

## Public hearing on Rockledge set for Tuesday

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A public hearing is scheduled Tuesday in Occoquan on two rezoning requests, one of them concerning the Rockledge Mansion estate.

Renovation of Rockledge, the stone mansion built by Occoquan's founder more than 200 years ago, is nearly complete, according to its owners. A fire destroyed the home and first renovation efforts in January 1980 before Ron and Joy Houghton purchased the mansion.

If approved, the zoning request would permit the opening of an antique store on the mansion's ground floor. Commercial zoning would also allow Mrs. Houghton to operate a bed and breakfast business without a special-use permit, according to Zoning Administrator Sid Bradbury.

A second proposed rezoning would enlarge a strip of land near Washington Street that is zoned for apartments and townhouses. The 100-foot strip runs parallel to Washington Street would be extended 60 feet.

The public hearings are scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. in Town Hall. The council meeting is scheduled to begin at 7:30 p.m.

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## Rockledge owners win rezoning

### Will open antique store in mansion

The owners of Occoquan's Rockledge Mansion have been given the go-ahead to open an antique store on the ground floor of the historic property.

Tuesday night, the Occoquan Town Council approved a request from Ron and Joy Houghton to change the zoning on their land from residential to business.

Four council members voted in favor of the zoning. Councilman Houghton abstained.

"There is a general trend in preservation through commercial use," Councilman Robert Lehto said. "It's almost the only way you can afford the cost of restoration."

None of the 35 residents in attendance spoke on the issue during the

public hearing preceding the vote.

Sid Bradbury, zoning administrator, told the council the land was zoned for residential use to preserve it as a private, historic home. Rockledge was built in 1758 by the town's founder, and had been vandalized before restoration efforts were destroyed by a fire in 1980.

A second restoration, by the Houghtons, is nearing completion. Mrs. Houghton had said they would probably run out of money before the finishing.

She said she hopes leasing out two of the mansion's 11 rooms will bring in the money needed to finish the job.

The remaining nine rooms would still function as the Houghton's pri-

ivate residence. The antique store would have a separate entrance, she said.

Land adjacent to the mansion is zoned for commercial use. A restaurant has been opened in the last week adjacent to the mansion, at the end of Mill Street.

A bed and breakfast business offered at the mansion will not require a special use permit to continue under the new zoning.

In other action, the Town Council agreed to hold a public hearing on a request for a special use permit to open an antique store in a home on Washington Street.

The public hearing and the next regular meeting of the Town Council is scheduled for September 10, in the Town Hall.