



TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE Planning Board

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Ginger Hain (Chair)
Travis Collins (Vice Chair)
Stuart Bass
Michael Blackburn
Tommy Thomas
Jan Grossman
John Baus
Alex McKay
John Mason

Development Services
Director
Elizabeth Teague

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE PLANNING BOARD Regular Meeting Town Hall – 9 South Main St., Waynesville, NC 28786 June 16th, 2025

THE WAYNESVILLE PLANNING BOARD held a Regular Meeting on June 16th, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in the board room of the Town Hall at 9 South Main Street, Waynesville, NC 28786.

A. CALL TO ORDER

1. Welcome/Calendar/Announcements

The following members were present:

Ginger Hain (Chair)
Jan Grossman
Travis Collins (Vice Chair)
Alex McKay
John Mason
Stuart Bass
John Baus
Tommy Thomas

The following Board members were absent:

Michael Blackburn

The following staff members were present:

Elizabeth Teague, Development Services Director
Olga Grooman, Assistant Development Services Director
Alex Mumby, Land Use Administrator
Tyler Anderson, Stormwater Management Coordinator
Esther Coulter, Administrative Assistant
Ron Sneed, Board's Attorney

Vice Chair Ginger Hain called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Development Services Director Elizabeth Teague welcomed everyone and informed the Board that the Council re-appointed John Baus and Michael Blackburn to the Planning Board for another term, and that Jan Grossman and Stuart Bass was rotating off the Board. Ms. Teague stated that the Town greatly appreciates everybody's service, noting that Planning Board membership is a volunteer position that requires many hours and navigating very complicated subjects. She stated that she appreciated people's thoughtfulness and service.

Ms. Hain also thanked the members of the Board for their service.

Ms. Hain read through the process and procedures for the public hearing.

2. Adoption of March 17, 2025, minutes as presented or amended.

A motion was made by Board Member Jan Grossman, seconded by Board Member Alex McKay, to approve the May 19, 2025, minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

B. BUSINESS

1. Public Hearing on as text amendments to Land Development Standards Section 3.10 related to wireless communication facilities and monopole communication towers.

Chair Ginger Hain opened the public hearing at 5:37 p.m.

Assistant Director of Development Services, Olga Grooman, read her staff report and stated that the purpose of the proposed text amendments is to better align the Land Development Standards with federal law and eliminate the Town's LDS provisions that imply a "use variance" from the Zoning Board of Adjustment, which is not permissible under North Carolina law.

Additionally, she asked the Board to clarify if LDS 3.10.4 permits 1 tower per full acre lot, then could a 2-acre lot have 2 towers clustered together. Or should each tower have its own acre.

Ms. Grooman submits that the proposed text amendments to the LDS are consistent with the following 2035 Comprehensive Plan Goals:

Goal 1: Continue to promote smart growth principles in land use planning and zoning.

- Encourage infill, mixed-use and context-sensitive development.

Goal 5: Create opportunities for a sustainable economy.

- Support 21st century technology and infrastructure by broadening the availability of high-speed internet, modernizing wireless communication facilities, and promoting green building and the use of solar and wind technologies.

And that the proposal is reasonable and in the public interest because it will better align the Town's ordinances with the Federal Communications Act of 1996 and applicable Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) regulations.

Ms. Hain asked if there were any comments from the public and hearing none, closed the public hearing at 6:07 p.m.

The Board members discussed the need for better cell coverage and the fact that during the hurricane, Verizon coverage disappeared completely. There was general consensus to bring the standards up to date with current federal and state laws and for the local standards to be clear. Ms. Grooman noted that the Town had permitted two cell towers close together on a 2.17-acre lot at the top of Reservoir Drive. This effectively clustered the towers together while staying within the guidelines of the supplemental standards. There was general discussion about the benefits of reducing disturbance by clustering towers, noting that a 1.5-acre lot could still only have 1 tower.

A motion made by Board member John Baus, seconded by Board member Jan Grossman to approve the recommended text amendment for LDS 3.10.4 to permit 1 tower per full acre lot (i.e., a 2-acre lot can have 2 towers, and 1.5-acre lot can only have 1 tower), and that the amendment is consistent with the 2035 Comprehensive Land Use Plan to promote smart growth principles in land use planning and zoning, context-sensitive development, creates opportunities for a sustainable economy and reasonable and in the public interest. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion made by Board Chair Ginger Hain, seconded by Board member John Baus to recommend the text amendment as amended to the Town Council. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Ginger Hain opened the public hearing at 6:18 p.m.

