

Town of Blacksburg

Planning Commission

Annual Report

2017

Overview

The Blacksburg Planning Commission is composed of between five and fifteen citizens appointed by the Town Council. There were eight Planning Commissioners at the end of this reporting period. The Commission fulfills the role identified in Section 15.2-2210 of the Code of Virginia. The Planning Commission is the official planning body for review of the future growth and development of the Town of Blacksburg pursuant to the adopted Comprehensive Plan and Town Ordinances. A number of Town Departments support the work of the Planning Commission by providing planning guidance and technical review. The Town Clerk of Council records minutes of the monthly Planning Commission meetings. The Town Attorney serves a valuable role in advising staff and the Planning Commission on land use matters. Town citizens also contribute through their service on Planning Commission subcommittees and their attendance at neighborhood meetings, public input sessions, and public hearings.

In November 2017, the Planning Commission held its annual retreat to foster camaraderie within the group, to discuss membership expectations and to consider how the Planning Commission might assist Town Council in its goals. We have been holding the annual retreat since 2009 and have found that it serves the Commission well to evaluate where we are as a Commission and where we would like to go in the future.

This Annual Report covers the work of the Planning Commission from January 1, 2017, to December 31, 2017. We have provided a summary of our membership, committees, meeting dates, and activities, as well as more detailed information on the development applications reviewed by the Planning Commission.

Blacksburg Planning Commission

Members and Terms

January 1, 2017- December 31, 2017

Jerry Ford, Jr.	June 28, 2016 – December 31, 2017
J. B. Jones, Jr.	April 14, 1998 – June 30, 2018
Melissa “Mel” Jones, Secretary	June 25, 2013 – June 30, 2017
Andrew Kassoff, Vice Chair	June 22, 2010 – June 30, 2018
Paul Lancaster,	November 14, 2000 – December 6, 2017
Don Langrehr, Chair	June 26, 2012 – June 30, 2020
Elizabeth “Gregg” Moneyhun	June 24, 2008 – June 30, 2020
Cecile Newcomb	January 10, 2012 – December 31, 2017

Planning Commission Subcommittees

(As of December 2017)

Zoning Ordinance Review

Tim Colley
Andy Kassoff
Mel Jones
Meredith Jones
Don Langrehr
Gregg Moneyhun
Georgia Anne Snyder-Falkinham
Greg Tew

Comprehensive Plan Working Group

J.B. Jones
Paul Lancaster
Jerry Ford Jr.
Bryce Johnson
Janine Kniola
Mike Lawless
Rick Roth
Emily Templeton
Brian Templeton
Hannah Vogel
Latanya Walker

Planning and Building Department

Anne McClung, AICP

Planning and Building Director

Planning Division

Kali Casper, AICP, CZO
Comprehensive Planner

Kinsey O'Shea, AICP
*Development
Administrator/Planner*

Paul Patterson, AICP, CZA
Zoning Administrator/Senior Planner

Greg Dudash, PMO, CZO
Property Maintenance Official

Maeve Gould
Planner

Kasey Thomsen
Office Manager/Planning Technician

Erika Newberry
Administrative Assistant

Ashton Funkhouser-Anway
Administrative Assistant

Hillary Moore
Zoning Inspector

Lisa Browning
Zoning Inspector

Planning Interns

Dinah Girma

Jeena Sajimon

Faruk Hesenjan

Building Division

Cathy Cook, CBO, PMO
Building Official

Sam Sapienza, CBO, CRCI
Building Inspector

Don Ford, CBO
Building Inspector

Bobbi Jo Burnett
Building Permit Technician

Trish Basham
Building Permit Technician

Mike Kendrick
Building Inspector

Assistance also provided by:

