

**MINUTES
STAUNTON PLANNING COMMISSION**

**March 19, 2026
5:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers**

PRESENT: **Jessica Robinson, Chair
Judith Wiegand, Vice Chair
Daniel Hansen
Kendrick Kier**

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: **Rodney Rhodes, Director of Community Development
Tim Hartless, Planning Manager
Adam Campbell, Council Liaison
Linda Nesselrodt, Clerk of Planning Commission**

Ms. Robinson called the March 19, 2026 meeting of the Staunton Planning Commission to order.

Ms. Robinson welcomed new commissioner, Kendrick Kier.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Wiegand made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2026 Planning Commission meeting, as presented.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Hansen and carried as follows:

Ms. Wiegand	aye	Mr. Hansen	aye
Ms. Robinson	aye	Mr. Kier	abstain

NEW BUSINESS

3-A) Appointment of Linda Nesselrodt as Clerk of Planning Commission

Mr. Hartless presented the staff report for this item.

Background: Moving forward, the city will no longer have a dedicated staff position known as Clerk of Council. The responsibilities of the Clerk have been divided among multiple existing positions. The Community Development Department will now be responsible for Clerking

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Planning Commission meetings. Ms. Nesselrodt, Zoning Administrator, has agreed to take on this new role.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that Planning Commission appoint Ms. Nesselrodt as Clerk of Planning Commission.

Mr. Hansen made a motion to appoint Linda Nesselrodt as the Clerk of Planning Commission.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Wiegand and carried as follows:

Ms. Wiegand	aye	Mr. Hansen	aye
Ms. Robinson	aye	Mr. Kier	aye

3-B) Public Hearing and Consideration of a Request by Staunton Augusta Properties, LLC, for a Special Use Permit at:

**1100 Middlebrook Ave - Parcel Identification Number 5937,
700 Grayson St - Parcel Identification Number 7348,
1106 Middlebrook Ave - Parcel Identification Number 7408,
100 Mayo St - Parcel Identification Number 10002,
824 Mineola St - Parcel Identification Number 10005,
910 Mineola St - Parcel Identification Number 10009,
914 Moore St - Parcel Identification Number 10092,
1320 Middlebrook Ave - Parcel Identification Number 10093,
1206 Middlebrook Ave - Parcel Identification Number 8404, and
200 Mayo St - Parcel Identification Number 11264,**

Under the Provisions of Staunton City Code 18.25.030(10) to Allow a Planned Residential Development Consisting of 267 Single-Family Dwellings.

This was Previously 298 single-family homes. It has now been reduced to 267.

Mr. Hartless presented the staff report for this item.

Background: Staunton Augusta Properties, LLC, is requesting a Special Use Permit for a planned residential development (PRD) to be known as McIntosh Village. The property is located in an area between Middlebrook Ave, the Shenandoah Heights neighborhood, and the Green Spring Valley neighborhood. The applicant acquired the properties in September 2024, and is now proposing to construct 267 single family homes on 77.31 acres of land. The property is zoned R-2, Low Density Residential District, and a PRD can only be permitted through the Special Use Permit process.

Analysis: Staunton City Code (SCC) 18.105, Development Standards for Uses Permitted on Review, establishes the requirements for a PRD. Section 18.105.020, Planned Residential

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Development, permits the developer to propose their own minimum lot size and setbacks which allows density to be clustered in the more easily developable areas. In exchange, the developer agrees to provide common area and amenities for recreation. Overall density for a PRD may not exceed the maximum density allowed in the underlying zoning. In this case, the underlying zoning is R-2, Low Density Residential, which allows a maximum density of 4.9 units per acre. The developer has proposed the following area requirements:

Minimum lot size – 3,000 square feet (standard R-2 is 8,750 SF)

Minimum Setbacks:

Front – 18 feet (standard R-2 is 25 feet)

Side – 6 feet (standard R-2 is 7 feet)

Rear – 15 feet (standard R-2 is 30 feet)

Corner Side – 12 feet (standard R-2 is 12.5 feet)

Maximum Density – 3.5 units per acre (R-2 allows 4.9 units per acre)

Common Area Amenities:

Amenity A – patio with fire pit (Concrete pavers with paver blocks or comparable, 2000 SF minimum), and pavilion/gazebo (wooden structure under roof with 4 picnic tables and 4 benches, 800 SF minimum)

Amenity B – playground (commercial grade play equipment, 3 swings, 1 slide, and 1 climbing wall – 2000 SF minimum)

Amenity C – walking trail (asphalt or crushed rock, 5-foot width)

Amenity D – walking trail (asphalt or crushed rock, 5-foot width)

Amenity E – walking trail (asphalt or crushed rock, 5-foot width)

Private Street – The Planned Residential Development process allows the City to consider allowing privately owned streets. A private street is generally a street owned and maintained by a Home Owners Association. The developer proposes one private street which will provide access to three lots, Lots 7, 8, and 9. A home owners association must own this street and must bear the responsibility for maintenance. This will include snow removal and re-paving costs.

