

REGULAR MEETING
TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE
PLANNING BOARD
TOWN HALL - 9 SOUTH MAIN STREET
NOVEMBER 19, 2012
MONDAY - 5:30 P.M.

The Planning Board held a regular meeting on Monday, November 19, 2012. Members present were Jon Feichter, Marty Prevost, Lee Bouknight, Shell Isenburg, Danny Wingate, Brooks Hale, H. P. Dykes, Jr., and Chairman Patrick McDowell. Also present were Planning Director Paul Benson, and Administrative Assistant, Eddie Ward. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 P.M. by Chairman McDowell.

Introduction and welcome to new Planning Board members H. P. Dykes, Jr., Shell Isenberg, and Danny Wingate

Planning Director Paul Benson asked the new Planning Board members to introduce themselves, and welcomed them to the Board.

Approval of Minutes of August 20, 2012

Brooks Hale moved, seconded by Lee Bouknight, to approve the minutes of August 20, 2012 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Consideration of amendment to text of the Land Development Standards Section 6.4.3 Public Transit Connections (referred by Town of Waynesville Board of Aldermen)

Chairman McDowell asked Mr. Benson to give a background report concerning the consideration of an amendment to the Land Development Standards, Section 6.4.3 Public Transit Connections. Mr. Benson stated that in September 2012, Ms. Philan Medford was present at the Town of Waynesville Board of Aldermen meeting and requested a requirement for transit shelters at all commercial locations. The Board of Aldermen referred the request to the Planning Board for recommendations. Mr. Benson stated he had inquired on the NC Planners Listserv as to what other cities were doing in regards to transit shelters. He received replies from the City of Asheville and the City of Chapel Hill. Transportation Planning Consultants Don Kostelec and Harrison Marshal also replied to the inquiries. Asheville does have a fixed route public transit and requires shelters in connection with large developments that have more than one hundred thousand square feet or fifty residential units. Chapel Hill has a well developed fixed route system and requires a fee-in-leu based on improvements deemed necessary for that development. Chapel Hill developers also have the option of installing a public transit shelter that is designed to City standards and is maintained by the City.

Mr. Kostelec stated he was not familiar with a universal standard to require shelters for demand

response transit systems. Mr. Marshal stated shelters are normally located within the public right of way and cautions that some users may prefer door service rather than using a shelter. This may confuse transit operators.

Susan Anderson, Transportation Director for Haywood Public Transit, Haywood Public Transit Advisory Committee, and Haywood Vocational Opportunities sent letters of support emphasizing safe points of connection for pedestrians, shelters placed a reasonable distance from entrances, and some type of requirement for commercial developments to have transit facilities.

Mr. Benson said the Town ordinance, as it is now, is not an effective requirement because the language states shelters would only be required on a “fixed route” system and only for larger developments of one hundred residential units or one hundred thousand square feet.

Staff recommendations include three changes to the ordinance;

1. Reduce threshold on residential units from one hundred to fifty units and square footage of commercial space from one hundred thousand to fifty thousand.
2. Add the requirement for institutional uses of fifty thousand square feet or greater.
3. Delete the clause “Are adjacent to present or planned transit routes” to accommodate the current on-demand public transit service.

Chairman McDowell opened the meeting for public comments. The first person to speak was Ms. Philan Medford, 99 Pisgah Drive, Waynesville, NC. Ms. Medford provided a hand out she had composed explaining five major points of having public transit shelters as per the attached comments which shall become part of these minutes.

The second person to speak was Ms. Lorna Sterling, 120 Meadow St., Waynesville, NC. Ms. Sterling stated her husband has advanced Parkinson Disease and is wheelchair bound. She compared how she and her husband supported small businesses in the Town of Waynesville ten years ago and now, because of his immobility, they are limited to going to “big box” stores. She expressed concerns that in another ten years, small businesses will be inaccessible to a larger population of Waynesville residents because of the lack of public transit shelters. Ms. Sterling stated that if the ordinance for shelters in Waynesville uses the square footage of a building, smaller business districts will be left behind. She would like to see an alternative criteria for shelters, based on the number of parking spaces allotted for a business. Her vision for the ordinances is to build toward an “accessible map” that will continue to ensure small business can respond effectively to the changing demographics.

Ms. Sterling also addressed the two “dial-a-ride” systems Waynesville has now. The first is the Haywood Transit System and the second is the informal transit system of family and friends transporting people to different places such as doctors, hospitals, and food shopping areas. She explained how difficult it is to go “door to door” in harsh weather. The lack of disability parking causes the fire lanes to be blocked and traffic to be backed up. She thinks it would be less expensive and much safer to create pull-out lanes or shelters.

Mr. Michael Beasley, 21 Fairlane Dr., Waynesville, NC asked if the Board would consider covered walkways or covered transit stops. He stated his wheelchair is electric and is not compatible with wet weather, therefore he has to wait inside the front of stores for his caretaker to pick him up. While he is waiting, Mr. Beasley says he is constantly asked if he is lost, or if he needs help, or having problems with his chair. He states he would like to see a covered transit stop in the near future.

Mr. Henry Foy, Welch St, Waynesville, NC stated he wanted to address how the Town of Waynesville needs public transportation, because of the way businesses are spread throughout the Town. He stressed the system needs to be done properly because it is vital to Waynesville’s growth.

Chairman McDowell closed the public hearing and asked for discussion from members of the Board. They had several questions for Ms. Medford about the cost of the shelters. Jon Feichter stated concern about the cost for smaller businesses.

There was also much discussion between the Board and Mr. Benson about the requirements of retrofitting shelters when reconstruction or additions trigger compliance.

Chairman McDowell stated that since there is not a comprehensive plan in place, consideration should to be given to the different aspects of needs. Our current transportation system versus the development of a fixed route transportation system. He feels there should be more time and education allotted to go over these aspects. Board Member Marty Prevost suggested a committee be formed with members of a public transit authority to explain more about transit systems and shelters, and also to study a plan for the Town of Waynesville.

Mr. Benson suggested inviting Ms. Susan Anderson, Transportation Director for Haywood Public Transit, to an upcoming Planning Board meeting to get her input.

After much discussion, the consideration of amendment to the text of the Land Development Standards Section 6.4.3 Public Transportation Connections was tabled and it was agreed upon to invite Ms. Anderson to a future Planning Board meeting to gather further information about the transit system and shelters.

Planning Board Minutes
November 19, 2012

Chairman McDowell said he had been invited to speak at the December 11, 2012 Town of Waynesville Board of Aldermen meeting to report on Planning Board activities for the past year, and discuss future projects such as commercial zoning for the Russ Avenue Corridor, and the need for updating the 2020 Land Development Plan. Chairman McDowell asked if the Board had any other issues that needed to be conveyed to the Board of Aldermen. None was mentioned.

With no further business, a motion was made by Lee Bouknight and seconded by Brooks Hale to adjourn at 6:40 P.M.. The motion was approved unanimously.

Patrick McDowell
Chairman

Eddie Ward
Administrative Assistant