



TOWN COUNCIL
& PLANNING COMMISSION JOINT WORKSESSION
AGENDA

March 20, 2023

6:00 PM

Rocky Mount Train Depot
52 Franklin Street, Rocky Mount, Virginia 24151

All cellular phones must be turned off during the Council Meeting.

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Joint Town Council and Planning Commission Kickoff -Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance Update
 - 3.1. Berkley Group Agenda & Materials
4. Adjournment

Town of Rocky Mount Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance Update Joint Town Council and Planning Commission Kickoff - Agenda March 20, 2023



Project Overview

The Town of Rocky Mount has enlisted the support of the Berkley Group to update, modernize, and restructure the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances into one seamless regulatory document. The revised Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance will:

- Provide streamlined and user-friendly regulations;
- Incorporate best planning practices and current state code requirements;
- Address the goals and strategies identified in the Comprehensive Plan; and
- Consider citizen needs and issues identified through the public engagement process.

This process will be guided by Rocky Mount staff, Town Council, and Planning Commission and will include opportunities for input from stakeholders and citizens. Tonight's meeting is intended to introduce the project and collect feedback and preliminary direction on key issues, concerns, and areas of focus.

Agenda

1. Berkley Group Presentation:
 - a. Project Overview & Schedule
 - b. Project Intent
 - c. Ordinance Purpose and Content
 - d. Community Engagement
 - e. Discussion
 - i. Project Priorities & Goals
 - ii. Focus Group Questions
 - iii. Public Survey
 - iv. Workshop Exercises
 - f. Keys to Success
 - g. Next Steps
2. Questions & Closing

Attachments

- a. Focus Group Questions
- b. Public Survey
- c. Workshop Exercises

Town of Rocky Mount Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance Update Joint Town Council and Planning Commission Kickoff - Agenda March 20, 2023



Schedule & Next Steps

The project schedule below indicates major tasks and the target month of completion.

Phase	Task	Task Description	2023												2024											
			February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November		
A	A1	Project Management / Staff Input																								
	A2	Project Kickoff with Staff (Virtual)	V																							
	A3	Document Review / Diagnostic																								
	A4	Joint Public Officials Meeting (up to 2)		X		X																				
	A5	Public Outreach Survey (Online & Paper)																								
	A6	Stakeholder Listening Sessions (up to 4)				X																				
	A7	Public Workshop (up to 1)			X																					
B	B1	Joint Work Sessions (up to 6)						X		X		X		X		X		X								
	B2-12	Drafting																								
	B13	Changes Summary																								
	B14	Compiled Draft Ordinance Review																								
C	C1	Open House (Public Draft Review)																								
	C2	Pre-Adoption Work Session																								
	C3	Incorporate Final Revisions																								
	C4	Public Adoption																					X			
	C5	Post-Adoption Materials																								
X = Anticipated In-person Attendance; V = Virtual Attendance																										

X = Anticipated In-person Attendance; V = Virtual Attendance

Town of Rocky Mount Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance Update Community Survey



Introduction

The Town of Rocky Mount is in the process of revising and updating the Rocky Mount Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. This revision will update the current Ordinance's language to reflect changes in the Code of Virginia, modernize language and regulations for current planning best practices, address new issues that have become relevant in Rocky Mount, and address changes to the development patterns and demands of the Town. This survey will assist the Planning Commission and Town Council in understanding your opinions about development within the Town of Rocky Mount.

Survey Information

- **Survey period:** Saturday, April 1, 2023 – Sunday, April 30, 2023.
- **Return surveys to:** 345 Donald Avenue, Rocky Mount VA 24151
- **Staff contact:** Jessica Heckman jheckman@rockymountva.org 540-483-0907

Survey Questions

1) **General:** Which of the following best describes your association with the Town of Rocky Mount? (Select all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ☐ I live within Town limits | ☐ I own a business within Town limits | ☐ I am a developer/builder |
| ☐ I work within Town limits | ☐ I am a property owner within Town limits | ☐ Other. Please Specify: _____ |

2) **General:** Select your top zoning and land use priorities for the Town of Rocky Mount: (Choose up to three)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ☐ Improving community appearance | ☐ Encouraging new housing development | ☐ Protecting existing residential areas from other uses |
| ☐ Encouraging industrial growth | ☐ Preserving historic areas | ☐ Encouraging infill development that matches community character and design |
| ☐ Encouraging new commercial businesses (retail, restaurants, etc.) | ☐ Conserving sensitive environmental areas | ☐ Other. Please Specify: _____ |

- 3) **General:** Are you generally satisfied with the quality of development in the following areas throughout the Town? Please explain any specific concerns in the comment section. (Check one for each)