2. Public Hearing on a text amendment to Land Development Standards Chapter 11 related to clarifications and updates to signage ordinance.

Land Use Administrator, Alex Mumby brought forward discussion of updates to the signage code related to areas of the LDS signage chapter in need of clarification and updates within the following text amendments. He reviewed recommendations from Town staff as follows:

- Signage code definitions should be added under each sign type within the ordinance itself. While some definitions are found within LDS Chapter 17 definition, others are not defined at all or but unevenly provided within LDS Chapter 11. Adding all definitions to the text within Chapter 11, will assist applicants and code enforcement with understanding the signage regulations. Additionally, the use of the word “etc.” has been removed to provide clearer interpretation.
- Clarification of how signs within murals are interpreted, LDS Chapter 11. Computation of signage area is proposed to affirm that only the portion of the mural which contains the sign itself, specifically the lettering and logo, will count towards the maximum allowed signage in a district. This codifies the precedent for how staff has interpreted signs within murals in the past.
- Adjust the scale of signage in Regional Center and Commercial Industrial districts. The maximum allowed size for an attached sign is 15% of the wall face. Staff recommends a reduction to 10% of the wall face for buildings that are free standing. For storefronts that are part of attached units within

shopping centers, staff recommends that it remain 15%. This reduction in ratio would apply to new signage only and LDS Section 11.10 Maintenance and Non-Conformities would still apply to existing signs. As a reference, note that proposed replacement signage at Wal-Mart is only 1.5% of the total façade, and the sign on the side of the Cookout building is exactly 15%.

- Clarify what is meant by “portable signs,” and provide specific guidelines to make it easier for the public to use and comply with the rules. Specifically, provide guidelines for A-frame signs which the business owners put out during the day. Recommended dimensions would allow all current A-frame signs to remain, while additional placement guidelines have been added in order to keep the public way clear for sidewalk users.
- Replace the term “Master Development” with the term “multi-tenant shopping centers,” to better describe the development that Waynesville has. The existing ordinance states that “master development signs” may be 160 sq. ft. and 25 ft tall, without defining what a master development is. This is the largest allowable signage and is appropriate to shopping center developments with multiple tenants. This is how it is currently used throughout Waynesville.
- Provide specific guidelines for dimensions of neighborhoods signs. Neighborhood signage is subject to approval by the Planning Board, but the planning board is given no criteria from which to consider an application. Staff feels that the primary purpose of neighborhood signs is for wayfinding and to create a sense of entrance, and that the ordinance should reflect this. The maximum dimensions recommended are similar to signs allowed in low, medium, and Urban residential districts which is a maximum of 16 square feet. Staff also recommends limiting the height of signage to 6’ tall which is consistent with the Neighborhood Center District. Thirdly, staff recommends consideration for limiting the number of neighborhood signs to two (2) signs per entrance with up to a maximum of four (4) signs allowed per neighborhood. This would allow double signage at up to two main entrances, with options for other entrances

Mr. Mumby discussed that these issues have been brought forward because of recent signage permits. There was Board discussion on striking a more balanced ratio for commercial buildings in the Regional Center Districts. There was discussion in regard to what was meant by a “facsimile” sign, since there was no explanation or definition included in the ordinance itself. Ms. Teague noted that a logo or character that is associated with a specific company – such as how the white and black cow is associated with Chick-Fil-A would be an example. She noted that this wouldn’t apply to unique artwork, and that the Town would want to be careful in order to preserve creative and artistic signage. There were examples such as a Cigar Indian or the truck in front of Pioneer as being things that you didn’t want to be regulated.

Ms. Hain asked if there was any public comment and there was none. The Board continued the hearing to allow staff to further research updates.

A motion was made by Board member Alex McKay, seconded by Chair Ginger Hain to continue the hearing until the next regular meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Ginger Hain opened the public hearing at 7:06 p.m.

3. Public Hearing on a text amendment to Land Development Standards Section 12.5 related to applicability and exemptions in the stormwater ordinance.