Access – Access to the property by way of an existing public street is available from either Green Spring Valley or Shenandoah Heights. The fire code requires two separate means of ingress and egress when a development exceeds 30 dwellings. The developer proposes 267 dwelling units; therefore, more than one access point will be required. The new access point must be constructed in the first phase of the development before construction of any dwelling unit is completed. The developer proposes access from three possible locations:

1. An existing access easement between 1138 and 1220 Middlebrook Avenue (next to Grace Christian Activity Center),
2. Undeveloped Gilliam Street, and
3. Undeveloped Grayson street.

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If the developer chooses to use undeveloped Grayson Street, a portion of the street grade may exceed 12% slope which will necessitate a variance to the City's subdivision standards (Title 17.15.070, Grades of Streets). That variance would have to be granted by City Council prior to staff approval of any Infrastructure construction plans or subdivision plat. Even if the PRD is approved, the project will not be feasible until the developer addresses the access requirement. As shown on the attached map (Attachment 3), surrounding zoning is R-2, Low Density Residential District with some B-2, General Business District to the east along Middlebrook Ave. The B-2 area is minimal and does not appear to include any developed area so rezoning of the B-2 area is not necessary.

The *City of Staunton, Virginia, Comprehensive Plan 2018-2040*, Land Use Development Guide, Future Land Use Map, designates this area as Low Density Residential. This designation is characterized as single-family detached dwellings with a maximum density of 1 to 5 units per acre. The proposed development contains a density of approximately 3.5 units per acre (267 units / 77.3 acres = 3.45) The requested Special Use Permit is consistent with this designation.

A Special Use Permit is step one of the multi-step process to develop the property for the intended use. Likely, the development will occur in phases (or sections). For each phase, the developer will submit an Infrastructure Construction Plan which details the construction of infrastructure including streets, curb, gutter, sidewalks, stormwater management facilities, common elements, and a grading plan for each lot. Construction Plans are reviewed and approved administratively. Once the Construction Plan is approved, the developer will submit a final plat to create the lots for that phase (section). Once the plat is recorded in the land book in the Circuit Court, building permits can be issued for each dwelling.

While staff is generally supportive of the proposed development, there are some concerns that should be addressed with conditions associated with approval of any Special Use Permit:

1. Prior to the recordation of a final plat for section 1 of the proposed development, City staff must review a copy of the proposed covenants and restrictions. A responsible party must be identified for the maintenance, repair, replacement of the stormwater management facilities, common areas and amenities, as well as the proposed private street.
2. Construction of the connection to Middlebrook Avenue must be completed as part of the first phase of the development and must be completed prior to issuance of any Certificates of Occupancy.
3. A construction plan must be submitted and reviewed to ensure that City standards are met for infrastructure. The necessary streets, water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure will need to be designed and constructed accordingly to extend to this development. The construction plan must be approved prior to beginning any construction activities.
4. The development will include more than 50 new lots; therefore, a preliminary plat will be required prior to submittal of the Infrastructure Construction Plan.
5. All lots to be platted will be for single-family development or uses that support single-family development as determined by the Zoning Administrator.

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6. One private street is approved which will provide access to lots 7, 8, and 9 on the Master Plan. All other lots will be accessed from a dedicated public street.
7. All walking trails and paths for all amenities must be constructed with an asphalt surface approved by the Zoning Administrator.
8. Section 17.15.070 of the Subdivision Ordinance limits the grade of streets in residential zones to no more than 12%. No street may exceed a 12% grade unless City Council chooses to grant a variance to the subdivision standard.
9. Because of the development's proximity to a Virginia Department of Transportation maintained roadway, Rt 262 and Rt 252 beyond the City limits, a 527 Traffic Impact Analysis, including turn lane analysis, will be required as part of the construction plan review.
10. In addition to the Staunton City Code, Title 17, requirement for sidewalks, sidewalks will also be required along the frontage of all residential lots as shown on the Master Plan.
11. The total number of units may not exceed 267 single-family dwellings.
12. On a corner lot, when the garage faces the corner side yard, the corner side setback shall be a minimum of 18 feet.
13. Approval of the special use permit for a planned residential development will include staff review and approval of the restrictive covenants for the sole purpose of ensuring the association, or other entity, is responsible for ownership and maintenance of the common elements of the development such as common areas, open space, any recreational or other common amenities, and storm water management facilities. Other provisions of the restrictive covenants are a private agreement between the association, individual property owners, and/or the developer and the City of Staunton is not a party to, nor does it take any interest in, those provisions, nor will the City of Staunton enforce or litigate any matter related to the restrictive covenants.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the requested special use permit.

