**PUBLIC HEARING**
**TAPPAHANNOCK PLANNING COMMISSION**
**JULY 2, 2025**
**7:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT**

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| Chair: | Dianna Carneal |
| Commission Members: | David Hammond |
| | Timothy Bradshaw |
| Assistant Town Manager Zoning Administrator: | James Knighton |
| Secretary: | Patsy K. Scates |

**ABSENT**

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| Vice Chair: | Maria Pitts |

**VISITORS:**

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| Jeff Howeth | Jay Whittington |
| Shannon Walker | Straton Beamer |

A Public Hearing of the Tappahannock Planning Commission was held on July 2, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the Tappahannock Municipal Building. The hearing was advertised in the Rappahannock Times for two consecutive weeks, June 18, 2025, and June 25, 2025, as required by Title 15.2-2204 of the 1950 Code of Virginia, as amended.

The purpose of the public hearing is to consider the following:

An application from J.L. Howeth PC requesting to rezone lots known as tax parcel 36 (2) Parcels 7P1A, 7P1, 7P2, 7P3, 7P4, 7P5, and 7RW. The lots are approximately 3.3 acres and are located at the 1200 block of Desha Rd. in the Town of Tappahannock. The applicant is requesting to rezone the property from R-3 Town Residential to R-4 Multi-Family Residential.

Said application has been submitted as per Section 22-225 through Section 22-228 of the Tappahannock Zoning Ordinance.

- **CALLED TO ORDER**

Chair Carneal called the meeting to order.

Chair Carneal stated the purpose of the public hearing.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton reviewed his staff report. (See report below)



Rezone Request for Howeth - 7-2-25 PH

Assistant Town Manager Knighton stated the rezoning request proposed is to construct 20 townhomes, a proposal once approved by the Board of Zoning appeals in 2007 and previously allowed under the R-3

zoning district with an approved special exception permit. However, with the removal of townhomes as an allowed use in R-3 zoning district the applicant is requesting this rezoning in order to construct the townhomes that were approved by special exception in 2007.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton stated that Mr. Howeth did submit the proffers regarding the rezoning request before the meeting today so he did not have time to include it in the packet but he did place the proffers letter on each planning commission desk. (See below proffers)



Proffers - Howeth.pdf

Assistant Town Manager Knighton stated in summary the rezoning request is in line with the housing goals of the comprehensive plan but not the future land use map, it is an upzoning because it increases the density and intensity of land use. He stated environmental impacts; utility requirements and transportation impacts will be reviewed thoroughly at the time of the full site plan submittal. He stated the proffers submitted are considered zoning law and any changes to the proffers would have to go before the Town Council and Planning Commission as a public approval.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton asked for any comments or questions.

Chair Carneal recognized Jeff Howeth.

Chair Carneal referenced a letter in the packet from the Department of Transportation dated 9-28-07 and asked if the items listed had been addressed. (See letter below)



Letter from VDOT dated 9-28-07 to Ho

Jeff Howeth stated Ronald Robbins was approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals on November 29, 2007, for twenty townhomes on Desha Road on Lot 36-121-17 in Tappahannock but since he did not begin construction or completed a zoning permit within a year the permit expired. He stated the townhomes were allowed to be built in 2007 under a special exception permit but now the zoning has changed.

Jeff Howeth discussed his rezoning request including the proffers submitted, the possible size, price range, lighting for entryways and parking lots of the townhomes. He reported a homeowner association will be established and that would be included in the sale contract.

Chair Carneal asked if he would consider having them as rental properties if they did not sell.

Jeff Howeth stated that if sales fall off, he is not going to build anymore. He stated that if he is eighty percent done then he will have to finish. He stated a buyer for a townhouse is not going to want to purchase it if someone already lived in it. He stated fair housing laws dictate what he can and cannot do because he will be over the HUD limit. He reported he will have to follow federal and state rules.

Straton Beamer asked if he had a design for what the home would look like once it is completed.

Jeff Howeth stated he has a rough design of what the home would look like.

There was some discussion about the design and height of the townhomes.

Commission Member Hammond asked if the property was changed to be zoned R-4 would a developer be allowed to put single-family homes on the property.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton stated that is correct.

- **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Carneal asked if anyone from the public had a comment to please come to the podium and state their name and address.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton stated he received a letter opposing the request before the meeting, so he did not have time to include it in the packet, but he placed the letter on their desk.

Shannon Walker, Desha Road stated she feels if the homes are built it could impact her privacy because her property is adjacent to the proposed rezoning request.

Shannon Walker expressed her concerns of increased traffic on Desha Road, increase of road maintenance and costs, increased stress on the Town sewer system and potable water systems, additional load on our essential public safety services (fire, police, first responders, and public works department) and the negative effects on conservation specifically Hoskins Creek.




Letter opposing request - delivered a

Shannon Walker stated she reviewed the comprehensive plan, and she feels that there are multiple sections that this request does not line with including housing plan. She asked the commission members to consider her concerns when deciding on this rezone request.

Jay Whittington stated that he did not see any negative comments on the Assistant Town Managers report only positive comments.

There was some discussion.

Straton Beamer asked if some type of buffer would be included on the property.

Jeff Howeth stated yes, there would be a buffer.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton presented the map that showed where the proposed buffer would be located.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton addressed Shannon Walkers' concerns. He stated the maintenance of the roads is the responsibility of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT because they own the road). He stated VDOT cannot require an applicant to increase the width of the road, but they can require the applicant to widen the entrance to the property and put in curb and gutter. He stated regarding the increased stress on the town utility system, the Town recently designed a hydraulic model for water

capacity and ran a test, and we had adequate capacity for water and sewer. He stated for a development of this size the Town would have adequate capacity for water and sewer. He stated that if this request gets approved then a full site plan would be required to be submitted, and those items would be addressed.

Commission Member Hammond asked if a developer built six single family homes, two stores high, would there be a limit to the height of the homes? He also asked if there is no height limit, could the homes be the same size as a townhome?

Assistant Town Manager Knighton stated that was correct. He stated under the current zoning single family and duplexes are allowed in this zoning district so six lots could have up to twelve units.

Cupper Dickerson asked if there was room for two cars to enter and exit into the complex at the same time.

Assistant Town Manager Knighton reported that anytime you access the state-maintained road there is a requirement for the entrance to accommodate vehicles entering and existing onto the road.

Commission Member Bradshaw reported that the rezoning request is to change the current zoning from R-3 to R-4 but there is no commitment to the type or quantity, it's just a hypothetical proposal. He asked if that was correct.

Jeff Howeth stated that it was not correct the purpose of the proffers was to cap the whole project at twenty residential units only.

There was some discussion.

Chair Carneal asked for any comments or questions.

- **ADJOURNED**

There being no further questions, the meeting was adjourned.

Dianna Carneal
**Dianna Carneal, Chair**

Patsy K Scates
**Patsy K. Scates, Secretary**