AGENDA
Wytheville Planning Commission
Thursday, January 10, 2019
6:00 p.m.
Council Chambers
150 East Monroe Street
Wytheville, Virginia 24382

A. CALL TO ORDER — Chairman M. Bradley Tate

B. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM — Chairman M. Bradley Tate

C. CONSENT AGENDA
   1. Minutes of the work session and the regular meeting of November 8, 2018

D. ELECTION OF OFFICERS
   1. Chairperson
   2. Vice-Chairperson

E. CITIZENS’ PERIOD

F. OTHER BUSINESS
   1. Review of the R-3 Residential Zoning District Regulations
   2. Further discussion regarding the Small-Lot/Small-Home Regulations
   3. Continued discussion regarding regulations for Homestays
   4. Further review of the R-1M Residential Zoning District Regulations
   5. Discussion regarding the zoning of properties along Community Boulevard

G. ADJOURNMENT
MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION OF THE WYTHEVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2018, AT 5:00 P.M.

Members present: Chairman M. Bradley Tate, Vice-Chairman Bradford M. Litton, Cathy D. Pattison, Terrance E. Suarez, Kevin L. Varney, Kenny W. Ervin, John W. Jones, Jr., Mayor Beth A. Taylor, Assistant Town Manager Stephen A. Moore, Town Clerk Sharon G. Corvin, Assistant Director of Planning and Development Brian Freeman, Town Attorney Christopher R. Menerick, Mark Zammit, David Schmidt

Members absent: None

Others present: None

RE: CALL TO ORDER, QUORUM
Chairman Tate called the Work Session to order and established that a quorum was present.

RE: CONSIDERATION OF SMALL HOMES/SMALL LOTS
Chairman Tate noted the purpose of the Work Session is to discuss the overlay regulations for small homes/small lots in town. He noted that the Town had invited several local contractors to the Work Session to gain their thoughts about the proposed regulations. Assistant Director of Planning and Development Freeman reviewed the regulations. Mr. Freeman noted that it had been discussed that a smaller home would cost more per square foot to construct than a traditional size home, and he inquired if Mr. Zammit or Mr. Schmidt had any comments. Mr. Schmidt noted that a small home would cost more per square foot to construct. Mr. Zammit explained it would cost more per square foot, but there is, obviously, less lumber required for framing, etc., and the overall cost would be less, but the cost per square footage would increase. Mr. Schmidt advised that he is opposed to allowing vinyl siding on the homes. Mr. Freeman explained that the regulations require a thicker millimeter vinyl siding, which would keep the homes affordable but also help with the longevity of the siding. Mr. Zammit noted that allowing smaller homes on smaller lots provides more opportunities for home ownership. Mr. Zammit advised that he does not think the purpose of the regulations should be for a developer to construct subdivisions of these homes, and he did not think that is the direction the Town would like to take. Mr. Varney noted that he has seen developments of these smaller homes, and they were developed very nicely. Assistant Town Manager Moore stated that in a subdivision development of smaller homes, perhaps there could be a Homeowners Association that could help with controlling the look of the homes, etc. A brief discussion ensued regarding parking in a small home subdivision. Mr. Varney noted that the homes he viewed had a single car garage and then a driveway where another vehicle could park. It was noted that some families have more than two vehicles. Mr. Zammit advised that there are already many zoning violations in town, and it would do no good to have these zoning regulations if no one is going to do zoning enforcement in the town. Mr. Schmidt pointed out that the Town would want to ensure that these homes are kept neat and tidy. Mr. Zammit stated that he thought it would be good if the Town imposed standards on all homes in the town and not just tiny houses. A brief discussion ensued about requiring electrical service lines to be installed underground to the smaller homes. Vice-Chairman Litton pointed out that underground electrical lines are great for the aesthetics of an area. Mr. Varney noted that he agreed with requiring electrical lines to be underground for the small homes. It was noted that the Town could possibly suggest that the electrical lines be underground but not to make it a requirement. Discussion continued regarding the regulations. Assistant Town Manager Moore thanked the contractors for attending the meeting and for voicing their opinions about the regulations for small homes/small lots. He advised that the Planning Commission will continue to discuss this topic in their regular meetings.

