



## **TOWN OF CLIFTON FORGE, VIRGINIA**

### **PLANNING COMMISSION**

**April 3, 2025, 6 p.m., 547 Main Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Clifton Forge, Virginia 24422**

#### **AGENDA**

**I. Call to Order – Chair**

**II. Finding of Quorum – Chair**

**III. Public Hearings**

Proposed rezoning of Alleghany County Tax Parcels 124-1-4-7, 124-1-4-8, 124-1-4-9, 124-1-4-10, 124-1-4-11 and 124-4-12A, known as the Old Jefferson School, from CF (Public) to BG General Business

**a. Staff Report – Saxton**

**b. Public Hearing.** Members of the public are invited to speak on the proposed rezoning.

**c. Consideration of the Rezoning Request**

**IV. Old or New Business – Commissioners**

**V. Adjourn – Chair**



## **STAFF REPORT**

**TO: Town of Clifton Forge Planning Commission**

**FR: Maria Saxton, Director of Community and Economic Development**

**DA: April 1, 2025**

**RE: Rezoning of Old Jefferson School**

---

### **Background**

At its December 10, 2024 meeting, the Town Council directed the Planning Commission to consider a possible rezoning of the Jefferson School, Alleghany County Tax Parcels 124-1-4-7, 124-1-4-8, 124-1-4-9, 124-1-4-10, 124-1-4-11 and 124-4-12A (the "School"), from CF (Public) to BG General Business.

At the December Council meeting, Town staff and Council members cited the importance of preparing the School for private use. A school has been on some part of this property since approximately 1930. The current school building was built in the early 1950s, and additional outbuildings, principally modular classroom trailers, were added later. The School has been closed for several decades. At the moment, because the School is under public ownership, it pays no real estate or personal property taxes. However, despite the fact that the Town has taken a low- upkeep approach to the property, it is an annual cost on the Town's budget.

### **Staff Analysis**

In the Clifton Forge 2012 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map, the School property is on the border between areas designated for future Commercial and Residential Low Density use. The current physical form of the main building is a multi-story structure that is potentially useful for residential purposes with some commercial or community service elements. This supports rezoning to a district that allows mixed commercial and multi-family residential use. These uses are by-right in the BG District. Staff therefore concludes that the potential use is consistent with the 2012 Comprehensive Plan guidance on future land use.

Another important goal of the Comprehensive Plan is preservation of historic structures. The Town has received some interest from third parties about potential acquisition of the School for adaptive reuse that would preserve its historic nature as the primary African-American school in Clifton Forge under segregation, and one of the first integrated schools in our part of the state (1965), while also making use of it for potential residential and light commercial or community service

uses. It is a beautiful building that is suffering from disuse. The Town wishes to explore how to preserve this asset to the Town with one or more private partners in order to preserve this piece of our history while also putting it on the tax rolls to drive local revenue. The first step is to undertake rezoning in order to open up private uses.

Staff indicates a note of caution, however, that the BG district allows a wide range of uses. However, due to the fact that the School remains under public control by the Town Council, its future use can be directed through other use controls.

Another issue that the School has is that it is still carried in the Land Book and in the land records under the ownership of the City of Clifton Forge School Board, which dissolved in 1982. The Town Attorney advises that he has discussed the matter with legal counsel for the current Alleghany Highlands School Division, and they have no future educational use for the property and believed that it was already owned by the Town. The Town Attorney is currently working to clear up the title to the School in order to allow for adaptive reuse.

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends forwarding the proposed rezoning to the Town Council with a recommendation of approval.

### **Proposed Motions**

#### **1. To recommend approval:**

I move to forward the proposed rezoning to the Town Council with a recommendation of approval, on the basis of the public health, safety, general welfare and good zoning practice, and:

1. ....

