

**Town of Blacksburg**

**Planning Commission**

**Annual Report**

**2016**

## Overview

The Blacksburg Planning Commission is composed of between five and fifteen citizens appointed by the Town Council. There were eight Planning Commissioners at the end of this reporting period. The Commission fulfills the role identified in Section 15.2-2210 of the Code of Virginia. The Planning Commission is the official planning body for review of the future growth and development of the Town of Blacksburg pursuant to the adopted Comprehensive Plan and Town Ordinances. A number of Town Departments support the work of the Planning Commission by providing planning guidance and technical review. The Town Clerk of Council records minutes of the monthly Planning Commission meetings. The Town Attorney serves a valuable role in advising staff and the Planning Commission on land use matters. Town citizens also contribute through their service on Planning Commission subcommittees and their attendance at neighborhood meetings, public input sessions, and public hearings.

In November 2016, the Planning Commission held its annual retreat to foster camaraderie within the group, to discuss membership expectations and to consider how the Planning Commission might assist Town Council in its goals. We have been holding the annual retreat since 2009 and have found that it serves the Commission well to evaluate where we are as a Commission and where we would like to go in the future.

This Annual Report covers the work of the Planning Commission from January 1, 2016, to December 31, 2016. We have provided a summary of our membership, committees, meeting dates, and activities, as well as more detailed information on the development applications reviewed by the Planning Commission.

## **Blacksburg Planning Commission**

### **Members and Terms**

January 1, 2016- December 31, 2016

<b>Jerry Ford, Jr.</b>	June 28, 2016 – June 30, 2017
<b>J. B. Jones, Jr.</b>	April 14, 1998 – June 30, 2018
<b>Melissa “Mel” Jones, Secretary</b>	June 25, 2013 – June 30, 2017
<b>Andrew Kassoff, Vice Chair</b>	June 22, 2010 – June 30, 2018
<b>Paul Lancaster,</b>	November 14, 2000 – June 30, 2020
<b>Don Langrehr, Chair</b>	June 26, 2012 – June 30, 2020
<b>Elizabeth “Gregg” Moneyhun</b>	June 24, 2008 – June 30, 2020
<b>Cecile Newcomb</b>	January 10, 2012 – December 31, 2017

## **Planning Commission Subcommittees**

(As of December 2016)

### **Zoning Ordinance Review**

Tim Colley  
Andy Kassoff  
Mel Jones  
Meredith Jones  
Don Langrehr  
Gregg Moneyhun  
Georgia Anne Snyder-Falkinham  
Greg Tew

### **Long Range Planning**

J.B. Jones  
Paul Lancaster  
Jerry Ford Jr.  
Cecile Newcomb  
Mike Lawless  
Rick Roth

## Planning and Building Department

**Anne McClung, AICP**

*Planning and Building Director*

### Planning Division

**Kali Casper, AICP, CZO**  
*Comprehensive Planner*

**Kinsey O'Shea, AICP**  
*Development  
Administrator/Planner*

**Paul Patterson, AICP, CZA**  
*Zoning Administrator/Senior Planner*

**Kasey Thomsen**  
*Office Manager*

**Erika Newberry**  
*Administrative Assistant*

**Hillary Moore**  
*Zoning Inspector*

### Planning Interns

**Faruk Hesenan**

**Tabitha Proffitt**

**Alexandra Sellers**

### Building Division

**Cathy Cook, CBO, PMO**  
*Building Official*

**Sam Sapienza, CBO, CRCI**  
*Building Inspector*

**Will Yager, CRI**  
*Building Inspector*

**Greg Dudash, PMO, CZO**  
*Property Maintenance Official*

**Trish Basham**  
*Building Permit Technician*

**Mike Kendrick**  
*Building Inspector*

**Jackie Gagne**  
*Building Permit Technician*

**Bobbi Jo Burnett**  
*Building Permit Technician*

Assistance also provided by:

