



**OAK RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
OCTOBER 13, 2021 - 10:00 A.M.
OAK RIDGE TOWN HALL**

MINUTES

Members Present

Ann Schneider, Mayor
Jim Kinneman, Mayor Pro Tem
George McClellan
Doug Nodine
Martha Pittman

Staff Present

Bill Bruce, Town Manager
Sandra Smith, Town Clerk
Sean Taylor, Planning Director

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ann Schneider called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman moved to approve the meeting agenda, and Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

3. WORK SESSION WITH HILL STUDIO FOR VILLAGE FEEL DESIGN GUIDEBOOK

Planning Director Sean Taylor introduced David Hill and Peter Giraudeau of Hill Studio in Roanoke, Va. Giraudeau said the firm had been asked to help develop a design guidebook for the town core area as well as to apply the proposed guidebook to two large, open sites located within the core. He said they had met with several focus groups from the town and gathered comments from them regarding what was important in Oak Ridge and how future development should look.

Giraudeau outlined sections the design guidebook would include and some of the key concepts:

Site Planning:

- Overall character of the site, including topography and any significant features, should be maintained as much as possible.
- Open spaces that provide gathering opportunities should be created (i.e., amphitheater, farmers market, a Town green, patios between buildings, perhaps to be used for outdoor dining).
- Regarding roads, streets and parking, the Town Core should respect the pedestrian while accommodating automobiles. Streets, squares and sidewalks should be safe, comfortable and interesting to the pedestrian.

- Siting of new buildings should respect unique site features and the siting patterns of the adjacent, rural landscape.

Architecture:

- New architecture should be seamlessly linked to the surroundings. Buildings should be respectful and compatible with the architecture of the past but not necessarily replicate it.
- General building forms and details should be appropriate for a building's civic stature and use.
- Height, scale, and massing of buildings is important as are the materials used.

Landscaping:

- Mature trees should be preserved and maintained. If trees must be removed, replace with a similar species.
- New landscaping should reflect typical community patterns.
- Plants installed should be native or well-established varieties.
- Trees should be placed in parking lots to plan for 75 percent shade coverage in 10 years.
- Medians and hedges should be used to minimize the impact of parking.
- Hedges and shrub masses should be used to screen the backs of houses.

Site Details:

- Section to include information on items such as signage, lighting, fencing, and walls.

Example Sites:

- Section to include sample plans to be developed for large, open parcels existing in the town core.

Discussion ensued as the Council discussed key issues and details they felt were important regarding the village feel concept with Giraudeau and Hill. Topics included drive-thru restaurants, creative traffic stacking, on-street parking, parking lots on the sides of and behind buildings, fire-lane parking being discouraged, and the use of traffic calming devices. Council also discussed the possibility of developing a plan that will also apply to small, redevelopment parcels, such as those along Linville Road. Council members said they wanted to ensure that the Historic District Design Standards and the Village Feel Guidelines mesh so the look and feel of areas is seamless.

Planning Director Taylor commented that the Village Feel Guidelines will also be applicable if, for example, Oak Ridge Commons is ever redone.

Council members also brought up the fact that lighting and signage are of paramount importance in Oak Ridge. The possibilities of allowing electronic signage in the future and of offering sewer for large tracts were also mentioned. Council members also requested that concept drawings of example sites indicate whether onsite septic was accommodated or the sites would need sewer, which the Town does not currently provide.

Mayor Schneider then led the discussion of next steps including receiving a draft of the document, whether an additional Council meeting might be needed, and receiving input from the Historic Preservation Commission, Planning & Zoning Board, and the public. After final approval of Council, which could happen in February, ordinance changes would begin to be implemented.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

5. ADJOURNMENT

Councilman George McClellan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:28 p.m., and Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