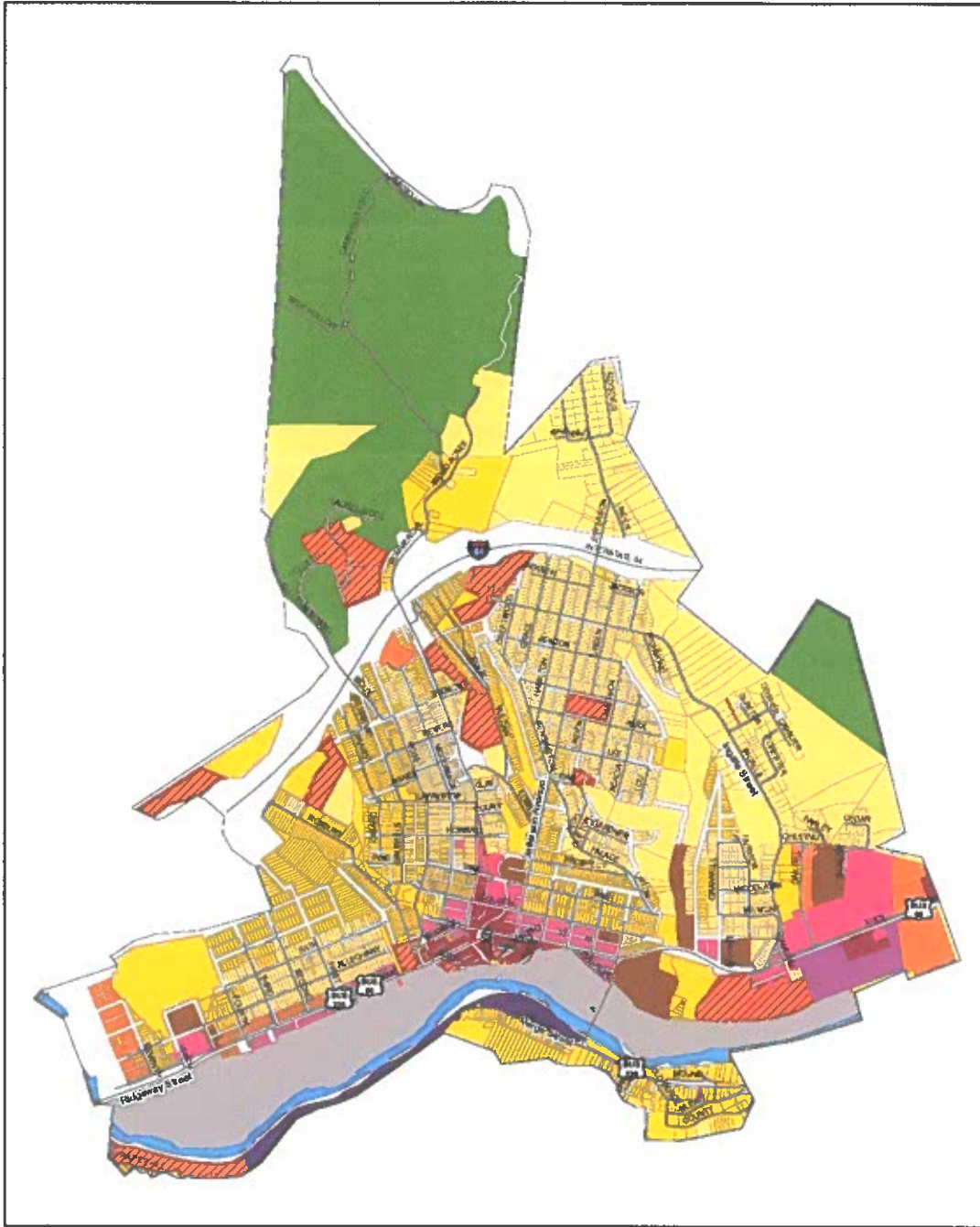
#### **2. To recommend denial:**

I move to forward the proposed rezoning to the Town Council with a recommendation of disapproval, because:

1. ...