Engineering & GIS Department

Randy Formica, PE

Engineering & GIS Director

Town Clerk

Donna Boone-Caldwell, MMC

Town Attorney

Lawrence Spencer

Linda Burnsed, Paralegal

Blacksburg Planning Commission Meeting Dates

<u>Public Hearing Dates</u>	<u>Work Session Dates</u>
January 3, 2017	January 17, 2017
February 7, 2017	February 21, 2017
March 7, 2017	March 21, 2017
April 4, 2017	April 18, 2017
May 2, 2017	April 20, 2017*
June 6, 2017	May 16, 2017
June 28, 2017***	June 13, 2017**
July 6, 2017	June 20, 2017
August 1, 2017	July 18, 2017
September 5, 2017	August 15, 2017
October 3, 2017	September 19, 2017
November 7, 2017	October 17, 2017
December 5, 2017	November 21, 2017
	November 28, 2017****
	December 19, 2017

*New River Valley Planning Commissioners Annual Training

**Joint Work Session with Town Council

*** Joint meeting with Montgomery County Planning Commission

****Planning Commission Annual Retreat

ACTIVITIES

Blacksburg Planning Commission Regional Coordination

The Blacksburg Planning Commission and the Montgomery County Planning Commission continue to share information on their respective activities through member liaisons. Typically, the County Planning Commission assigns an individual each year to keep track of the development activities within the Town. For the Town, Blacksburg Planning Commissioners rotate service as a liaison to the Montgomery County Planning Commission meetings each month. The Commissioner liaison for a particular month provides a brief report of the activities at the Montgomery County meeting at each Planning Commission meeting.

The Commissioners attended the New River Valley Regional Commissioner sponsored Annual Training for Planning Commissioners in April of 2017. The spring training session was entitled “Implementing Legislative Changes” with discussion on topics regarding recent changes in proffer laws, sign ordinance court rulings and an update on wireless facility siting.

Comprehensive Plan

Blacksburg 2046, the Town's Comprehensive Plan, was written in 1996, and establishes a fifty-year vision for how Blacksburg should grow and develop. In accordance with Virginia State Code, review of comprehensive plans is required by a locality every five years. On October 11, 2016, Town Council adopted the new update for the town's Comprehensive Plan, which replaced the previously adopted 2014 version. *Blacksburg 2046* is available at www.blacksburg.gov, with hard copies at the Blacksburg Planning Department.

In 2017 the Town staff began the 5- Year Update of the Comprehensive Plan in January with educational outreach meetings and continued public outreach efforts throughout the spring and summer months. The Long Range Planning Committee was expanded with this 5-year update to become a larger group and became the Comprehensive Plan Update Working Group. The Working Group began reviewing proposed text and map changes in August 2017 and continued working through the end of 2017. The revised Comprehensive Plan is expected to be adopted by the Planning Commission in fall 2018.

Comprehensive Plan Update Working Group

Comprehensive Plan related matters are typically reviewed by the Long Range Planning Committee, comprised of Planning Commissioners and citizens. This group reviews and makes recommendations to the full Planning Commission on potential changes to the Comprehensive Plan. In the year following a major update of the plan, the Long Range Planning Committee does not meet as the staff spends that year on finalizing the plan document along with education and outreach. The Long Range Planning Committee was expanded in 2017 to become the Comprehensive Plan Update Working Group to address the need for a larger group to review the 5-year update to the Comprehensive Plan. The Working Group began reviewing proposed text and map changes in August 2017 and continued working through the end of 2017. The revised Comprehensive Plan is expected to be adopted Fall 2018.

Zoning Ordinance Review Committee

The Zoning Review Committee (ZORC) reviews and makes recommendations to the full Planning Commission on all potential changes to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. This year the ZORC committee worked on two Zoning Ordinance Amendments. The first amendment, adopted by Ordinance #1816, created an accessory apartment permit program. The second amendment, adopted by Ordinance #1845 added a definition of an Event Center use, and permitted the use in the Industrial and Research and Development Zoning District with applicable use and design standards .