Ms. Robinson stated that she did receive a number of emails from the public on this request and wanted to go over a couple of the items that were a common theme. Ms. Robinson stated that one issue being raised was the concern about traffic and the number of entrances. She requested that Mr. Hartless expand on the traffic analysis and access points.

Mr. Hartless explained that there is a 527 VDOT traffic study required of this development due to the proximity to the city limits and roadways that are owned and maintained by VDOT. The City Engineer and Traffic Planner will review the traffic study and determine whether they think the study is correct. The study will also be shared with VDOT for their input. The city is primarily reviewing for traffic counts on Middlebrook Avenue, anticipated increases in traffic generated by the neighborhood to review if turn lanes, traffic lights, or any other kind of traffic control design will be necessary. Mr. Hartless stated that the traffic study would be reviewed during the infrastructure construction plan reviewed by city staff.

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Mr. Campbell noted that there are have already been concerns with the traffic operations at Ritchie Blvd and Greenville Avenue. There is a recommendation in place at that intersection but it is not a new signal at this time. The existing spacing is an issue due to the proximity to the existing intersection at Statler Blvd. He believes it is a good thing to have an additional connection for the subdivision.

Ms. Robinson stated that another concern raised was about water connections. She requested that Mr. Hartless elaborate about what would be required by the developer and how specifically water pressure would be addressed in the new development.

Mr. Hartless stated that the existing neighborhoods, Green Spring Valley and Shenandoah Heights are on the gravity zone. That is the largest water zone in the city. The City Engineer anticipates that the water line along Richie would be extended. The city plans to require that the water line along Middlebrook Avenue be connected to and also extended, and most likely will also require them to connect to Gordon Street in Shenandoah Heights. That would create a loop that would connect three different legs of the gravity zone, which should improve pressure in the area. Water supply is not an issue. There's plenty of water supply. The issue that some in Green Spring Valley have deal with water pressure, which has to do with the size of the line. By making those connections and looping the three legs, we should be able to improve the static pressure of the city water lines and all of those areas which would maintain a more constant water pressure, even for the existing development.

Ms. Robinson stated that another main topic of concern was trees and wildlife. She questioned Mr. Hartless what the rights of an owner are under the existing zoning.

Mr. Hartless stated that under existing zoning, the owners of the property could clear the 77 acres and not be required to obtain approval unless they were removing the stumps as well. That would require a land disturbing permit. Mr. Hartless further stated that under the plan, there will be some areas that will need to be cleared, primarily where the houses will be built. There are other areas left for open space that may not be cleared.

Ms. Robinson asked Mr. Hartless to go over again why staff is supporting the proposed size of the lots and setbacks that are being proposed.

Mr. Hartless stated that the whole purpose of a planned residential development is to review and approve an alternative form of development. Under the current zoning, the developer could, by right, under the R2 zoning district, create 8750 square foot lots to build homes without any required public hearings or public input. It would be an administrative process. This special use permit for the planned residential development gives the developer the ability to increase density in more easily developed areas.

He continued that staff has been interested in a long time to obtaining an additional connection to Green Spring Valley and this is a great opportunity through this planned development.

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Mr. Justin Shimp, with Shimp Engineering, presented the item on behalf of the applicant. **During Mr. Shimp's explanation of the project, the Zoom platform went down causing the commission to take a recess. The webinar could not be restarted. **

The meeting was resumed with Mr. Shimp finishing his comments on the access points and requirements, by right. Mr. Shimp stated that it is their intention to create a more creative development that has a good access point.

Ms. Wiegand stated that while on the field trip, the commission considered a couple of other conditions, number 14 and 15.

Mr. Shimp stated that he would rather the commission leave the option of entrance three in the special use permit. Entrance three is not their preferred entrance, but would like to keep their options open. He further stated that in regards to condition 15, they would prefer not to connect for vehicular traffic to Gordon Street. They would prefer to have that connection as a pedestrian access point.