Areas	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	No Opinion
Residential neighborhoods			
Commercial areas			
Industrial areas			
Central Business District - Downtown area			
Central Business District - Uptown area			
Gateway areas into the Town			

Comments:

- 4) **Land Use:** Would you encourage or discourage the following residential land uses in the Town of Rocky Mount? Please explain any specific concerns in the comment section. (Check one for each)

Land Use / Types of Development	Encourage	Allow with Restriction	Discourage	No Opinion
Single family dwellings				
Townhouses				
Apartments/multi-family dwellings				
Mixed-Use development with different housing types and uses				
Mixed-Use buildings with both apartments and office/commercial				
Attached accessory dwelling units (<i>i.e., basement apartment, in-law suites</i>)				
Detached accessory dwelling units (<i>located in separate outbuilding or garage</i>)				
Manufactured homes				
Non-traditional homes (<i>i.e., tiny homes, container homes, etc.</i>)				
Short-term rentals (<i>i.e., Airbnb, VRBO</i>) in homeowner-occupied homes				
Short-term rentals (<i>i.e., Airbnb, VRBO</i>) in homes not occupied by the owner				

Comments:

- 5) **Overlays:** Overlay zoning is a regulatory tool that creates a special zoning district, placed over an existing primary zoning district, which identifies special provisions in addition to those in the underlying primary zoning district. Regulations or incentives are attached to the overlay district to guide development within a specific area. A Mixed-Use Overlay District would allow a mix of residential, office, and commercial uses on the same property, such as retail stores on the bottom floor of a building with residential units on the floors above. **Would you support the establishment of a Mixed-Use Overlay District(s) in Rocky Mount?**

☐ Yes, I would support a Mixed-Use Overlay District around the Cornell Property

☐ Yes, I would support a Mixed-Use Overlay District around the School Board Road property

☐ Yes, and I would also support a Mixed-Use Overlay District in this additional area(s)

☐ No, I would **not** support a Mixed-Use Overlay District

☐ Prefer not to answer

6) Land Use: Would you encourage or discourage the following non-residential land uses in the Town of Rocky Mount? Please explain any specific concerns in the comment section. (Check one for each)

Land Use / Types of Development	Encourage	Allow with Restriction	Discourage	No Opinion
Commercial development – small (<i>i.e., boutique retail store, fitness studio, etc.</i>)				
Commercial development – large/box store (<i>i.e., Target, Wal-Mart, etc.</i>)				
Office development				
Auto-related uses (<i>i.e., sales/service</i>)				
Hotels				
Restaurants				
Food trucks				
Outdoor recreation/tourism (<i>i.e., parks, trails, etc.</i>)				
Industrial development				
Community services (<i>i.e., clinics, hospitals, social services, libraries, etc.</i>)				
Home occupations without onsite customers/employees				
Home occupations with onsite customers/employees				
Solar, Small-scale residential (<i>i.e., roof-mounted or less than 1 acre</i>)				
Solar, Medium-scale commercial or industrial (<i>i.e., roof-mounted or generally 2 to 3 acres and supplements power onsite</i>)				
Solar, Utility-scale residential, commercial, or industrial (<i>i.e., generally larger than 3 acres and used to provide electricity to a utility provider</i>)				

Comments:

7) Community Character: In your opinion, what three things contribute most to creating an inviting community? (Select up to 3)

- ☐ High quality building materials and design

☐ Trees and landscaping that provide shade and color

☐ Consistent or compatible architectural features

☐ Consistent or compatible building scale, size, and height

☐ Lighting that ensures safety but prevents light pollution

☐ Reduced sign clutter

☐ Convenient parking

☐ Other. (Please Specify):

8) Community Character: Would you agree or disagree with the following design statements? (Check one for each)

Design Standard	Agree	Disagree	No Opinion
Landscaping should be provided along streets to improve community appearance.			
Landscaping (trees, shrubs, etc.) <i>and</i> screening (fences, walls, etc.) should be provided between commercial/industrial uses and residential uses.			
Landscaping should be provided along the fronts of buildings.			
Tree canopy should be required for business and industrial developments to soften the character of development and protect environmental resources.			
Tree canopy should be required for residential developments to soften the character of development and protect environmental resources.			
Dumpsters, loading areas, and electrical/mechanical equipment should be screened from off-site views.			
Parking lots should have trees to provide shade and reduce stormwater runoff.			
Parking lots should be shared by more than one use, to reduce number of lots.			
Parking lots should have landscaping islands throughout the lot.			
Certain developments (e.g., multifamily, shopping centers) should have bicycle parking.			
Lighting should be required, and height should be restricted in commercial and industrial districts to prevent light trespass and preserve dark skies.			
Signage should be limited in size and number of signs to prevent sign pollution.			
Signage should not be allowed to obscure windows.			

