

Comprehensive Plan – Short Term Work Update – First Reading

Secretary Smith announced that the five-year update to the Short Term Work Plan found within the Rome/Floyd/Cave Spring Comprehensive Plan is being placed on first reading. Action for this item is scheduled for the January 23rd City Commission meeting.

Alcohol Ordinance Amendment – Small Bars – First Reading

Secretary Smith announced that an alcohol ordinance amendment, as recommended by the Alcohol Control Commission, is being placed on first reading. This ordinance, if adopted, would establish a new category of small bars. A second reading for this amendment is scheduled for the January 23rd City Commission meeting.

SUP22-12-05 Special Use Permit Request – Westside Industrial Blvd (Cryptocurrency Mining)

It was noted that Special Use Permit request file SUP22-12-05, regarding the request for a cryptocurrency mining operation permit on property zoned Heavy Industrial and located on Westside Industrial Blvd. (tax map number H13W-034A), was tabled following the public hearing at the December 19, 2022, City Commission meeting.

Commissioner Beeman moved to remove this item from the table, making it available for discussion tonight. Commissioner Doss seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Assistant City Attorney Frank Beacham clarified that although a public hearing is not being held tonight, the City Commission could ask questions of the applicant.

The City Commission discussion began regarding noise associated with this proposed operation. Ms. Olivia Wang stated that she did not have any additional data to present tonight that was not previously covered by her and her attorney at the December 19th meeting. There were numerous questions asked by the City Commission involving several concerns of this operation. It was asked if cryptocurrency mining operations had been prohibited in any other areas. Ms. Wang stated that there was a moratorium on these types of businesses in at least two areas in the United States, and in China. Ms. Wang stated that her assumption was that the reason for the prohibition in China was the cost and availability of energy needed for this operation. She is aware of an area near Niagara Falls that has prohibited these types of operations. She summarized the reason for that prohibition due to electrical costs in the Niagara Falls area were less expensive than most areas, however the electrical needs of the cryptocurrency mining operation had driven up the cost of electricity. Ms. Wang was questioned regarding the size of her corporation, and she stated that her corporation was very small compared to the publicly traded companies. When asked about potential sound nuisances, Ms. Wang stated, once again, the sound that would project from her operation would be a constant sound primarily from the cooling fans, however, her structure would mitigate 50 – 80% of this sound. She also reminded the commission that the noise in the nearest residential areas will not exceed the current base line background level if her operation moves forward.

There was at least one question for Rome/Floyd Planner Artagus Newell regarding noise. Mr. Newell stated that based on data currently available, Ms. Wang’s operation would provide a constant noise, however, it does not appear it would not exceed the current baseline sound levels. Assistant City Attorney Frank Beacham was questioned on the scenario of this operation moving forward and later becoming a nuisance with louder than expected noise. Mr. Beacham stated that unless a decibel level has