Review of Development Applications and Ordinance Amendments

A number of different development applications were filed during the calendar year 2017 and most were heard by the Planning Commission in calendar year 2017. The requests included two special exception request, five Conditional Use Permits, nine Rezoning requests, and two Zoning Ordinance text Amendments. In most cases, the Planning Commission serves as a recommending body, making recommendations to Town Council with Town Council taking final action. In some instances, however, the Planning Commission takes final action, such as in the review of Major Subdivisions. No Major Subdivisions were filed in 2017. The Planning Commission also reviews requests to amend the Agriculture and Forestal District (AFD), and applications to enter or withdraw from the AFD. However, in 2017, no actions were taken as there were no requests for addition to, or withdrawal from the AFD. A summary of the development applications reviewed is provided on the following pages

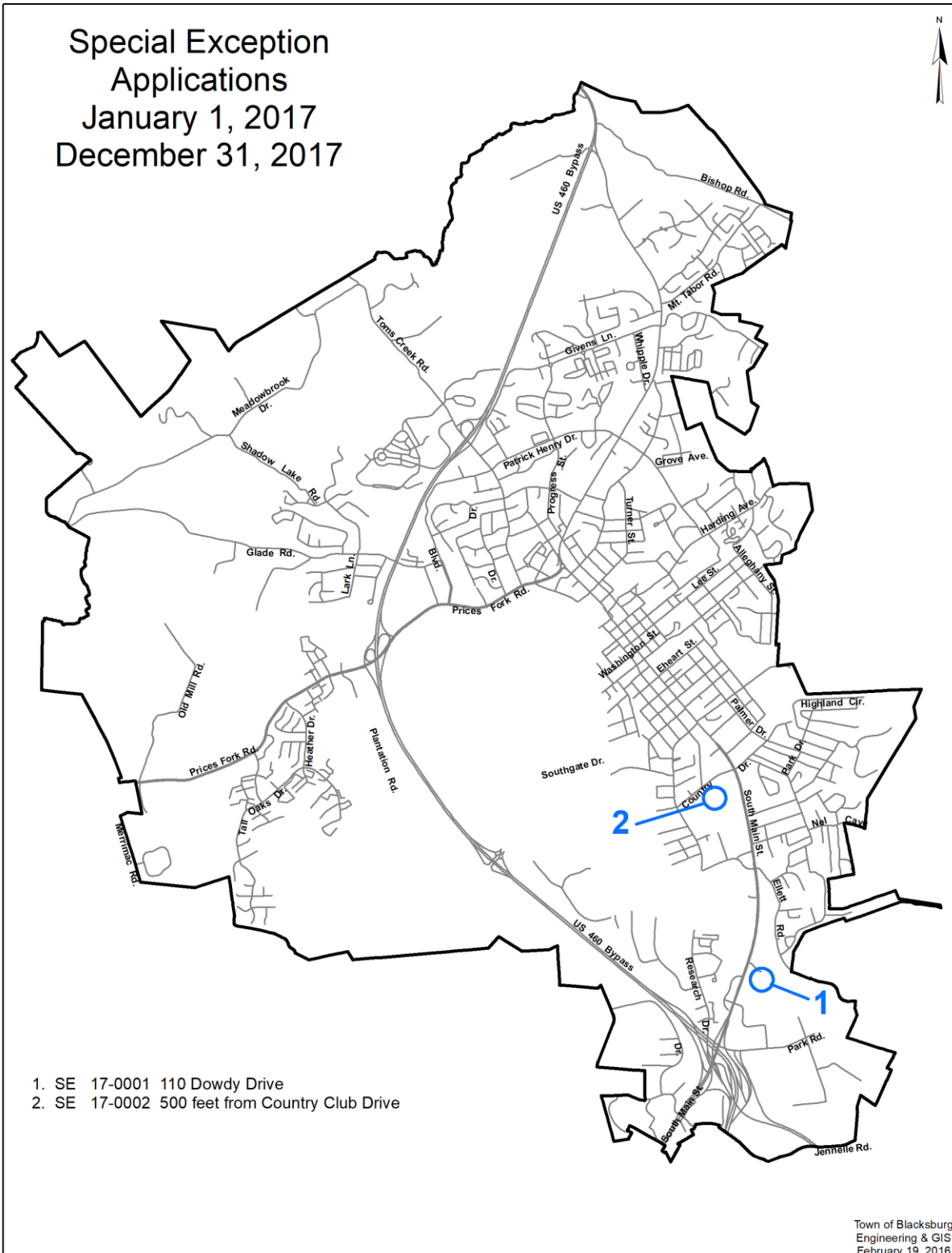
Planning Commission Actions: 2017

Special Exception (SE) Requests

SE Number	Applicant	Request	Location	Planning Commission Recommendation	Town Council Action
SE 17-0001	James Taylor, Balzer & Associates on behalf of Main at Dowdy, LLC	To allow parking in front of the front building line	110 Dowdy Drive	Approved April 4, 2017	Approved, July 11, 2017
SE 17-0002	Home 2 Home Suites	To allow parking in front of the building line	500 feet from Country Club Drive	Approved August 1, 2017	Approved, September 12, 2017