**Engineering & GIS Department**

**Randy Formica, PE**

*Engineering & GIS Director*

**Town Clerk**

**Donna Boone-Caldwell, MMC**

**Town Attorney**

**Lawrence Spencer**

**Linda Burnsed, Paralegal**

## **Blacksburg Planning Commission Meeting Dates**

### Public Hearing Dates

January 5, 2016

February 2, 2016

March 1, 2016

April 5, 2016

May 3, 2016

June 7, 2016

July 5, 2016

August 2, 2016

September 6, 2016

October 4, 2016

November 1, 2016

December 6, 2016

### Work Session Dates

January 19, 2016

February 16, 2016

April 19, 2016

April 21, 2016\*

May 17, 2016

June 21, 2016

July 19, 2016

August 16, 2016

September 20, 2016

October 18, 2016

November 15, 2016

November 29, 2016\*\*

December 20, 2016

\*New River Valley Regional Commission Training

\*\*Planning Commission Annual Retreat

## ACTIVITIES

### **Blacksburg Planning Commission Regional Coordination**

The Blacksburg Planning Commission and the Montgomery County Planning Commission continue to share information on their respective activities through member liaisons. Typically, the County Planning Commission assigns an individual each year to keep track of the development activities within the Town. For the Town, Blacksburg Planning Commissioners rotate service as a liaison to the Montgomery County Planning Commission meetings each month. The Commissioner liaison for a particular month provides a brief report of the activities at the Montgomery County meeting at each Planning Commission meeting.

The Commissioners attended the New River Valley Regional Commission's annual Planning Commissioners Training in April of 2016. Featured speakers included Emily Gibson from Montgomery County providing an update from the Virginia General Assembly, Anne McClung from Town of Blacksburg discussing the limits of residential zoning and Danny Wilson from Pulaski County providing an overview of Pulaski County's new Unified Development Ordinance.

### **Comprehensive Plan**

*Blacksburg 2046*, the Town's Comprehensive Plan, was written in 1996, and establishes a fifty-year vision for how Blacksburg should grow and develop. In accordance with Virginia State Code, review of comprehensive plans is required by a locality every five years. On October 11, 2016, Town Council adopted the new update for the town's Comprehensive Plan, which replaced the previously adopted 2014 version. This update included various text changes and one change to the future land use map. *Blacksburg 2046* is available at [www.blacksburg.gov](http://www.blacksburg.gov) with hard copies at the Blacksburg Planning Department.

### **Long Range Planning Committee**

The Long Range Planning Committee, comprised of Planning Commissioners and citizens, reviews and makes recommendations to the full Planning Commission on potential changes to the Comprehensive Plan. Typically, in the year following a major update of the plan, the Long Range Planning Committee does not meet as the staff spends that year on finalizing the plan document along with education and outreach. The Long Range Planning Committee reviewed the proposed changes and concluded work on amendments to the Comprehensive Plan in April 2016.

### **Zoning Ordinance Review Committee**

The Zoning Ordinance Review Committee (ZORC) reviews and makes recommendations to the full Planning Commission on all potential changes to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. This year the ZRC committee worked on three Zoning Ordinance Amendments. The first amendment—Ordinance #1794—expanded the boundaries in the optional Live/Work/Sell Arts Overlay District. The district boundary was extended along Progress Street from the current terminus at Turner Street to Giles Road and also amended in the Town Code so as to make the more desirable financial incentives of the zone available to in the new expanded area. The second amendment—Ordinance #1800—clarified the criteria for grant of special exceptions to the Use and Design Standard for location of parking behind the front building line, applying to most multi-family, institutional, commercial and office uses. The third amendment—Ordinance#1816—addresses the provision of Accessory Apartments in the RR-1, RR-2, and R-4 Zoning Districts and to result in the establishment of the Accessory Apartment Permit Program.