Mr Hansen stated that he believes that access is the most important point. He is concerned with the steepness of Grayson, and recognizes that there is engineering that can be done to mitigate some of the steepness. He has concerns of recommending approval of the PRD, and Grayson became the only viable access point, that it would be construed the approval for the variance would be guaranteed.

Mr. Shimp stated that he understands that the variance would not be guaranteed.

Ms. Robinson opened the public hearing.

Nancy Kalanta, 543 Hilltop Drive, stated that she is not in support of the subdivision proposal due to excessive noise disturbances, the impact on the environment, the increase of traffic on Ritchie Blvd, and the impact on city expenditures.

Matthew Warner, 50 Woodland Drive, was previously a resident on Alextine Drive for twenty years. He requested that if they approve the request, that they specifically disallow the connection to Ritchie Blvd. He believes the intersection of Ritchie Blvd and Greenville Ave is very unsafe, as it is.

Mike Ansbach, 663 Gloria Pl, stated that he has concerns with the size of the lots. They have been listening to the pounding of rock over the last two years with the construction of the apartments and the new homes in the neighborhood being built. He has concerns of his foundation being damaged. He continued with his concerns of stormwater management, environmental impacts, and the flow of water from the springs.

Karen Burris, 667 Gloria Pl, stated that her concern is with everyone using Ritchie Blvd for access and stormwater runoff.

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Jane Firkin, 1128 Middlebrook Ave, has concerns with traffic, impacts on her house from any blasting, and wildlife displacement.

Kim Sims, 682 Gloria Pl, has been in the subdivision less than a year. She stated that if she would have known this was a possibility, she wouldn't have bought the house. She has concerns with the blasting.

Jimmy Cerminaro, 1118 Middlebrook Ave, has been living there for the last 23 years. He stated that traffic is a concern of his and that the area is being overdeveloped.

Benny Brown, lives at the corner of Ritchie Blvd and Caraan St. He has been living in the neighborhood for fifty years. His concerns are with the traffic on Ritchie Blvd and the effect on the trees and wildlife.

Cooper Pugh, Hudson Ave, believes that this is not the ideal neighborhood for most of the people in Staunton. It will those that are traveling to other areas for work. He also has concerns for wildlife displacement.

Joe Loyacano, 804 Ritchie Blvd, has concerns with the removal of trees, traffic, and overdevelopment of the area.

Curtis Hart, 700 Moore St, Shenandoah Heights, has concerns with noise from blasting. When they were building the apartments, the blasting affected him and the veterans on the street. He further stated his concerns with deforestation, traffic, and wildlife displacement.

Joe Whistler, 1111 Churchville Ave, has concerns with putting a lot of houses in a very small space and taking away from Staunton's beautiful character.

Ms. Kalanta and Mr. Ansbach came back up to provide a couple more comments. Mr. Ansbach is concerned about the construction traffic going through Ritchie Blvd.

Ms. Robinson closed the public hearing.

Ms. Wiegand questioned Mr. Hartless if there are any requirements in the city to regulate construction noise and damage to nearby structures.

Mr. Hartless stated that all blasting is regulated through the Fire Department. The blasting requires a permit with inspections completed by the Fire Marshal.

Mr. Rhodes added that there are time restrictions when construction activity may take place.

Ms. Robinson questioned if the Fire Marshal is always on site when the blasting is being done.

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Mr. Hartless stated that he thought they were there for a portion of the time, but not sure if for the entire time.

Discussion ensued regarding limiting where the construction traffic will access the development. Mr. Hartless stated that they could make it a condition of the special use permit to require the construction entrance be at Middlebrook Rd.

Mr. Campbell shared that traffic is a concern of his. He believes that the connection to Gordon Street should be made and that additional connection points will benefit the existing residents. From the environmental standpoint, he personally likes the smaller, condensed development, because it's preserving part of the upper area of the property. From an affordable housing standpoint, we can't set the price of housing that's up to the market but by allowing smaller lot sizes, smaller houses, at least, we're doing something to promote that. He further stated that he would like to see a little more commitment that the portion that's going to be undisturbed remains undisturbed from an environmental and a flood or a storm water standpoint. Finally, he stated that there should be a little more of a buffer or set back from at least Gloria place to preserve the character of the Green Spring Valley neighborhood.

Ms. Wiegand agreed with the idea of a buffer between developments. She has concerns that they don't have a traffic study for the proposed development. She is very concerned with traffic and the entrances. She understands that the developer has a right to develop the property and to put houses on it but she is not comfortable with having to do it as a special use permit with all of the conditions that someone is going to have to enforce. The current proposal doesn't include any information on the designs or possible phasing of construction.