(Please see map next page)

Special Exception
Applications
January 1, 2017
December 31, 2017



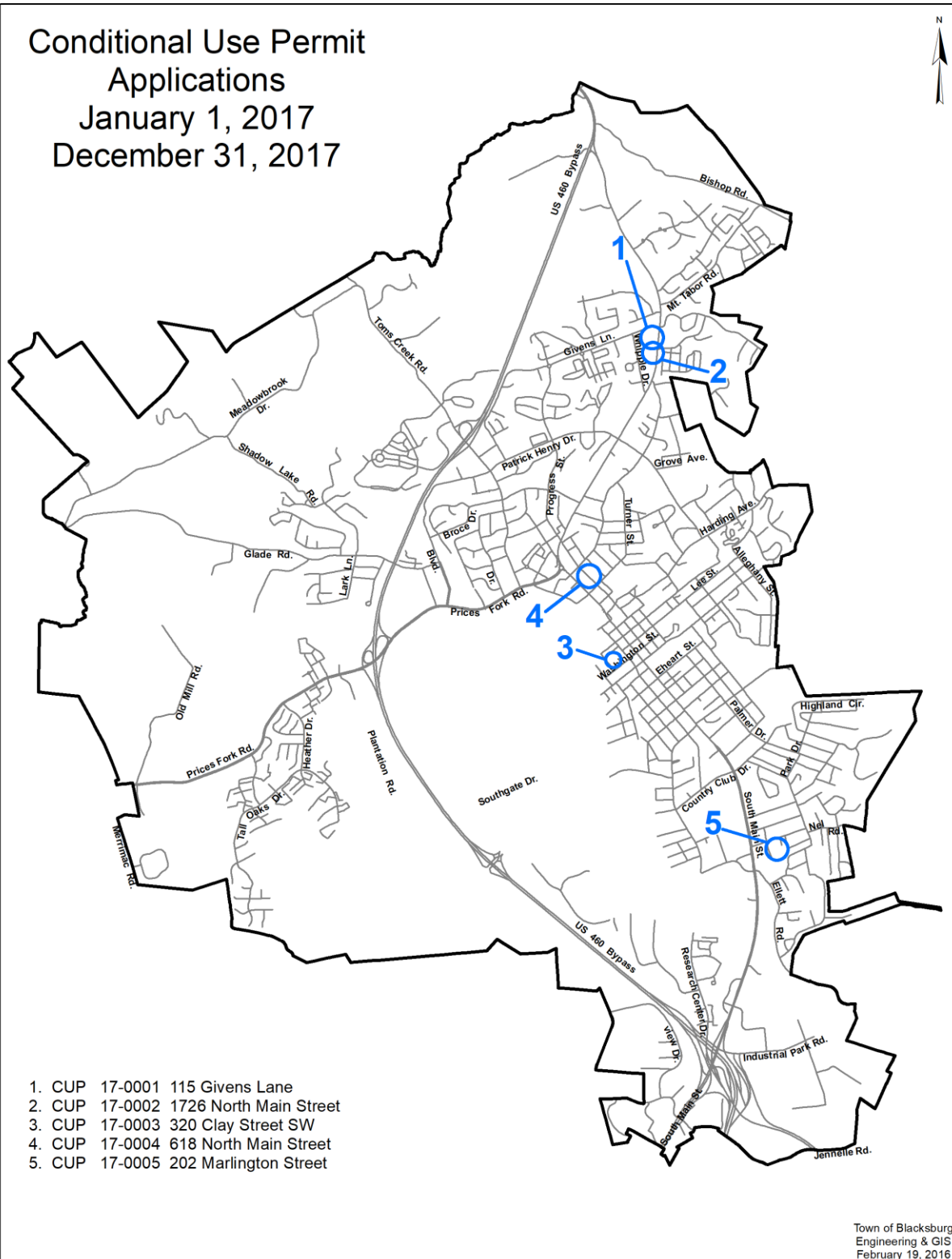
Planning Commission Actions: 2017

Conditional Use Permit Applications

CUP Number	Applicant	Request	Location	Planning Commission Recommendation	Town Council Action
CUP 17-0001	Steve Semones, Balzer and Associates on behalf of Ratcliff Corner, LLC	Five townhouses in an R-5 Transitional Residential Zoning District	115 Givens Lane	Approved, May 2, 2017	Approved, June 13, 2017
CUP17-0002	Steve Elliott on behalf of James and Alice Noonkester	General Office in the R-5 Transitional Residential Zoning District	1726 North Main Street	Approved, June 6, 2017	Approved, July 11, 2017
CUP17-0003	Greg Campbell on behalf of Clay Street Office LLC	General Office in the Old Town Residential Zoning District	320 Clay St SW	Approved, June 6, 2017	Approved, June 13, 2017