### Review of Development Applications and Ordinance Amendments

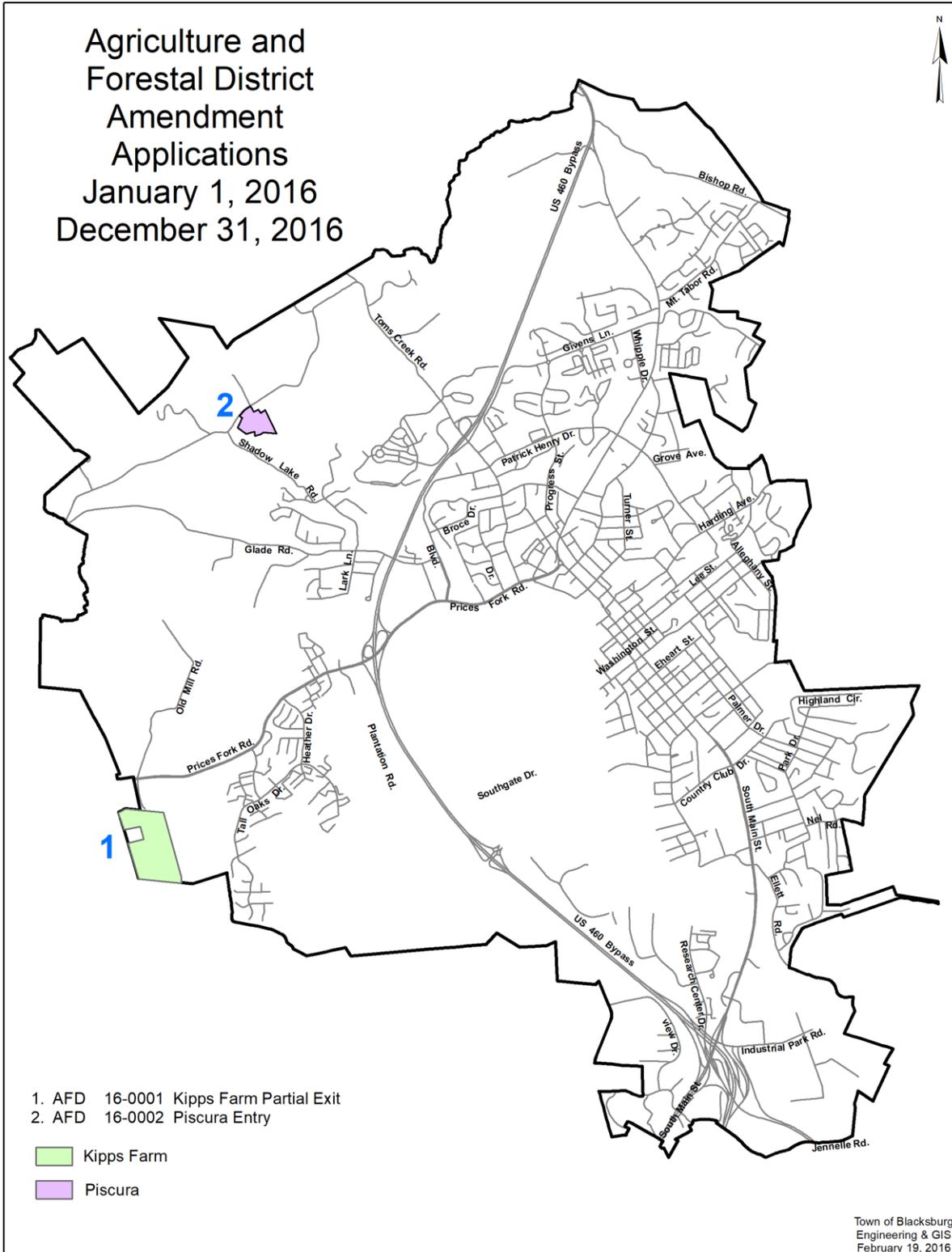
A number of different development applications were filed during the calendar year 2016 and most were heard by the Planning Commission in calendar year 2016. The requests included two Agricultural & Forestal District Amendments; three Conditional Use Permits; four Rezoning requests; and three Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments. In most cases, the Planning Commission serves as a recommending body, making recommendations to Town Council with Town Council taking final action. In some instances, however, the Planning Commission takes final action, such as in the review of Major Subdivisions. No Major Subdivisions were filed in 2016. One subdivision variance request was withdrawn by the applicant on August 2, 2016. Planning Commission also reviews special exception requests; however, there were no requests this year.

## Planning Commission Actions: 2016

### Agricultural & Forestal District (AFD) Amendment Requests

AFD Number	Applicant	Request	Location	Planning Commission Recommendation	Town Council Action
AFD 16-0001	Kipps Farm LLC	Withdraw 64.83 Acres from AFD	2200 Merrimac Road	Approved March 1, 2016	Approved April 12, 2016
AFD 16-0002	Brandon Herndon and Gina Piscura	Add 15.81 Acres to AFD	2305 Meadowbrook Road	Approved March 1, 2016	Approved April 12, 2016

(Please see map next page)