RE: ADJOURNMENT
There being no further business, a motion was duly made, seconded and carried to adjourn the Work Session (6:00 p.m.).

M. Bradley Tate, Chairman

Sharon G. Corvin, CMC, Town Clerk
Chairman Tate called the meeting to order and established that a quorum was present.

RE: CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Tate presented the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the regular meeting of October 11, 2018. He inquired of the Commission if there were any additions or corrections to the consent agenda or if there was a motion to approve the consent agenda, as presented. A motion was made by Mr. Jones and seconded by Mr. Varney to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of October 11, 2018, as presented. Chairman Tate inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: For: M. Bradley Tate, Bradford M. Litton, Cathy D. Pattison, Terrance E. Suarez, Kevin L. Varney, Kenny W. Ervin, John W. Jones, Jr. Against: None.

RE: CITIZENS’ PERIOD

Chairman Tate advised that the next agenda item is Citizens’ Period. He noted that there are no citizens attending the meeting to address the Council during Citizens’ Period, therefore, he would proceed with the agenda.

RE: SMALL-LOT.SMALL-HOME REGULATIONS

Chairman Tate advised that the next agenda item is the continued review of the Small-Lot/Small-Home regulations. Assistant Town Manager Moore stated that he would like to discuss non-conforming uses with the Commissioners. He noted that he and Councilman Hand discussed the fact that Councilman Hand did not understand the nonconforming lot issue. Assistant Town Manager Moore remarked that Councilman Hand thought that a nonconforming lot was considered an illegal lot where construction was not allowed. He noted that he wanted to explain to the Planning Commission that a nonconforming lot is a lot that was developed prior to the adoption of the Zoning Ordinance in 1969. He commented that a nonconforming lot does not meet the provisions of the present Zoning Ordinance, but it is still considered to be a legal lot. Assistant Town Manager Moore explained that the lot simply does not conform to the provisions of the ordinance. He remarked that a person can still build on the lot, however, the present setback requirements have to be met, and the Small-Lot/Small-Home Regulations define this. Assistant Town Manager Moore noted that earlier in the Work Session, manufactured housing was discussed. He explained that the Town does provide some allowances for manufactured homes. Assistant Town Manager Moore remarked that a manufactured home is, basically, what used to be called a mobile home. He noted that the home is located on a frame and meets certain federal standards, but it does not meet provisions of the Building Code. Assistant Town Manager Moore commented that the definition of a manufactured home is listed in the Zoning Ordinance. He continued to explain to the Commissioners that manufactured homes are allowed in the town but only in industrial zones and there are requirements that the homes must meet even in those zoning districts/areas. Mr. Varney stated that on the corner of 18th and Washington Streets, apartments are located there and two townhouses that he built. He inquired of Assistant Town Manager Moore if that area is zoned for manufactured homes. Assistant Town Manager Moore noted that there is such a thing as an onframe modular home. He explained that onframe modular homes are, basically, manufactured homes, but they are built to the Building Code standard, therefore, they meet the provisions of the Building Code. Assistant Town Manager Moore commented that the Town does allow onframe modular homes in R-3 Residential Zoning Districts. Vice-Chairman Litton inquired of Assistant Town Manager Moore if those homes have to be on a permanent foundation. Assistant Town Manager Moore stated that is correct. He continued to discuss the difference between onframe modular homes and modular homes. Assistant Town Manager Moore stated that a number of years ago, the Town adopted an ordinance that allowed the older, plotted lots to have a setback of five feet. He remarked that those lots had to be plotted before 1969, and they had to have a lot width of 60 feet or less in an R-3 Residential Zoning District and 70 feet or less in an R-2 Residential Zoning District. Assistant Town Manager Moore explained that the reason for this was because the Town had a number of people who had homes that were built on the lots between 1920-1940,