CUP17-0004	Stateson Homes and Education Media Company at Virginia Tech Inc.	General Office use on ground floor in DC Downtown Commercial Zoning District	618 North Main Street	Approved, August 1, 2017	Approved, August 8, 2017
CUP17-0005	Julie Willard	Townhome use on 0.3 acres in the R-5 Transitional Residential Zoning District	202 Marlinton Street	Approved, September 5, 2017	Approved, October 10, 2017

(Please see map next page)

Conditional Use Permit Applications January 1, 2017 December 31, 2017



1. CUP 17-0001 115 Givens Lane
2. CUP 17-0002 1726 North Main Street
3. CUP 17-0003 320 Clay Street SW
4. CUP 17-0004 618 North Main Street
5. CUP 17-0005 202 Marlington Street

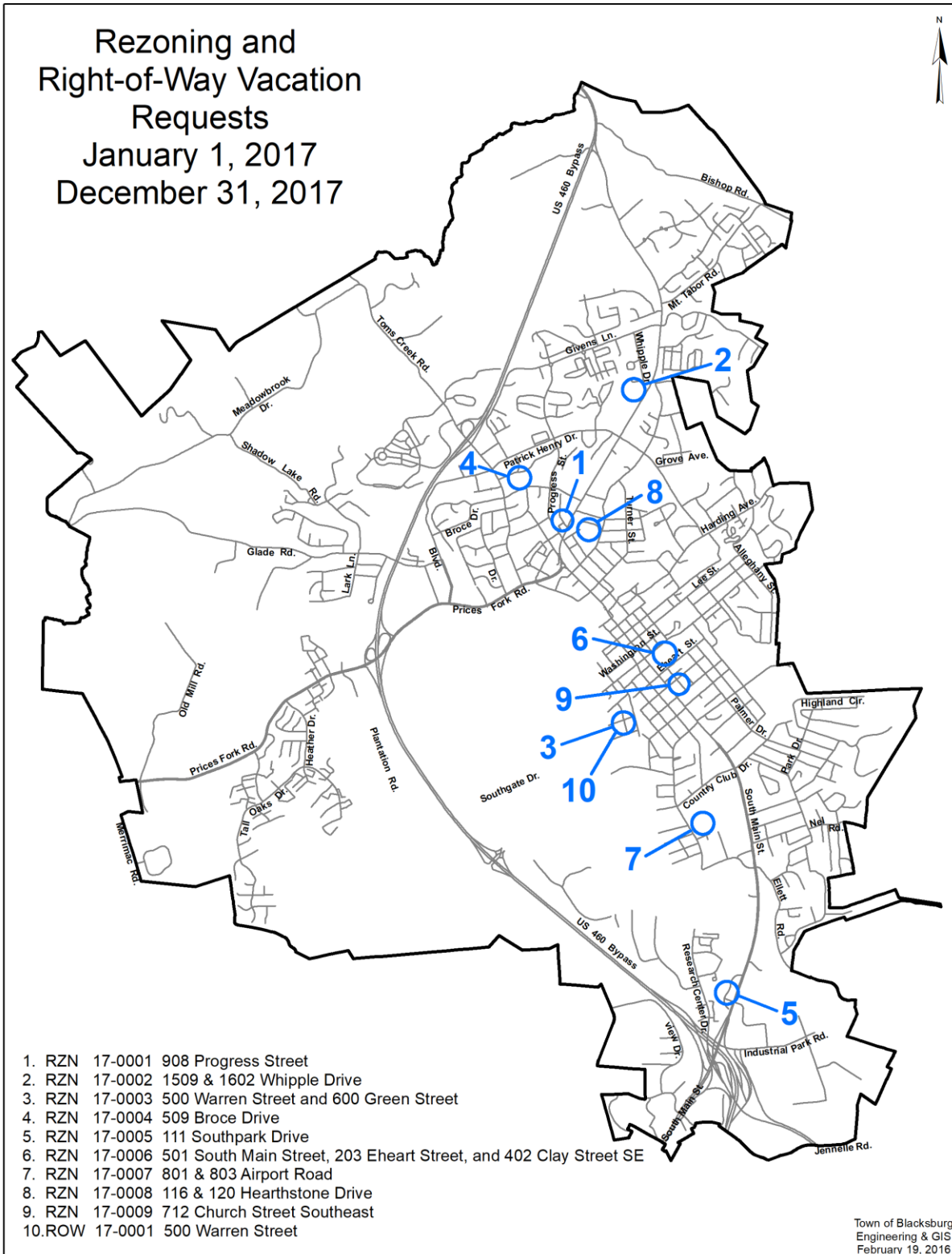
Town of Blacksburg
Engineering & GIS
February 19, 2016

