


**TO:** Planning Commission

**FROM:** Anne McClung, Planning and Building Director 

**RE:** Zoning Ordinance Amendment #44 – Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to allow greater building height and limited Instructional Classroom uses for Education Facilities, College/University in the Downtown Commercial (DC) by Conditional Use Permit with modifications and additions to Definitions and Use and Design Standards

**DATE:** June 28, 2019

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At the June 18, 2019 work session, the Planning Commission inquired about the ability of Town firefighters to respond to fires in buildings up to 100' in height. Attached is a response from Wayne Garst, Fire Code Official for the Town of Blacksburg.

Also attached are the sign-in sheets and meeting notes from the public input meeting held on Thursday, June 27, 2019.

**Attachments:**

June 27, 2019 email from Wayne Garst  
Meeting notes and sign-in sheet dated June 27, 2019

## Anne McClung

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**From:** Anne McClung  
**Sent:** Friday, June 28, 2019 12:33 PM  
**To:** Anne McClung  
**Subject:** Quick Question

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**From:** Wayne Garst <WGarst@blacksburg.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 27, 2019 11:08 AM  
**To:** Anne McClung <amclung@blacksburg.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Quick Question

Hi Anne,

Taller buildings do add additional challenges for firefighters. More steps add more response time and fatigue to firefighters. We already have 2 tall buildings on campus- Slusher Hall (12 Stories) and Lane Stadium is similar in height.

We operate 2 ladder trucks- One will reach 100 feet and the other 75 feet. We carry high rise packs on our pumpers that we would connect to standpipes that are required on any building over 3 stories. Most of our pumpers have 1500 gallon per minute capacity so they are adequate to supply a 100 foot building. We have a very good hydrant system in town so water should not be an issue.

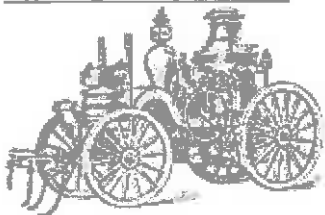
Building code would require the building to be fully sprinkled with a fire pump to boost water to upper floors. Full fire alarm system, rated stairwells, backup generator would all be part of the building. Fire department communications would be provided on each floor or a repeater system installed within the building to be used on our radio frequency.

Fire apparatus access for this location would be a good because we would have streets or parking lots on all sides of the building.

Hope this helps,

Wayne

**J. Wayne Garst**  
**Fire Code Official**  
**Blacksburg Fire Department**  
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Blacksburg, VA 24060  
O- 540-961-1175  
C- 540-951-3030  
[wgarst@blacksburg.gov](mailto:wgarst@blacksburg.gov)



## **Public Input Meeting**

**June 27, 2019**

**7:00 pm -8:05 pm**

Ms. McClung provided an overview of the zoning text amendment.

- An attendee commented that one of the ideas missing from public hearing discussion is proffer suggestions from the citizens. He expressed concern about the current taxing situation in relation to the University and Virginia Tech Foundation, specifically regarding meals and lodging taxes. It was suggested that the Foundation could proffer to pay these fees for the North End redevelopment project as part of the upcoming rezoning.
- A citizen asked about the area along Otey Street and for more information on what property in the area around the University is owned by the University and what is owned by the Foundation. He inquired about the regulations governing development on these parcels. He also inquired how building height is measured given that the amendment would allow buildings up to 100' in height. He noted the impact of the fence constructed to prevent pedestrian crossings of Prices Fork Road at The Edge. He suggested more specific development criteria than currently proposed for the height increase to address impacts. He commented that for taller buildings more criteria about items such as the number of egress paths would be helpful.
- An attendee commented that a better pedestrian and bike crossing is needed for Prices Fork Road commenting on a tunnel connection was as a solution used at William and Mary and could be considered or a bridge.
- An attendee commented that taller buildings due to scale would have greater impacts on infrastructure such as water and sewer as well as on the facility needs of a greater volume of pedestrians and bicyclists. He suggested a broader approach to downtown redevelopment based on a more comprehensive approach as opposed to a project-by-project evaluation of impacts.
- An attendee asked which specific buildings are being demolished for the proposed North End redevelopment and what businesses would be lost.
- A business owner in the North End center commented on ongoing issues with business visibility noting signage issues. He also commented on problems with access on Prices Fork Road. He was supportive of reopening the vehicular access on Turner Street as part of the North End project but has traffic concerns. He noted he is not opposed to the greater height option being proposed.
- A citizen asked in what neighborhood the North End development is considered to be located.
- A citizen expressed concern about allowing requests for classroom uses noting that the use could become more widespread than intended. There was a question as to whether other uses in the Educational Facilitates definition could occur in DC or elsewhere such as dining halls or residence halls.
- An attendee asked about construction standards for the University for campus buildings versus standards for the Town.

- A citizen commented that the Town should be more proactive in preparing for growth.
- Another citizen asked in what ways the Town was not being proactive.
- An attendee asked how the amendment and redevelopment proposal fit in with sustainability. Should criteria about sustainability be included? There were further comments on the impacts of tearing down buildings to construct new buildings from a sustainability perspective. There were also comments on the impacts of new construction on the Town's overall character and small town charm. The speaker felt that review of the proposed redevelopment should be looked at closely for impacts to the St. Luke's and Odd Fellows Lodge. The speaker also stated that modeling the capacity of Downtown infrastructure would be a way to look at the potential for redevelopment.
- There were further questions and discussion about taxation of Virginia Tech Foundation properties and the relationship to the University.
- There were specific questions about the redevelopment project, which Ms. McClung indicated would be part of input meetings and public hearings on the rezoning application when filed, noting this meeting was to discuss the proposed zoning ordinance text amendment.
- An attendee asked how parking requirements are handled in the Downtown Commercial zoning district.

# TOWN OF Blacksburg

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Public Input Meeting/ZOA #44  
June 27, 2019  
Sign-In Sheet

Name - <u>Printed</u>	Email Address
Carrie Woodring	carrie.woodring@vtf.org
Fan Friend	ifriend@sasbuilders.com
JIM RAKES	JIMJANERAKES@COMCAST.NET
CHARLES A JOHNSON	CAJOHNSON33@AOL

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# TOWN OF Blacksburg

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Public Input Meeting/ZOA #44  
June 27, 2019  
Sign-In Sheet

Name - <u>Printed</u>	Email Address
Dustin Alvin Wylie	dawdesigns@gmail.com
Michael Gordon	mehudseine@gmail.com
David Torabinejad	dtorabinejad@yahoo.com

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