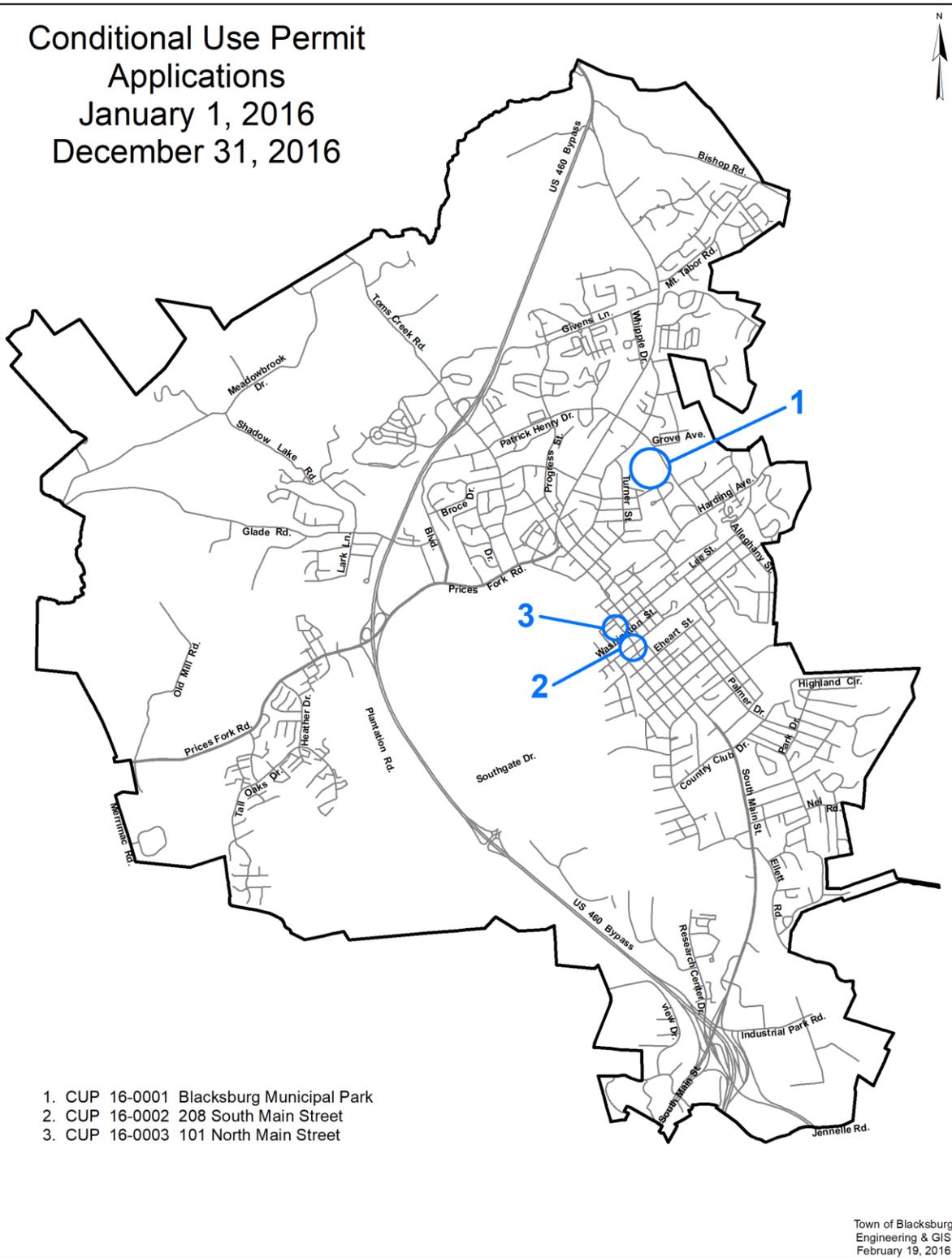
## Planning Commission Actions: 2016

### Conditional Use Permit Applications

CUP Number	Applicant	Request	Location	Planning Commission Recommendation	Town Council Action
CUP 16-0001	Max Wiegard, Milestone Communications on behalf of AT&T Mobility.	Communication Facility in the R-4 Low Density Residential Zoning District	Blacksburg Municipal Park	Denied, June 7, 2016	Public hearing cancelled by applicant August 9, 2016
CUP16-0002	Aaron Harris, Pointe West Management, on behalf of Kent Square, LLC(property owner)	General Office on the Ground Floor in the Downtown Commercial Zoning District	208 South Main Street	Approved, October 4, 2016	Approved, October 11, 2016
CUP16-0003	John Morehead , AB & B LLC (Property Owner)	General Office on the Ground Floor in the Downtown Commercial (DC) Zoning District	101 North Main Street	Approved, February 7, 2017	Approved, February 14, 2017

(Please see map next page)