Rezoning and Right-of-Way Vacation Applications

Rezone/ Ordinance Number	Applicant	Request	Location	Planning Commission Recommendation	Town Council Action
ORD 1828 RZN 17- 0001	Broadstreet Partners, LLC (Craig Stipes)	0.939 acres General Commercial and Transitional Residential to Planned Residential (PR)	908 Progress Street	Approved, March 7, 2017	Approved, April 11, 2017
RZN 17- 0002	Whipple South, LLC (Justin Boyle)	3.096 Acres Planned Residential District (PRD) to PRD with amended proffers for two- family dwellings	1509 & 1602 Whipple Drive	Approved, June 6, 2017	Approved, July 11, 2017
RZN 17- 0003	ACC OP Development, LLC (Daniel Perry) and Warren Street Partners, LLC (Chuck Carroll)	3.818 Acres PRD with conditions and RM-27 Low Density Multiunit Residential District to PRD with amended conditions	500 Warren Street, and 600 Green Street	On hold per applicant	On hold per applicant
ORD 1840 RZN 17 -0004	H2R Engineering and April DeMotts on behalf of Paul Scott Roop Trust	2.22 Acres R-4 Low Density Residential to PRD	509 Broce Drive	Approved October 3, 2017	Approved, November 14, 2017
ORD 1844 RZN 17- 0005	Virginia Blue Ridge, LLC on behalf of SDP Southpark, LLC	1.289 acres from Office Zoning District to GC General Commercial	111 Southpark Drive	Approved, November 7, 2017	Approved, December 12, 2017

RZN 17- 0006	Midtown Development Partners	22 acres overall. 8.87 acres from R-4 Low Density Residential to DC Downtown Commercial, and 13.84 acres from R-4 Low Density Residential to PR Planned Residential	501 South Main Street, 203 Eheart Street, and 402 Clay Street Southeast	On hold per applicant	On hold per applicant
ORD 1854 RZN 17- 0007	Draper Aden Associates (Blaise Keese)	5.98 acres from R-4 Low Density Residential Zoning District to PRD	801 and 803 Airport Road	No Recommendation, February 6, 2018	Denied, March 13, 2018
RZN 17- 0008	Mike Beck on behalf of Hearthstone LLC	3.729 acres from RM-48 Medium Density Multi-unit Residential Zoning District to PRD	116, 120 Hearthstone Drive	Approved, January 2, 2018	Approved, February 13, 2018
RZN 17- 0009	Habitat for Humanity of the New River Valley for Blacksburg Presbyterian Church Trustees	0.69 acres from R-5 Transitional Residential Zoning to PRD for 7 income- restricted townhomes	712 Church Street SE	Approved, February 6, 2018	Approved, March 13, 2018
ROW 17- 0001	ACC OP Development, LLC (Daniel Perry) and Warren Street Partners, LLC (Chuck Carroll)	Vacate approximately 0.4 acres of Town owned right-of-way	500 Warren Street	On hold per applicant	On hold per applicant