9) Are there any other topics that have not been addressed that you would like to identify, or do you have any other general comments or suggestions? If yes, please explain briefly.

☐ No

☐ Yes:

10) Please provide your name and email address to stay informed about the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance updates.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Town of Rocky Mount Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance Update
Public Workshop



Wednesday, April 12, 2023
Municipal Building
345 Donald Avenue
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Small Group Exercise

(60 minutes for group exercise & 20 minutes for sharing)

Directions: Appoint a group recorder to record comments and report back to the full group at the end of the time period.

1. **Priorities:** Identify the primary priorities and/or issues of concern regarding zoning and land use for the community (list 3-5 items in order of importance).

Conversation Starter— What issues are most important for the ordinance update to address? What aspects of the existing land use regulations limit progress or need to be improved?

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Comments:

2. **General:** Consider the following areas of your community. Are you satisfied with the quality of development in these areas? Use the blank spaces in the table below to explain why or why not.

Conversation Starter – *What do you like about the current development that you see in your community? What could be improved? Would smaller residential lots be appropriate?*

Area	Satisfied (Y/N)	Ideas/Priorities/Concerns
Residential neighborhoods		
Commercial areas		
Industrial areas		
Major streets / thoroughfares: <u>Route 220</u>		
Major streets / thoroughfares: <u>Main Street/Business 220</u>		
Other major streets		
Downtown and Uptown		
Other:		

Note any Additional Comments:

3. Land Use: Review the list of potential land uses (below) that have been identified as topics of focus for ordinance revisions. Please share your thoughts and considerations for these land uses in the space provided.

Conservation Starter – *Would you encourage or discourage this land use? Where might the use be appropriate? What, if any, restrictions would be needed/supported for this use?*

Land Use Focus	Comments and Considerations
Home Businesses (with or without customers / employees)	
Short-Term Rentals (e.g., Airbnb, VRBO)	
Accessory Dwelling Units	
Accessory Structures (shed/detached garage)	
Mobile Restaurant / Food Truck	
Mixed Use Structure (commercial/office/residential)	
Commercial Vehicle Parking	
Solar Facilities (small-, medium-, and utility-scale)	
Industrial Uses (e.g., manufacturing, processing)	
<i>Other:</i>	

Note any Additional Comments:

4. **Community Character & Design:** Review the list of design elements that affect the character, visual appeal, and/or impact of land use on the community. Consider how each design element would apply in Rocky Mount and provide any comments you have related to the topic.

Conversation Starter – *What design elements are needed to create and maintain an inviting community? Should certain design elements be required in some areas of the community but not others (e.g., along commercial corridors only)?*

Character/Design Element	Comments and Considerations
Building height	
Signs (number, size, and type)	
Landscaping along roadways	
Screening and landscaping between land uses (e.g., commercial next to residential).	
Screening for dumpsters, loading areas, electrical, and mechanical equipment	
Parking lot landscaping to provide shade and reduce stormwater runoff	
Minimum/maximum parking requirements	
Bicycle parking	
Fence style and height	
Lighting height and style to prevent light trespass and preserve dark skies	
Other:	

Note any Additional Comments:

Overview

Focus groups are a form of public engagement designed to gain input from agencies, organizations, and businesses that have an interest in and experience with development and land use tools. The representatives interviewed in the focus group meetings can also participate in the public input process as individual citizens, but the purpose of these interviews is to gain an in-depth perspective about how Town policy specifically affects their organizations or businesses, and what changes they would recommend.

Questions

General

1. What is your experience with the Town of Rocky Mount Zoning Ordinance?
2. Do you find the Town's zoning ordinance easy to use and interpret?
 - a. If not, what sections do you think could be clarified and made more user friendly?
3. Are you generally satisfied with the quality, form, and character of development in the Town?
4. What do you like most about the Zoning Ordinance – are there any processes or requirements that you would absolutely want to remain as-is?

Development Review Process

1. What is your experience with the development review process – what processes have you undergone? (Subdivision, special exception permit, site plans, etc.)
2. Did you find elements of the development review process to be burdensome? Easy and efficient?
3. Are there any process improvements that, in your opinion, would boost commercial development?
4. Are there any processes that would benefit from administrative review, rather than review from Planning Commission and Town Council?