Conditional Use Permit  
 Applications  
 January 1, 2016  
 December 31, 2016



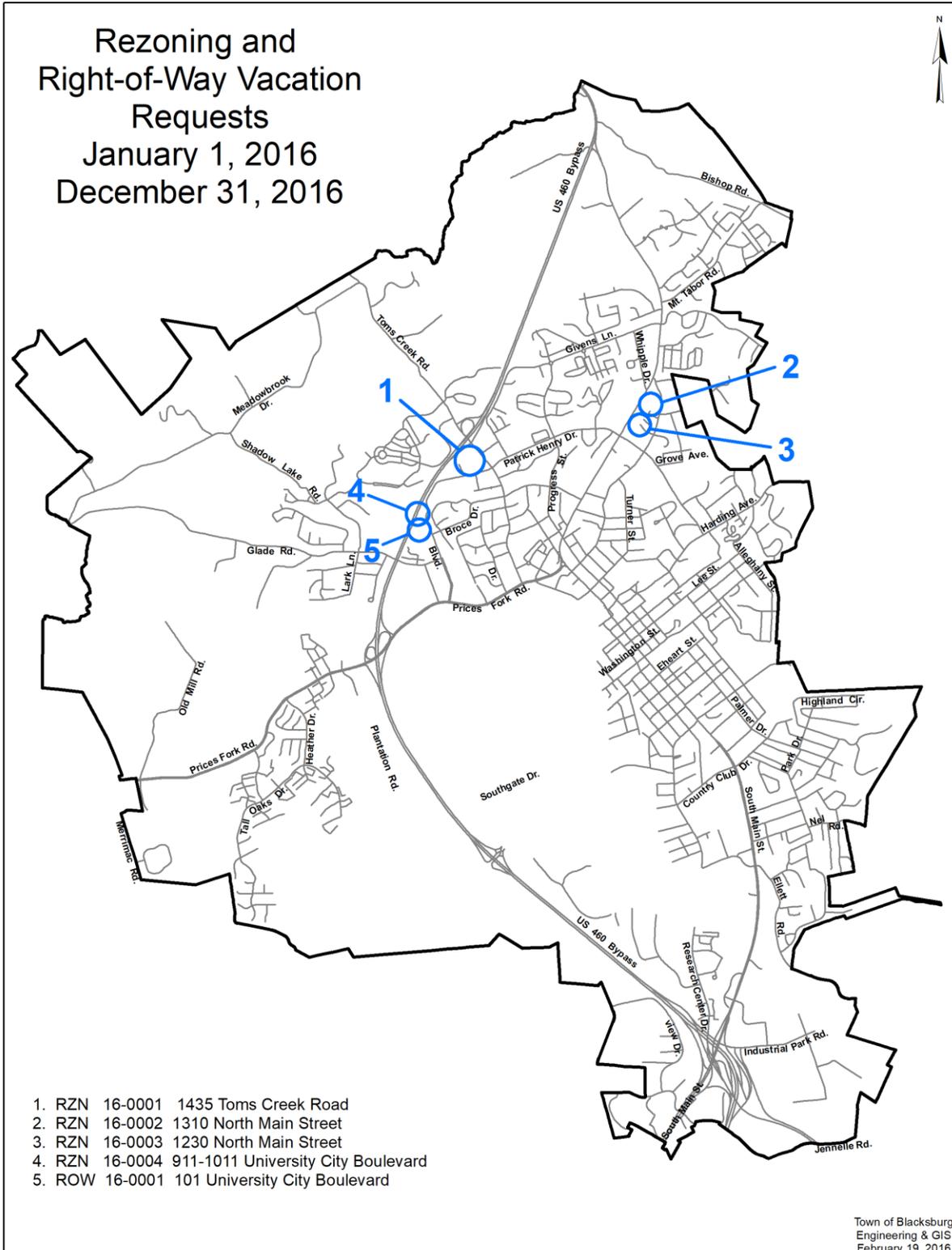
- 1. CUP 16-0001 Blacksburg Municipal Park
- 2. CUP 16-0002 208 South Main Street
- 3. CUP 16-0003 101 North Main Street

