop and to add both uses as a Conditional Use in the Business General District.

Luttrell Tadlock explained to the Commission that this item had already been before the Commission as a public hearing several months ago. This item is now on the table for the Commission to discuss as it had been tabled to obtain additional information.

Alfred Fisher questioned if a Pawn Shop is really the type of business we want in this County. He stressed he is not anti-business. We need business; however, he is in favor of good businesses coming to the County and has strong reserves about allowing Pawn Shops in the County. Pawn Shops in the past have been known as quick outlets to get rid of stolen items. The Pawn Shops you see on television look nice, but he doesn't believe that this is always the case.

Alfred Fisher noted concerns about an easy/close outlet to get rid of items that may come from a persons' business, home, or automobile obtained illegally, which is not always the case. There are honest people that go to Pawn Shops, but there are those that use Pawn Shops in dishonest ways, and he didn't know how something like that could be controlled.

Ed King had questions related to regulations on Pawn Shops.

Alfred Fisher noted the State has many strong controls for Pawn Shops. He also noted if the Commission decides to recommend approval of allowing Pawn Shops, they should do so by Conditional Use and he would like to see that the conditional use be an open house to law enforcement to go there day or night.

Ed King questioned if this is a predatory type of business for someone in need of cash.

Alfred Fisher noted that it could be in some circumstances.

Bill Kling stated his concerns go further than what has been discussed so far. The current business in Callao is being run as a consignment shop. His concern is that the

Commission has not heard anything from the County Sheriff, and this would be placing an extra burden on the Sheriff's Office at a time when the County Board of Supervisors will be struggling to balance a budget. Will something like this require additional deputies in the future? He has major concerns about Pawn Shops. He is biased about Pawn Shops as he saw them as a dumping ground for stolen merchandise when he was younger. It is hard to catch any perpetrators trying to sell any stolen goods. He has real concerns about this.

Garfield Parker questioned if we aren't taking this risk with other types of businesses in the County. He checked on other counties' ordinances regarding Pawn Shops, and the State Code is so restrictive that these other localities do not seem to have a problem.

Kevin Elmore questioned how many stolen items a junk yard takes in.

Bill Kling commented he serves as the Vice Chairman of the County's Economic Development Commission and is very interested in expanding the business and tax base of this County. Yet he sees this as an increase in the tax revenue to enforce this. We now have regulations on the books but not necessarily the personnel to keep a close check on them.

Alfred Fisher noted conditions were placed on the junkyard in close proximity to the courthouse, and the amount of time that this County has spent investigating stolen items is unbelievable. Not only is he concerned about the Pawn Shop and the citizens of Northumberland County, but it allows people from adjoining counties a place to bring items into this County that have been stolen. The Sheriff does have concerns about this. Mr. Fisher has spoken to him; however, he cannot speak for the Sheriff.

Kevin Elmore questioned why the Sheriff has not come to the meeting to voice those concerns. Any type of business you have coming into the County you will have repercussions. He thinks the Commission should give the pawn shop owner an opportunity to run his business.

Chris Cralle questioned Alfred Fisher if he was saying that the County may see an increase in criminal activity if a Pawn Shop was permitted.

Alfred Fisher commented he would not say that criminal activity would increase.

Richard Haynie said he agreed with Mr. Fisher but didn't want to stop any business, even though he does have doubts about this. Pawn Shops have always had a bad name associated with them.

Kevin Elmore commented the Commission keeps saying that we have mixed feelings. No one has brought to the table any valid evidence that we have had criminal activity associated with a Pawn Shop.

Bill Kling noted that the Commission could invite comment from Sheriff Wilkins and ask if the personnel he currently has could handle the addition of a pawn shop.

Garfield Parker commented the Commission should make a decision tonight, send this to the Board, and not table this until another meeting, as tabling this item is not getting us anywhere.

Albert Penley stated he would be interested in seeing this go forward but only as a conditional use. He has dealt with Pawn Shops and Precious Metals Dealer Shops before. They are tightly controlled, but the bulk of the administration and control of this goes back to the Sheriff's Office.

With a motion from Albert Penley, Jr., seconded by Kevin Elmore, the Commission is recommending the Board of Supervisors approve the definitions of a Pawnbrokers Shop and Precious Metals Dealer Shop as advertised as well as adding these uses as a Conditional Use to the Business General District. The Commission is also recommending two conditions be placed on each Pawnbroker Shop/Precious Metals Dealer Shop in addition to any other conditions warranted by the Board of Supervisors. These two conditions shall include: 1) Some type of permitting process where an individual would need to renew the permit to operate a Pawnbroker Shop/ Precious Metals Dealer Shop and where, if the business is in good standing, the permit would be renewed, and 2) Some type of condition where the Sheriff's Office has the option of monitoring these types of businesses. The vote was as follows:

Chris Cralle	AYE	Garfield Parker	AYE
Kevin Elmore	AYE	Albert Penley, Jr.	AYE
Alfred Fisher	NEAY	Charles Williams	Absent
Ed King	AYE		
Bill Kling	NEAY		

RE: WORK SESSION ITEMS

There were no work session items.

RE: DISCUSSION ITEMS

Board of Supervisors Report

Luttrell Tadlock gave the Board of Supervisors' report.

RE: PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments received.

RE: ADJOURNMENT

With a motion from Bill Kling, seconded by Chris Cralle, and approved by all, the meeting was adjourned. The vote was as follows:

Chris Cralle	AYE	Garfield Parker	AYE
Kevin Elmore	AYE	Albert Penley, Jr.	AYE
Alfred Fisher	AYE	Charles Williams	Absent

Ed King
Bill Kling

AYE
AYE