

**Meeting Minutes – Monday, October 28, 2024 - Special Public Meeting – Reading of Comprehensive Plan**

**Bolivar Planning Commission**

6:30 PM meeting called to order.

**Members present:** Barb Staats, Deb Hale, Marcelo Morinigo, Jeffrey Staats.

**Also present:** Town Council Members and Mayor: Mayor Steve Paradis, Sarah Shafer, Victoria Gale, Dan Jimenez, Chris Higdon; BZA Member: Lisa Kovatch; Andrew Lee, and Vanessa Haferman.

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This Special Meeting served as the official Public Hearing for the reading of the Comprehensive Plan update of 2024 as required by WV State Code 8A-3-7(c).

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Jeff Staats read through the Comp Plan from the beginning, stopping after each section or so to hear comments and accept questions from attendees.

**Attendee comments included:**

**Intro/Section 1:**

V. Gale brought up the sidewalk project and how some of the bump-outs have taken away some street parking spaces; she also discussed a problem with pet waste not being picked up by dog walkers and the lack of enforcement for this and other ordinance violations. She would like BPC to make a recommendation on how the Town can better enforce ordinances.

L. Kovatch expressed concern that if AirBnBs were restricted to Washington Street, they may take over commercial space and push out other potential businesses. She wondered if AirBnBs should be further restricted.

S. Shafer stated that by enforcing code and educating the public on issues like sidewalk clearing and yard maintenance, AirBnB properties might be better neighbors. She also believes that AirBnBs may not be an issue in future as that business trend may naturally fade.

M. Morinigo suggested the Town invest in more trash bins on our streets (in particular for pet waste disposal).

A. Lee would like to see specific objectives /goals for achieving the dark nighttime sky for residents, for example a recommendation to the Town from Dark Sky International for creating a new lighting ordinance.

**Section 2:**

A. Lee provided two corrections to the history on p. 15: Dixon Miles was killed by Confederate fire (not friendly fire); and Bolivar Castle was razed by the NPS in 1962 (not the 1950's).

J. Staats found an error needing to change "safety" to "safely" in this section.

**Section 3:**

B. Staats made a note to make sure that Goals from Section 1 match this Section, and to include as an Objective to consider a Dark Sky International recommendation for possible new lighting ordinance.

D. Hale noted that the Quality Hotel on Union Street should also be included in exceptions along with the Medical Center on Taylor on p. 22.

C. Higdon was curious as to what spurred the Tiny Home survey question and subsequent mention in the Comp Plan. It was relayed that the main issue was housing affordability.

S. Paradis stated that on p. 23 the proper name for the local organization is the "Trail and Town Alliance," and suggested that the sentence regarding paper streets should be changed to reflect "may" or "might" rather than "should."

A. Lee noted that the mention of sidewalks on p. 19 might be better discussed under Infrastructure (rather than Land Use). He added that the Land Use map of the original Comp Plan is nearly illegible. Jeff stated that the online version of the Comp Plan has a link to access the digital form of the map, which can be clearly viewed and enlarged. Steve expressed that the Town should ensure that the map is part of our current website (not the old one hosted/owned by Chuck Davis).

#### **Section 4:**

D. Hale asked whether under Stormwater Management we might want to add a recommendation to conduct a regular (annual?) flushing of drainage culverts/grates in town.

#### **Section 5:**

D. Hale suggested that here again sidewalks and parking issues might be lumped together under one section. Table 6 should be labeled as 2023 (not 2013) and make sure that the info is updated.

#### **Final Comments:**

Steve offered some additional comments towards the end of the meeting and submitted his notes (please see attached):

Mentions of sidewalk project should note that the project has been "recently completed."

On p. 35, Mailbox "disarray" might be reworded to reflect a "future management" as new mailboxes added to the street will be likely. This should also be classified as "Ongoing" issue rather than Short-term (p. 70) and listed as Maintain tidiness of mailboxes.

Mentions of the Historic Town Foundation should be called "Harpers Ferry-Bolivar Historic Town Foundation."

On p. 36, relating to parking issues, "police" should be reworded as "law enforcement."

He explained that some of the new bump-out curbs as part of the sidewalk project have solved the problem of parking/bad visibility at road junctures along Washington Street, specifically at Old Furnace Rd and Gilbert St.

Table 12 last row contains an error – the Sales tax and Hotel tax appear to be incorrect.

Table 7 includes "Dr. Mayhew, DDS" but should be changed to "Mayhew and Smith Dentistry."

On p. 47, mention of the wine/liquor tax should also include info about how the Racetrack distribution business changed from funneling into the liquor store in Harpers Ferry (that store closed) to going through the 7-11, which directly benefitted Bolivar.

Lantern Festival in events should be listed as occurring on Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>.

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This Special Meeting ended at 10 pm.

The Bolivar Planning Commission meeting that was scheduled to follow was cancelled for the night and rescheduled for Nov. 4 at 7 pm.