(Please see map next page)



Zoning Ordinance Amendments

ORD Number	Applicant	Request	Location	Planning Commission Recommendation	Town Council Action
ORD 1816 ZOA 32	Town of Blacksburg	Ordinance to amend zoning ordinance to establish an accessory apartment permit program	-	Approved, March 7, 2017	Approved April 11, 2017
ORD 1845 ZOA 37	Town of Blacksburg	To create a definition of an Event Center use and add as a permitted use in the Industrial and Research and Development districts	-	Approved November 7, 2017	Approved, December 12, 2017

Variance Applications

ORD Number	Applicant	Request	Location	Planning Commission Recommendation	Town Council Action
VAR-0001	Town of Blacksburg	To reduce 15 ft. public utility easements in certain project areas	701 Lee Street	Denied, December 5, 2017	-

2018 Planning Commission Goals

1. *Continue Zoning Ordinance Amendments in 2018 as directed by the Town Council which may include:*
 - a. *Amendment to clarify the standards for residential components of mixed use developments in the General Commercial district and create the option for a freestanding residential component;*
 - b. *Amendments to the R-4 residential district to revise Floor Area Ratio, allow averaging of front yard setbacks, and address concerns about front yard parking and paving issues that have a detrimental effects townwide and most particularly within the Historic District;*
 - c. *Amendment to Signs regulations for compliance with recent Supreme Court case and to incorporate revisions recommended by staff;*
 - d. *Other Zoning Ordinance Amendments as may be directed by Town Council through referring resolutions to the Planning Commission; and*
 - e. *Support amendments that better align the Zoning Ordinance with the Comprehensive Plan*

2. *Complete five year update of the Comprehensive Plan to include:*
 - a. *Consideration of the impact of University growth on the Town;*
 - b. *Engaging in visioning for the downtown area;*
 - c. *Evaluating student housing redevelopment options;*
 - d. *Considering other changes to aid in implementation of the 2015 downtown housing study; and*
 - e. *Expanding the density bonus for desired infill areas. The density bonus may be to further sustainability goals or advance the provision of more affordable housing.*

3. *Consider ways to increase public outreach by the Planning Commission to the community on land use related topics.*

4. *Continue work on sustainability initiatives that reflect the sustainability intentions and commitments in the Town's Comprehensive Plan working with the Town's Sustainability Manager. Prepare a set of suggested guidelines for sustainable development that includes examples of best practices. Coordinate efforts of the Planning Commission with Town Council and share outcomes with the development community.*

5. *Participate in any implementation of the Old Blacksburg Middle School Master Plan with a focus on future development that will fully maintain the integrity of the key design elements of the OBMS Master Plan. Acknowledge that conditions have changed since the plan was adopted but that key development principles still apply.*

6. *Request joint meetings with Town Council on a semi-annual basis to promote a common understanding of Town goals. Meet with Town committees and other regional committees as opportunities arise. Continue cooperation with the NRV Regional Commission (NRVRC) as well as*

with other jurisdictions in development review and reporting such as the ongoing coordination with the Montgomery County Planning Commission.

7. *Continue to offer new Planning Commissioners training through PlanVirginia and annual training through the NRVRC. Continue to explore opportunities for mini-training sessions at Planning Commission Work Sessions and Planning Commission Subcommittee meetings.*
8. *Conduct an annual Planning Commission Retreat Meeting that includes a discussion of:*
 - a. *Land use issues and trends; and*
 - b. *Other items as determined by the Commission.*
9. *Post the 2017 Planning Commission Annual Report to the Town's website.*