and they did not have the setback that is now required. He continued to explain the setbacks during that time period. Assistant Town Manager Moore commented that this is the proposed provision is that is included in the Overlay Zone, which is in the R-2 Residential and R-3 Residential Zoning Districts. He noted that if the Planning Commission would like to get a visual of a small-lot/small-home, they could go down Valley Street, and at approximately Third Street at the four way stop, there is a home located on the corner that has been built on a very small lot. He noted that it seems that the home is going to be very nice. He remarked that it is very similar to what the Planning Commission has been discussing. Assistant Town Manager Moore noted that if the Planning Commission members have anyone with questions to please have them come see him, and he will explain this to them. He noted that Town staff could review what the person has and try to help figure out a way to help them develop their lot. Assistant Town Manager Moore reiterated that if anyone has questions relative to the Small-Lot/Small-Homes or anything in the Zoning Ordinance oranything in the Overlay Zone, please feel free to come by the Town offices, and Town staff will take the time to explain this or get them an answer. Chairman Tate stated that he felt like the two contractors who attended the Work Session earlier were in favor of the idea of the Small-Lot/Small-Homes, which is a big deal to him. He noted that he thought that the Planning Commission should keep moving forward with the idea. Mr. Varney remarked that both Mr. David Schmidt and Mr. Mark Zammit are active in construction in town. He noted that Mr. Schmidt has, actually, performed a lot of work and is a type of developer. Mr. Varney commented that the Planning Commission inquired of Mr. Schmidt before he left the Work Session if he would be interested in the Small-Lot/Small-Home Overlay Zone. He remarked that Mr. Schmidt stated that he would be interested in the Overlay Zone. Mr. Varney noted that he feels like the Overlay Zone is a way to grow Wytheville. He explained that he felt like the Work Session was very productive, and he feels like Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Zammit were in favor of most everything except for the siding, which was a split between them. Mr. Varney noted that in his opinion, the siding needs to remain as a requirement. He continued to express his thoughts regarding the siding regulations. Discussion ensued regarding the regulations in the Overlay Zone and the expenses involved with the regulations. The Commissioners discussed the cost of underground electric service, etc., how it makes things look aesthetically and the advantage of not having to cut trees because of power lines. Mr. Varney noted that he had to leave the meeting, however, he is in favor of the underground electric service. The Planning Commissioners continued to discuss the regulations including underground telephone, cable and electric service. Assistant Town Manager Moore stated that Town staff could place a paragraph in the regulations that states that the Town would encourage the electricity to be underground. He noted that it would be a choice, but he would suggest that most people, if it is only a couple of feet from the pole, will probably choose to go underground. Vice-Chairman Litton commented that he feels like most people think that it costs more to bury the electric because a truck and crew has to come out to perform the work, but people normally never really price the work. He noted that the electric company is losing money when they have to come out, but the company knows that they will receive a service fee each month. Vice-Chairman Litton remarked that when a person looks at a structure and works it and has to plant trees around a structure, it is much better to have the electric service in the ground. Assistant Town Manager Moore inquired of the Planning Commission if they would like to have Town staff include this regulation in the Small-Lot/Small-Home Overlay Zone. It was the consensus of the Wytheville Planning Commission to place a paragraph in the regulations that states that the Town would “encourage the electricity to be underground,” but not make it mandatory. Assistant Town Manager Moore commented that he is not sure where to include this in the regulations, but Town staff would include it and have it for the Commission’s review at the next meeting. He inquired if the Planning Commission had any other corrections, additions or deletions to the Small-Lot/Small-Home Overlay Zone. Assistant Town Manager Moore remarked that if the December meeting is cancelled, then the public hearing for the Overlay Zone could be set for the February meeting. Chairman Tate inquired about the verbiage of the Front Yard Setback. Discussion ensued regarding the Front Yard Setback verbiage. Mr. Jones remarked that he feels like the verbiage means that if the home has a front porch, the porch is required to be 15 feet from the front yard. Assistant Town Manager Moore stated, in favor of this, Town staff will leave this verbiage in the draft ordinance, but he is not so sure this is something that the Commission would want to do. Assistant Town Manager Moore noted that on page two of the draft ordinance, there are two types of homestays listed.
He commented that Type A rentals are rented with the homeowner being present, and Type B rentals are rented with the homeowner not being present. Assistant Town Manager Moore remarked that he feels like this is a point of contention with many people, and they feel like if the homeowner is present at the rental property, then everything is under control, but without the homeowner present, the house is considered a party house that could result in a bad situation.

