

**Draft
Town of Smithfield
Planning Board Minutes
Thursday, February 4, 2021
Town Council Chambers
6:00 PM**

Members Present:

Chairman Stephen Upton
Teresa Daughtry
Debbie Howard
Michael Johnson
Doris Wallace
Alisa Bizzell

Members Absent:

Ashley Spain
Mark Lane

Staff Present:

Mark Helmer, Senior Planner
Julie Edmonds, Administrative Assistant

Staff Absent:

Stephen Wensman, Planning Director

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Michael Johnson made a motion, seconded by Debbie Howard to approve the agenda.
Unanimously approved

APPROVAL OF MINUTES from January 7th, 2021

Michael Johnson made a motion, seconded by Doris Wallace to approve the minutes as written.
Unanimously approved

NEW BUSINESS: ZA-21-01 Saint Ann Catholic Church:

The applicant is requesting an amendment to the Town of Smithfield Unified Development Ordinance, Article 7, Supplemental Regulations as it pertains to columbaria with over 200 niches and other refinements to the existing regulations concerning columbaria.

Mark Helmer said the Planning Department now notifies the public of Planning Board meetings. You will see in your agenda the legal ad and the affidavit of the ad that went to the newspaper. Since there weren't adjacent property owners, no letters were sent notifying them.

Mr. Helmer said we have further revisions to the Columbaria ordinance that was first brought before you in November. St. Ann's Church is requesting an amendment to Article 7, Section 7.46 as it pertains to columbaria. After the ordinance was approved, St. Ann's found their planned columbaria was going to be in violation of the newly adopted regulations and is requesting changes to the ordinance:

1. Allow columbaria visible from the public right-of-way to be 1-foot taller than the allowed maximum 6-foot height limit
2. Refining access requirements in 7.35.1.1
3. Increasing the allowed number of columbaria with a special use permit
4. Amending the perpetual care and maintenance trust fund requirements with annual reporting
5. Using the term niches for an urn place
6. Requiring clear title on land used for columbaria
7. And other minor clarifications.

Columbaria Height. St. Ann's planned columbaria will be 1-foot taller than the allowed maximum 6-foot height limit when visible from the public right-of-way. Staff feels the one foot height difference is insignificant and supports this change.

Access Requirements. The purpose of the access requirements is to ensure access for maintenance. The proposed refinements to the ordinance clarify that purpose and access requirements.

Trust Fund. St. Ann's is requesting changes to the trust fund requirement. The diocese currently charges \$4000 a niche and requires 15% of the sales prices be placed in an endowment for future maintenance. With a planned 2000 niches, St. Ann's will have an endowment for perpetual care of \$1,200,000 when the columbaria are built out. St. Ann's is proposing that with a special use permit, the Town Council could set an alternative percentage of the sales price be retained for perpetual care, not less than 15% of the sales price. The proposed change to the endowment would only affect columbaria that are greater than 200 niches, leaving the 50% funding requirement for columbaria that are smaller than 200 niches.

Planning Staff recommends the Planning Board recommend approval of the zoning text amendment, ZA-21-01, with a statement declaring the request is consistent with the Town of Smithfield Comprehensive Growth Management Plan and that the request is reasonable and in the public interest.

Debbie Howard made a motion to recommend approval of zoning text amendment, ZA-21-01, amending the supplementary standards for columbaria finding the amendment consistent with the Town of Smithfield Comprehensive Growth Management Plan and other adopted plans, and that the amendment is reasonable and in the public interest, seconded by Teresa Daughtry. Unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

Adjournment

Being no further business, Michael Johnson made a motion seconded by Debbie Howard to adjourn the meeting. Unanimously approved

Next Planning Board meeting is March 4th, 2021 at 6pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julie Edmonds

Julie Edmonds
Administrative Support Specialist

DRAFT