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**TOWN OF CHARLOTTE
PLANNING COMMISSION
MARCH 19, 2015**

Minutes are subject to correction by the Charlotte Planning Commission. Changes, if any, will be recorded in the minutes of the next Planning Commission meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeff McDonald, Chair; Peter Joslin, Paul Landler, Gerald Bouchard, Linda Radimer, Marty Illick. Donna Stearns.

ADMINISTRATION: Jeannine McCrumb, Town Planner/Zoning Administrator.

OTHERS: Karen Frost, Nancy Wood, Jacob Spell

AGENDA ITEMS:

West Charlotte Village Designation discussion

Town Plan Responsiveness Summary – Chapter 6 Forestry and Agriculture

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. McDonald, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVE REGULAR AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. McCrumb asked to add time for deliberation on the Hardy application. Commission agreed to address at end of meeting.

Consent agenda: none.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

MINUTES REVIEW

Motion by Illick, second by Joslin to approve minutes as presented. Vote: 5-0 in favor (Stearns abstained).

WEST CHARLOTTE VILLAGE DESIGNATION DISCUSSION

Karen Frost and Nancy Wood introduced themselves and Ms. McCrumb introduced Jacob Spell, the Selectboard's liaison to the Commission.

Ms. Frost introduced herself as both a village resident and business owner and noted that both she and Ms. Wood had participated in meetings with the business group. She indicated that the group was interested in seeking village designation and they supported revitalization of what exists in the village core. Ms. Frost noted she had spoken with Dean Bloch and Jeannine McCrumb as well as staff at the Regional Planning Commission and the State Agency of Commerce and Community Development and all had voiced support for the project. Ms. Frost noted that a prerequisite for application consideration was the inclusion of a statement in the Town Plan indicating an intention to apply for designation. There was some discussion on the process for application and whether inclusion of such a statement in our draft plan would suffice. Ms. Frost agreed

48 to seek clarification on this. Ms. Radimer said she supported the idea. Mr. Landler asked
49 if the benefits included real estate tax credits to which Ms. Frost replied no. Ms. Frost
50 explained that the tax benefits applied to building improvement projects including
51 interior and exterior improvements, electrical upgrades or compliance work. Mr. Joslin
52 asked if such a designation restricted future buildings or additions to existing buildings.
53 Ms. McCrumb thought that limitations on scale might be a consideration and agreed that
54 this needed to be clarified prior to moving forward. Ms. Frost highlighted that this
55 process does not equate to design review and that designation would not supercede
56 current zoning regulations. She noted that our current regulations generally align with
57 the concept presented through designation – that of historic village revitalization. Mr.
58 Landler asked if we would seek designation in the East Village also. Ms. Frost noted that
59 they were only seeking West Village Designation at this time. Mr. McDonald thought it
60 prudent to reach out to residents and / or business owners in East Charlotte to see if they
61 too might be interested. He reviewed next steps as seeing if the draft town plan statement
62 was okay with the state and seeing if the East Charlotte may be interested in participating.
63 Ms. Wood noted that another benefit to designation was prioritization for state grants.
64 She explained the recent wastewater study grant application that was not chosen by the
65 state. Ms. Wood added that growth was not the intent of this program. Ms. Illick said
66 she was surprised that residential development was not supported. Ms. Frost replied that
67 mixed use development including residential was supported by the designation. Ms.
68 Frost agreed to discuss outstanding issues with Richard Amore from ACCD and to then
69 work on setting up a meeting with him and the Commission.
70 Ms. Frost departed.

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72 **TOWN PLAN RESPONSIVENESS SUMMARY – CHAPTER 6 FORESTRY AND** 73 **AGRICULTURE**

74 Ms. McCrumb recommended starting with the workshop comments as these dealt with
75 some of the more substantive concerns. Ms. McCrumb added that she felt it important to
76 follow the state definitions of farming and agriculture in this chapter and suggested
77 addressing smaller, rural activities in the land use chapter. The Commission agreed with
78 this approach and proceeded with review of workshop comments. Mr. Joslin expressed
79 his opinion that an upper end to the size of a farm be added to this chapter. The
80 Commission agreed that horse-based businesses needed to be included in this chapter as
81 did forest land and forest products. The Commission felt that the comments requesting
82 the mapping of farmland was addressed by strategy two. The Commission agreed to
83 rephrase policy one to read “Agriculture is and shall remain one of the primary economic
84 activities in Charlotte.” Ms. Illick requested that we add a statement to this policy
85 addressing opportunities for all income levels and Ms. McCrumb agreed to work on some
86 wording for this. Ms. Illick suggested working with the Regional Planning Commission
87 to obtain economic information related to farm employment, land devoted to agriculture
88 and other inventory needs. She noted that they had just gone through this exercise as part
89 of the Regional Plan process. The Commission agreed that maintenance of a scenic
90 landscape via agriculture and economically viable farming were both important to
91 maintain. The group discussed land cost as a barrier to attracting young farmers and the
92 Commission agreed to add this as a key planning consideration. In addition to strategy 4,
93 the Commission discussed the need to promote ownership of farms. There was some

94 discussion on agriculture related businesses versus on farm businesses. Home
95 occupations were also discussed as an option for farmers who had jobs not directly tied to
96 their farming or forestry activities. The Commission agreed to revising the language in
97 the draft plan related to local food. We want Charlotte farmers to sell products to the
98 broader market but also have local products available for purchase in town. Ms.
99 McCrumb agreed to review remaining comments and revise the draft accordingly. She
100 will also incorporate revisions provided by Ms. Stearns and Mr. Bouchard specifically as
101 relates to forestry and related products.

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103 **DELIBERATIVE SESSION**

104 Motion by Mr. Joslin, second by Mr. McDonald to enter deliberative session. Vote: 7-0
105 in favor.

106 Motion by Mr. Joslin, second by Ms. Stearns to exit deliberative session. Vote: 7-0 in
107 favor.

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109 **ADJOURNMENT**

110 **Motion by Ms. Radimer, second by Ms. Stearns to adjourn. Vote: 7-0 in favor.**

111 The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

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113 Minutes prepared by J. McCrumb, Town Planner.

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