He continued to note the main topics of concern in the proposed Homestay Ordinance that the Planning Commission needs to discuss. Assistant Town Manager Moore stated that in the draft Homestay Ordinance, Town staff followed several similar regulations that the Blacksburg, Virginia, ordinance follows. He noted that he feels that it would be a good idea for Wytheville to follow some of the similar regulations that surrounding communities follow. Assistant Town Manager Moore inquired if the Planning Commission had any questions or comments. Ms. Pattison stated that, personally, she is not in favor of the Type B rentals because she thinks the host needs to be present. Assistant Town Manager Moore inquired if the Planning Commission thinks that this has also been the public’s opinion during past public hearings regarding Airbnbs, etc. Chairman Tate and Ms. Pattison stated that they would suggest removing “apartment” on page one, Section 3-42.2. Further discussion ensued regarding the draft Homestay Ordinance in comparison to surrounding areas’ Homestay or Airbnb Ordinances. Assistant Town Manager Moore explained to the Commissioners that when the General Assembly noted that they would rule on Airbnbs, many communities, including Wytheville, decided not to proceed with proposed ordinances that would police the Airbnbs or Homestays. He noted that once the General Assembly finalized rules for Airbnbs and gave it to the localities to regulate, both Roanoke and Blacksburg proceeded with adopting an ordinance to regulate the Airbnbs. Assistant Town Manager Moore explained that Town staff did not perform a search for all localities that have ordinances, however, he is aware that Fairfax, Roanoke and Blacksburg all have Airbnb Ordinances. He commented that Blacksburg’s ordinance seems to be the most reasonable and easiest ordinance to interpret. Assistant Town Manager Moore continued to review the Blacksburg ordinance.

Mr. Suarez inquired of Assistant Town Manager Moore if he is supposed to be permitted to operate an Airbnb. Assistant Town Manager Moore explained that the Melton property has continued to be rented on the Airbnb website. Town Attorney Menerick continued to explain to the Planning Commission how he made the reservation, etc. He noted that he had a conversation with the Meltons in August, and they were told that they would need to cease operations, but they could proceed with the existing reservations that they have in their system. He remarked that they were told not to accept any new reservations following that conversation, but they accepted his reservation. Assistant Town Manager Moore remarked that he did not see any ordinances for those locations, however, he would look again.