Ms. Robinson stated that she would like to see more dedicated area for open space in the residual area.

Discussion ensued regarding how stormwater will be addressed for the development.

Mr. Shimp stated that the proposed development as a PRD is for flexibility to create a development that has far less impacts than what the current zoning allows for.

Mr. Hansen stated that he agrees with the ideas of buffering the development on Gloria Place, making the construction entrance to be off of Middlebrook Ave, preserving the idea of open space and limiting building area, and providing another point of access for the existing subdivision.

Ms. Wiegand proposed that the item be tabled to work on a couple of the conditions.

Mr. Shimp stated that he preferred to move forward with the item but that if the commission doesn't feel comfortable with that, he can work with the item being tabled.

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Being no further discussion, Ms. Wiegand made a motion to table the matter until the next meeting so that staff and the applicant can work out a couple of the remaining conditions as discussed at the meeting.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Hansen and carried as follows:

Ms. Wiegand	aye	Mr. Hansen	aye
Ms. Robinson	aye	Mr. Kier	aye

3-C) Authorization to expand the scope of an Amendment to Chapter 18.140 Signs, Billboards, and Other Advertising Structures, of Title 18, Zoning, of the Staunton City Code.

Mr. Hartless presented the staff report for this item.

Background: Chapter 18.140, Signs Billboards, and Other Advertising Structures, of Title 18, Zoning, of the Staunton City Code defines an area known as the Downtown Business Area (DBA) which has specific requirements for signs. This area includes limits on sign types, size, and placement which are specific to downtown. Currently, this area includes all of N Central Ave and N Lewis Street. Oliver Dahl, owner of several properties in that area, is requesting a zoning text amendment to change the boundaries of the DBA and remove portions of N Central Ave and N Lewis Street.

The DBA was intended to coincide with the commercial portions of the City's historic districts. However, the current boundaries of the area include N Central Ave and N Lewis Street north of Frederick Street. This area is not part of the historic districts even though it is part of the DBA Sign District. The subject area is also part of the Entrance Corridor Overlay District (ECO) and is subject the special sign regulations of the ECO. The two sets of regulations are sometimes in conflict. By removing this area from the DBA, it would simplify the sign permitting process and regulations for properties in the area benefiting property owners, tenants, and city staff.

Additionally, staff has identified an area along Beverly Street, west of Lewis Street, which is part of the historic districts but is not part of the DBA. This further complicates matters when reviewing sign permits for properties in this area.

Staff is now considering eliminating the DBA sign district altogether and replacing it with a simplified approach that would apply the special sign regulations to all business, professional, and industrial zoned properties in the historic districts. This approach eliminates the need to define a set of specific boundaries for a DBA.

Draft language:

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Any property located within one of the City's historic districts and zoned for business, professional, or industrial use are subject to the special sign regulations established in SCC 18.140.040(4)(d)l.

This new approach expands the scope of the amendment beyond what Planning Commission previously authorized. Now, staff is requesting that the Commission give new authorization for an amendment to Chapter 18.140 rather than just the specific section that was previously authorized in December 2025.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that Planning Commission authorize the amendment with this expanded scope.

Discussion ensued regarding existing signs and what properties the proposed ordinance would affect.

Being no further discussion, on the basis that it would serve the interest of public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice, Ms. Wiegand made a motion to authorize staff to work on an amendment to Chapter 18.140 Signs, Billboards, and Other Advertising Structures, of Title 18, Zoning, of the Staunton City Code to address the issues related to the special sign regulations for the Downtown Business Area.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Kier and carried as follows:

Ms. Wiegand	aye	Mr. Hansen	aye
Ms. Robinson	aye	Mr. Kier	aye

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

UPDATE ON ACTIONS OF CITY COUNCIL

Mr. Hartless had no updates on actions of City Council.

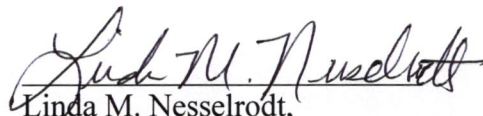
MATTERS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no matters from the public.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Robinson stated the next Planning Commission meeting would be held on April 16, 2026. *These minutes are for the full meeting as there was a technical difficulty during the meeting with the Zoom webinar. The first 20 minutes of the meeting can be found on the [City's Youtube page](#).*

Upon a motion properly made, seconded, and unanimous, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.


Linda M. Nesselrodt,
Clerk of Planning Commission

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