### **Attachments**





# Town of Clifton Forge

**Map 7  
Existing Land Use (Zoning)**

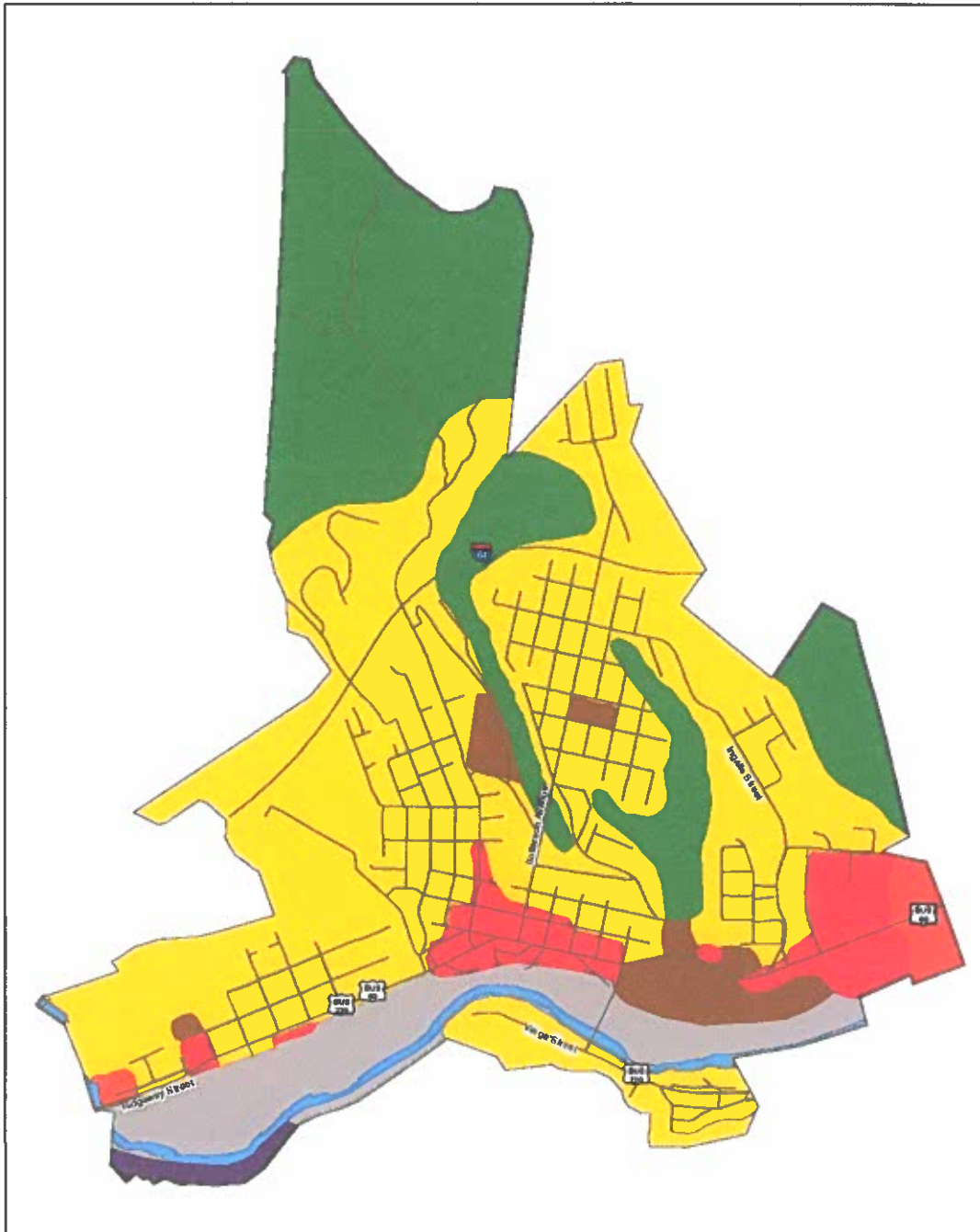


Scale 0 500 1000 2000 Feet

Source: Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, 2012.

**Legend**

- AR
- B1
- B2
- BD
- BG
- CF
- CN
- M1
- M2
- NF
- R1
- R2
- R3
- RR ROW
- UNKNOWN



## Town of Clifton Forge

### Map 8 Future Land Use



Scale 0 500 1000 2000 Feet

Source: Roanoke Valley-Alegheny Regional Commission, 2012.

#### Legend

- Commercial
- Conservation
- Industrial
- Public Use
- Residential High Density
- Residential Low Density
- Railroad