Discussion continued regarding the restriction of the property owner having to be present at the rental property. Chairman Tate inquired of Assistant Town Manager Moore as to what the Melton property is zoned, which will be going before the Council for their request of a Special Exception Permit to operate an Airbnb. Assistant Town Manager Moore stated that the Melton property is zoned R-2 Residential. He noted that he would like to update the Planning Commission in regard to that property. Assistant Town Manager Moore explained that the Melton property has continued to be rented on the Airbnb website. He noted that Town Attorney Menerick checked the website earlier in the day, and he was able to make a reservation on the site. Town Attorney Menerick continued to explain to the Planning Commission how he made the reservation, etc. He noted that he had a conversation with the Meltons in August, and they were told that they would need to cease operations, but they could proceed with the existing reservations that they have in their system. He remarked that they were told not to accept any new reservations following that conversation, but they accepted his reservation. Assistant Town Manager Moore stated that on page three of the draft ordinance, the number of rooms per building is limited to two or three rooms. He commented that the Planning Commission has not discussed this regulation. Assistant Town Manager Moore stated that Town staff would suggest that the homestays be registered somehow through the Town and that the properties have an inspection process. He noted that the draft ordinance also states that no signs shall be permitted for the homestay. Assistant Town Manager Moore inquired of the Planning Commission if they would like to keep the exclusion of signs in the draft ordinance. He continued to review the draft ordinance with the Planning Commission and inquired of their thoughts regarding the draft. Dr. Suarez inquired of Assistant Town Manager Moore if he is referring to a sign that would state that a property is a homestay. Assistant Town Manager Moore stated that he is correct. Dr. Suarez inquired of Assistant Town Manager Moore if he is referring to a sign with a specific house name on it that would identify the Airbnb. Assistant Town Manager Moore inquired regarding the naming of properties for homestays. Assistant Town Manager Moore explained the new Supreme Court ruling regarding no content based signs. Discussion continued regarding the naming of properties for homestays. Assistant Town Manager Moore remarked that the Planning Commission could insert in the Homestay Ordinance that no signs will be permitted to distinguish a homestay. He noted that in reference to the Sign Ordinance, no signs are supposed to be permitted in residential districts. Dr. Suarez inquired of Assistant Town Manager Moore that if he understands correctly, he is not allowed to name his home and place the sign on his mailbox. Assistant Town Manager Moore explained that Dr. Suarez would be allowed to place the name sign on his mailbox, but he would not be allowed to place the sign in his yard or on his home. Discussion ensued regarding the definition of a sign. Chairman Tate commented that he feels like the biggest decision regarding homestays is going to be the zoning. He noted that the Planning Commission needs to decide where to allow homestay properties. Assistant Town Manager Moore stated that Town staff could advertise and leave the proposed language as it is regarding the Airbnb or Homestay establishments being permitted uses in the residential zoning districts, however, he suspects that the Planning Commission will have a lot
of citizens attend the public hearing in opposition of this being a permitted use in R-1 Residential Districts. The Planning Commission continued to discuss the pros and cons of advertising the draft ordinance as it is. Mr. Jones stated that the language can be removed, and if there is a large crowd that attends the public hearing who wants those districts included, the Planning Commission can add it back into the ordinance. Assistant Town Manager Moore stated that it would be easier to advertise for the public hearing with the language regarding the permitted use of Homestays and Airbnbs in the draft ordinance rather than leaving the language out and adding it back because then another public hearing would have to be scheduled. It was the consensus of the Planning Commission to keep the proposed language in the draft Homestay Ordinance allowing Airbnbs or Homestays in Article VI-Residential District R-1; Article VI-A-Residential District R-1A; and, Article VI-M-Residential District R-1M. Discussion was held in regard to Airbnb representatives soliciting property owners in the community, etc. Assistant Director of Planning and Development Freeman stated that if the Planning Commission removes the R-1 Residential Districts as permitted use areas, someone could still come before the Planning Commission with a Special Exception Permit request to operate an Airbnb or Homestay. He noted that he and Town Attorney Menerick discussed this, and they do not feel like it would hurt the Planning Commission to remove the language since a Special Exception Permit can be requested. He remarked that the language would not mean that an Airbnb and/or Homestay would never be allowed in the R-1 Residential Zoning Districts, it would simply mean that it would not be a by right provision. Dr. Suarez remarked that if the language is removed, it would mean that the Commission did not really want this as a permitted use, and then, if the Commission approves the use with a Special Exception Permit request, it is a contradiction. He noted that is simply his opinion. Chairman Tate inquired as to what the definition is of a true Special Exception Permit. Assistant Director of Planning and Development Freeman stated that a Special Exception Permit is required when a use is not currently permitted, but it is permitted in other zoning districts in the town. He noted that it is not at the level of requesting a variance because a variance is supposed a true hardship. He commented that, for example, a variance request might be that a person has a 15 foot sideyard setback requirement on their lot, and they are requesting that the setback be five feet in order to construct what they need. He noted that this would require a variance and not a Special Exception Permit because it is simply not allowed. Assistant Director of Planning and Development Freeman continued to discuss Special Exception Permit requests versus variances. Assistant Town Manager Moore explained that the good news about Special Exception Permit requests is that the abutting property owners are identified and notified. He commented that at least the abutting neighbors are not clueless as to what could potentially be approved to operate next to them. Assistant Town Manager Moore continued to explain to the Planning Commission the definition of a Special Exception Permit, the safeguards that can be implemented by the Commission, etc. He noted that he feels like Special Exception Permits are good because they allow flexibility in the Zoning Ordinance, but they have some stipulations, as well. Dr. Suarez inquired if there was anything in the proposed ordinance that addresses fees, taxes, etc. Assistant Town Manager Moore stated that it has been established that a lodging tax would be a requirement. Town Clerk Corvin noted that those types of requirements are listed under item number 16 of the regulations. Vice-Chairman Litton commented that the Airbnb website collects the tax for the property owners, if he is correct. Assistant Town Manager Moore stated that is correct, if the property owner sets this up with Airbnb. He noted that a property owner may be able to have a Homestay without having to go through the Airbnb website. Chairman Tate inquired of Assistant Town Manager Moore if he feels it is in the best interest of the Planning Commission to leave the R-1 Residential Zoning Districts listed in the draft ordinance as approved locations for the use of Airbnb or Homestay. He inquired if Blacksburg and Roanoke include R-1 Residential Zoning Districts in their ordinance. Assistant Town Manager Moore commented that as he recalls, both included most all residential districts. Vice-Chairman Litton stated that he feels like the Planning Commission needs to compromise, therefore, he thinks it should be left in the draft ordinance. Discussion continued regarding whether or not to leave the R-1 Residential Zoning Districts in the draft ordinance. Assistant Town Manager Moore requested the Planning Commission to think about which regulations they want to leave in the draft ordinance and which regulations they would like to remove from the draft ordinance, and noted that at the January meeting, the Commission will review the draft ordinance once more before setting the public hearing. The Planning Commission discussed the difference between Airbnbs and Homestays. Assistant Town Manager Moore commented that in the draft ordinance, he thought that instead of being listed as Airbnb, he thought that it is listed as Homestay throughout the draft ordinance rather than in the definition. Dr. Suarez remarked that it is listed as Homestay Establishment or Airbnb throughout the entire draft ordinance. Assistant Town Manager Moore stated that Town staff would make those corrections. Chairman Tate noted that there will be further discussion at the January meeting, once the corrections are made that the Planning Commission recommended. Assistant Town Manager Moore commented that Town staff would try to review a few more localities’ ordinances, besides the three that have already been reviewed. Chairman Tate inquired if there were any other comments or questions regarding the Airbnbs/Short Term Rentals. There being none, he proceeded with the agenda.
RE: R-1M RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICT

Chairman Tate advised that the next agenda item is the continued review of the R-1M Residential Zoning District regulations. Assistant Town Manager Moore stated that the Planning Commission has the proposed regulations for the R-1M Residential Zoning District in their packets. He noted that the proposed changes have been highlighted, and the Planning Commission could discuss those proposed changes at this time. Assistant Town Manager Moore continued to review the highlighted proposed changes in the R-1M Residential Zoning District with the Commission. Assistant Town Manager Moore inquired if the Commission would like to strike number 6-9.9M regarding boarders from the draft, as presented. He noted that if the Planning Commission desires, the section regarding the accessory structure provision can also be removed. Ms. Pattison remarked that she would like to see the accessory structure provision stay in the ordinance. She noted that as far as striking number 6-9.9M, she would like to see this removed from the ordinance. Assistant Town Manager Moore inquired if the Planning Commission had any further comments or questions regarding the proposed changes. It was the consensus of the Planning Commission to keep the accessory structure provision but delete number 6-9.9M from the proposed ordinance. Discussion continued regarding the proposed revisions to the ordinance. Chairman Tate inquired if there were any questions or concerns regarding the proposed revisions to the R-1M Residential Zoning District. There being none, he proceeded with the agenda.

RE: DISPENSING WITH DECEMBER MEETING

Chairman Tate advised the next agenda item is to consider dispensing with the December 2018 meeting due to the Christmas holidays. Chairman Tate inquired if the Commission agreed to dispense with the December meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Jones and seconded by Dr. Suarez to dispense with the December 2018 Wytheville Planning Commission meeting due to the Christmas holidays. Chairman Tate inquired if there was any discussion on the motion. There being none, the motion was approved with the following voting in favor and there being no opposition: For: M. Bradley Tate, Bradford M. Litton, Cathy D. Pattison, Terrance E. Suarez, Kenny W. Ervin, John W. Jones, Jr. Against: None.

RE: ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was duly made, seconded and carried to adjourn the meeting (6:57 p.m.).

M. Bradley Tate, Chairman

Sharon G. Corvin, CMC, Town Clerk