Uses and Districts

1. Are there any **specific uses** that are not included in the zoning ordinance, that you think should be included? These can be uses that are:
 - a. Growing in popularity within the Town.
 - b. Allowed in other localities and would be a good fit for the Town.
2. Specific uses may be discussed depending on the focus group, such as:
 - a. Types and location of housing (i.e., duplexes, apartments)
 - b. Mixed-use (residential/office/commercial)
 - c. Breweries, distilleries, and tasting rooms
 - d. Mobile restaurant / food truck
 - e. Agricultural uses
 - f. Home occupations

- g. Short-term rentals (e.g., Airbnb)
 - h. Event venues
 - i. Temporary events and uses
 - j. Other industrial/commercial uses
 - k. Telecommunications facilities
 - l. Mini storage / self-storage facilities
 - m. Solar energy facilities
3. Are there any **uses that are not allowed** in certain district(s), but should be?
 4. Are there any **uses that are allowed** in certain districts, but shouldn't be – or should have more regulation (e.g., special exception permit or performance standards)?
 5. What types of businesses would you find appropriate in Agriculture and Residential districts / areas?
 6. What areas should be considered for mixed-use development?
 7. What has your experience been with setbacks, height requirements, and lot requirements?
 - a. Do the requirements adequately meet the community needs?
 - b. Do you find any of the current requirements burdensome?
 - c. Do you suggest any changes?

Design Standards

1. Are the community design elements such as lighting, landscaping, screening, and signage appropriate for the development and character of the Town?
2. In what ways could these be improved (e.g., parking lot landscaping, height limits for lighting, parking requirements, signage allowances)?

Closing

1. What are your top priorities for improvement to the Town's ordinances?



GUIDE TO ZONING



What is Zoning?

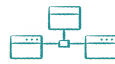
Zoning is a tool that localities use to govern the physical development of land and the kinds of uses allowed on individual property. Zoning may also regulate the dimensional requirements for lots, buildings, and structures; the density of development; and how development relates to its surroundings, including other buildings, open spaces, and the street. Zoning is regulated under **Virginia State Code §15.2, Chapter 22, Article 7.**

↔ Zoning Text vs. Zoning Map

A zoning ordinance has two parts: Zoning Text and a map, known as the Official Zoning Map. The Zoning Text serves two important functions. First, it explains the zoning rules that apply in each zoning district. These rules typically establish a list of land uses permitted in each district plus a series of specific standards governing lot size, building height, and required yard and setback provisions. Second, the text sets forth a series of procedures for administering and applying the zoning ordinance. The Official Zoning Map shows the location of the established zoning districts within a community. Zoning districts are applied directly to parcels and are legally binding.

Typical Content of a Zoning Ordinance

- Purpose & Authority
- Administration
 - Permit & Application Procedures
 - Review Bodies Powers & Procedures
 - Enforcement & Appeals
- Zoning Districts
 - Establishment of Districts
 - Dimensional Standards
 - Allowable Uses (By-Right, Conditional, Temporary, Accessory)
- Design & Use Standards
 - Signs, Landscaping, Parking, Utilities
 - Supplemental Standards for Specific Uses
- Non-conforming Uses
- Definitions



Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

The zoning ordinance is the primary tool through which a locality implements its Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is a high-level policy document that is used as a decision-making guide for a locality. The plan contains a Future Land Use Map and policies that show the desired, future location, character, type, and density of development throughout a community. Zoning ordinances and development regulations directly control the location, form, and character of private projects. When a development or rezoning project comes before a locality's decision making body they must ensure the project meets the specific standards of the ordinance and the overarching vision of the Comprehensive Plan. Zoning ordinances and development regulations should be reviewed annually to ensure they achieve the goals of the plan and amended as necessary.

Comprehensive Plan ↔ Zoning Ordinance

Future Land Use Map	Official Zoning Map
Makes recommendations regarding physical, social, and economic development.	Primarily regulates physical development.
Broad — dealing with concepts and policies.	Specific — dealing with individual parcels and projects.
Looks to the future.	Deals with development happening now.
A policy guide.	Regulation.

Zoning Can

- ✓ Divide land into districts for different uses, such as industrial, commercial, and residential.
- ✓ Regulate the size and type of building that can be constructed in each district.
- ✓ Require development standards, such as screening and setbacks, to minimize impacts on adjacent property.
- ✓ Protect sensitive resources from inconsistent or harmful use.
- ✓ Enhance community character with signage, parking, and landscaping standards.
- ✓ Support affordable housing and economic development goals.

Zoning Cannot

- ✗ Change or correct land use or buildings already in existence.
- ✗ Guarantee that development will take place.
- ✗ Assure that land uses will be permanent.
- ✗ Treat similar uses differently within a district.
- ✗ Ensure property is maintained. (This is accomplished through other means, such as Virginia Maintenance Code and Blight Abatement.)
- ✗ Guide public or private investment in infrastructure.