

TITLE 7

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER

PLANNING COMMISSION

Section

7-1. Authority; Establishment.

7 - 2. Composition; Qualifications, Appointment, Terns, Etc., of Members; Filling of Vacancies.

7-3. Election of Chairman; Meetings; Rules and Regulations; Etc.

7-4. Finances.

7-5. Master Plan--Purpose; Contents.

7-6. Same--Procedure for Adoption, Amendment, Etc.

7-7. Powers Generally.

§ 7-1. Authority; Establishment. Pursuant to the provisions of § 15.1-427 of the Code of Virginia, the town hereby establishes a planning commission. (See § 19-1 of the former Code of the Town of Bridgewater, adopted January 14, 1975.)

§ 7-2. Composition; Qualifications, Appointment, Term of Members; Filling of Vacancies. The town planning commission shall consist of seven members to be appointed by the council. All shall be residents of the town and qualified by knowledge and experience to make decisions regarding the town's growth and development. At least one-half of the members shall be freeholders in the town.

One member of the commission shall be a member of the council and another member may be a member of the administrative branch of the town government. Their terms shall be coextensive with the terms to which they have been elected or appointed, except that council may replace either of those two members in its first regular meeting of any year. Other members of the commission shall serve staggered four year terms.

Vacancies shall be filled by council for the unexpired portion of the term left vacant. Members may be removed for malfeasance in office, (See Code of Virginia, § 15.1-437.) (Amended December 14, 1993.)

§ 7-3. Election of Chairman and Vice-chairman; Meetings; Rules and Regulations; Etc. The town planning commission shall elect its chairman from amongst its appointed members for a term of one year, with eligibility for reelection, and may create and fill such other of its offices as it may determine; shall hold at least one regular meeting in each month; and shall adopt rules and regulations for the transaction of business and shall keep a record of its resolutions, transactions, findings, and determinations, which shall be a public record. (See Code of Virginia, §§ 15.1-439, 15.1-442.)

§ 7-4. Expenditures. The expenditures of the planning commission, exclusive of gifts to the commission, shall be within the amounts duly appropriated by the town council for that purpose. (See Code of Virginia, § 15.1-442.)

§ 7-5. Comprehensive Plan. The town commission shall prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the town.

In the preparation of a comprehensive plan the commission shall make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the existing conditions and trends of growth, and of the probable future requirements of the town and its inhabitants. The comprehensive plan shall be made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the town which will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants.

The comprehensive plan shall be general in nature, in that it shall designate the general or approximate location, character, and extent of each feature shown on the plan and shall indicate where existing lands or facilities are proposed to be extended, widened, removed, relocated, vacated, narrowed, abandoned, or changed in use as the case may be.

The plan, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive matter, shall show the commission's long-range recommendations for the general development of the town. It may include, but need not be limited to:

- (a) The designation of areas for various types of public and private development and use, such as different kinds of residential, business, industrial, agricultural, conservation, recreation, public service, flood plain and drainage and other areas;

- (b) The designation of a system of transportation facilities such as streets. Roads, highways, parkways, railways, bridges, viaducts, waterways, airports, ports, terminals, and other like facilities;
- (c) The designation of a system of community service facilities such as parks, forests, schools, playgrounds, public buildings, and institutions, hospitals, community centers, waterworks, sewage disposal or waste disposal areas, and the like;
- (d) The designation of historical areas and areas for urban renewal or other treatment; and
- (e) An official map, a capital improvements program, subdivision ordinance, and a zoning ordinance and zoning district maps. (See Code of Virginia, § 15.1-446.1.)

§ 7-6. Same--Procedure for Adoption, Amendment, Etc. The town planning commission may adopt the comprehensive plan as a whole by a single resolution, or may by successive resolutions adopt successive parts of the plan, such parts corresponding to major geographical sections of the town or to functional divisions of the subject matter of the plan, and may adopt any amendment or extension thereof or addition thereto. The adoption of the plan, or of any such part, amendment, extension or addition, shall be by resolution carried by the affirmative votes of not less than a majority of the commission, but before the adoption of the plan or any such part or any modification, extension or addition the commission shall hold at least one public hearing on the proposed action, at least 15 days notice of the time and place of which shall be given by one publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the town. An attested copy of the plan or part thereof shall be certified to the council.

§ 7-7. Powers Generally.

- (a) The town planning commission shall have the power and shall be required to:
 - 1. Exercise general supervision of, and make regulations for, the administration of its affairs;
 - 2. Prescribe rules pertaining to its investigations and hearings;
 - 3. Supervise its fiscal affairs and responsibilities, under rules and regulations as prescribed by the governing body.
 - 4. Keep a complete record of its proceedings; and be responsible for the custody and preservation of its papers and documents;
 - 5. Make recommendations and an annual report to the governing body concerning the operation of the commission and the status of planning within its jurisdiction;
 - 6. Prepare, publish and distribute reports, ordinances and other material relating to its activities;
 - 7. Prepare and submit an annual budget in the manner prescribed by the governing body of the county or municipality; and
 - 8. If deemed advisable, establish an advisory committee or committees.

(b) The town planning commission shall have power to:

1. Promote public interest in the understanding of the comprehensive plan and, to that end, publish and distribute copies of the plan or of any report, and employ such other means of publicity and education as it may determine.
2. Authorize its members to attend planning conferences or meetings of planning institutes or hearings upon pending legislation or to visit other communities and by resolution, to pay the reasonable traveling expenses incident to such attendance or visit.
3. Require information in relation to its work which all public officials shall, upon request, furnish to the commission within a reasonable time.
4. Request additional assistance for special survey work of the town superintendent, who may at his discretion assign such work to the staff of any administrative department or direct such department to make special studies.
5. Enter upon any land in the town, in the performance of its function, and make examinations and surveys and place and maintain necessary monuments and marks thereon.
6. Conduct planning, platting or other activities permitted by law to be effective inside or outside the corporate limits of the town.

(See Code of Virginia, § 15.1-444.)