Stormwater Management Coordinator, Tyler Anderson reported the Town of Waynesville holds a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit (NPDES) issued by the NC Department of the Environmental Quality (NC DEQ) on August 19, 2021. The permit is valid for five (5) years. The purpose is to manage stormwater runoff, to reduce the discharge of pollutants, and protect water quality within the Town's jurisdiction. After the approval on June 28, 2021, the Town started implementing its comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan and ordinance.

Recently a case demonstrated that the ordinance was unclear in how the ordinance was applied to minor subdivisions of single- and two-family lots. The ordinance creates an exemption for single-family and two-family lots, but doesn't explain that when multiple lots are developed as part of a minor subdivision, then the other parts of the ordinance would still apply if the overall development disturbs one acre or more, or adds 24,000 square feet or more of impervious surface.

Per recommendation of the Planning Board's attorney Ron Sneed, staff is bringing forward this text amendment to clarify the scope of the single-family and two-family exemption.

Ms. Anderson states the proposed text amendments to the LDS are consistent with the following 2035 Comprehensive Plan Goals:

Goal 1: Continue to promote smart growth principles in land use planning and zoning.

- Encourage infill, mixed-use and context-sensitive development.
- Promote conservation design to preserve important natural resources.

Goal 3: Protect and enhance Waynesville's natural resources.

- Protect and enhance water quality and forests.

She added that staff recommends that the proposal is reasonable and in the public interest because it clarifies the applicability and exemptions of the stormwater ordinance, thereby strengthening the Town's legal authority through clear ordinance.

Ms. Hain asked if there was further discussion or public comment and closed the public hearing at 7:16 p.m.

A motion made by Board member John Baus, seconded by Board member Tommy Thomas to approve the language of the recommended text amendment 12.5.2C, and 12.5.3 bullet 1&3. It is consistent with the 2035 Comprehensive Land Use Plan to promote smart growth principles in land use planning and zoning, Protect and enhance Waynesville's natural resources its reasonable and in the public interest. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion made by Board member John Baus, seconded by Board Chair Ginger Hain to recommend the text amendment as amended to the Town council. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Ginger Hain opened the public hearing at 7:16 p.m.

4. Public Hearing on a text amendment to Land Development Standards Section 8.2.5 related to compliance requirements in the landscaping ordinance.

Assistant Director of Development Services, Olga Grooman stated that LDS Chapter 8 encourages the preservation of existing trees and vegetation and replenishment of removed vegetation to “improve the visual quality of the Town of Waynesville and minimize the potential impacts of development, such as noise, dust, and glare of lights.” The Several projects along Russ Avenue corridor will be unable to plant the required street trees due to ongoing NCDOT roadway construction and associated easements. Unlike with Town sidewalk requirements that allow for a “fee-in-lieu of construction” option, covering all costs associated with the installation and materials of the required landscaping for developments affected by the NCDOT road projects. These funds will be held in a Town-designated account. To the extent possible, the Town will use these funds to plant the required road frontage landscaping in the original project location once the NCDOT construction is complete.

Ms. Grooman submits that the proposed text amendments to the LDS are consistent with the following 2035 Comprehensive Plan Goals:

Goal 1: Continue to promote smart growth principles in land use planning and zoning.

- Encourage infill, mixed-use and context-sensitive development.
- Create walkable and attractive neighborhoods and commercial centers.

Goal 3: Protect and enhance Waynesville’s natural resources.

- Protect and enhance water quality and forests.
- Protect rural lands, iconic views and mountain vistas.

She added that staff feels the proposal is reasonable and in the public interest, as it allows the Town to ensure compliance with its landscaping ordinance while enabling affected projects to proceed without delay and obtain a final Certificate of Occupancy.

Ms. Hain closed the public hearing at 7:32 p.m.

A motion made by Board Chair Ginger Hain, seconded by Board member Tommy Thomas to approve the language of the recommended text amendment 8.2.5C. It is consistent with the 2035 Comprehensive Land Use Plan to promote smart growth principles in land use planning and zoning, Protect and enhance Waynesville’s natural resources its reasonable and in the public interest . The motion passed unanimously.

A motion made by Board member Tommy Thomas, seconded by Board member Stuart Bass to recommend the text amendment as amended to the Town council. The motion passed unanimously.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT/CALL ON THE AUDIENCE

There was no public comment.

D. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Ginger Hain at 7:34 pm.

Ginger Hain, Vice Chair

Esther Coulter, Administrative Assistant