Town of Blacksburg  
 Engineering & GIS  
 February 19, 2016

**Rezoning and Right-of-Way Vacation Applications**

<b>Rezone/ Ordinance Number</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Planning Commission Recommendation</b>	<b>Town Council Action</b>
RZN 16-0001	Graystone Properties LLC (Kirk Johnson)	3.004 Acres RM-48 Medium-Density Multiunit Residential to Planned Residential (PR)	1435 Toms Creek Road	Withdrawn	-
RZN 16-0002	LandPro Development Group, LLC (Michael Carouba)	5.309 Acres GC General Commercial Zoning District to the PR Planned Residential District	1310 North Main Street	On hold per applicant	-
RZN 16-0003	LandPro Development Group, LLC (Michael Carouba)	2.26 Acres GC General Commercial Zoning District to the PR Planned Residential District	1230 North Main Street	On hold per applicant	-
ORD 1813 RZN 16-0004	Sturbridge Square, LLC	11.893 Acres RM-48 Medium Density Multifamily Residential Zoning District to the Planned Residential (PR) Zoning District	911-1011 University City Boulevard	Approved, February 7, 2017	Approved March 14, 2017
ROW 16-0001	Sturbridge Square, LLC	Vacate approx 3,447 square feet of Town-Owned Right-of-Way	101 University City Boulevard	Withdrawn	-

**(Please see map next page)**



**Zoning Ordinance Amendments**

<b>ORD Number</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Planning Commission Recommendation</b>	<b>Town Council Action</b>
ORD 1794 ZOA 36	The Town of Blacksburg	To expand the boundaries of the optional Live/Work/ Sell Arts Overlay District	-	Approved May 3, 2016	Approved June 14, 2016
ORD 1800 ZOA 38	The Town of Blacksburg	Clarification of criteria for grant of special exceptions to the Use and Design Standard for parking behind the front building line.	-	Approved Sep 6, 2016	Approved October 11, 2016
ORD 1816 ZOA 32	The Town of Blacksburg	Ordinance to amend zoning ordinance to establish an accessory apartment permit program	-	Approved March 7, 2017	Approved April 11, 2017

## 2017 Planning Commission Goals

1. *Continue Zoning Ordinance Amendments in 2017 as directed by the Town Council which may include:*
  - a. *Amendment to better protect neighborhood character including re-evaluation and amendment to the R-5 district regarding the impact of two family dwellings. This may include making two-family dwellings a Conditional Use Permit in the district and enhancing the Use and Design Standards for two-family dwellings;*
  - b. *Amendment to address parking issues in residential areas townwide and impacts of parking and paving specifically within the Historic District;*
  - c. *Amendment to Signs regulations for compliance with recent Supreme Court case and to incorporate revisions recommended by staff. The amendment will include adding a number of illustrations to the Zoning Ordinance to make the signage regulations easier to understand; and*
  - d. *Other Zoning Ordinance Amendments as may be directed by Town Council.*
  
2. *Work on five year update of the Comprehensive Plan to include:*
  - a. *Consideration of the impact of University growth on the Town;*
  - b. *Engaging in visioning for the downtown area;*
  - c. *Evaluating student housing redevelopment options;*
  - d. *Considering other changes to aid in implementation of the 2015 downtown housing study; and*
  - e. *Expanding the density bonus concept in use for the retention and rehabilitation of structures in the Historic District to apply to desired infill areas. The density bonus may be in relation to forwarding sustainability goals or advancing the provision of more affordable housing.*
  
3. *Continue work on sustainability initiatives that reflect the sustainability intentions and commitments in the Town's Comprehensive Plan working with the Town's Sustainability Manager. Prepare a set of suggested guidelines for sustainable development that includes examples of best practices. Coordinate efforts of the Planning Commission with Town Council and share outcomes with the development community.*
  
4. *Participate in any implementation of the Old Blacksburg Middle School Master Plan with a focus on future development that will fully maintain the integrity of the key design elements of the OBMS Master Plan. Acknowledge that conditions have changed since the plan was adopted but that key development principles still apply.*
  
5. *Request annual meeting with Town Council. Meet with Town committees and other regional committees as opportunities arise. Specifically, work with Montgomery County to hold a spring 2017 joint meeting for both Planning Commissions to further discuss the Prices Fork Road area. Continue cooperation with the NRV Regional Commission (NRVRC) as well as with other jurisdictions in development review and reporting such as the ongoing coordination with the Montgomery County Planning Commission.*

6. *Continue to offer new Planning Commissioners training through PlanVirginia and annual training through the NRVRC. Continue to explore opportunities for mini-training sessions at Planning Commission Work Sessions and Planning Commission Subcommittee meetings.*
7. *Conduct an annual Planning Commission Retreat Meeting that includes a discussion of:*
  - a. *Land use issues and trends; and*
  - b. *Other items as determined by the Commission.*
8. *Post the 2016 Planning Commission Annual Report to the Town's website.*