

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE PLANNING BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 20, 2013

THE WAYNESVILLE PLANNING BOARD held a regular meeting on Monday May 20, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. in the board room of the Town Hall, 9 South Main Street, Waynesville, NC.

A. CALL TO ORDER

1. Chairman McDowell called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. with the following members present:

Chairman Patrick McDowell
Marty Prevost
Don Stephenson
Brooks Hale
Shell Isenburg
Jon Feichter

The following staff members were present:

Paul Benson, Planning Director
Eddie Ward, Deputy Clerk
Jason Rogers, Codes Administrator

Representing the media:

Caitlyn Bowling, Smoky Mt. News

Representing Downtown Waynesville Association:

Buffy Phillips

2. MINUTES OF APRIL 29, 2013

Board member Marty Prevost made a motion, seconded by Don Stephenson to approve the minutes of April 29, 2013 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

B. PORTABLE SIGNS IN BUSINESS DISTRICTS

Chairman McDowell asked Planning Director Paul Benson to talk about the issue of portable signs in the Business Districts.

Mr. Benson said this issue came to the Planning Board as a request from the Town Manager. Manager Onieal would like the Board to look into the issue of "sandwich board signs". Mr. Benson provided the Board with pictures of different portable signs he had seen earlier in the day on Main Street. Currently, portable signs are not allowed in Waynesville, but there is considerable interest on the part of downtown business owners in using portable signs. Recently developed draft Design

Guidelines for Waynesville's historic landmarks and districts suggest that such signs should be permitted and other cities and town in North Carolina do permit such signs.

The staff offered these suggestions for consideration of the Planning Board:

1. Permit only in Business Districts (Central, Hazelwood, and North Main St)
2. Permit only where space does not permit a permanent free-standing sign.
3. Specify standards for design and materials.
4. Specify standards for maximum size and height.
5. Do not permit where signs would block sidewalks or sight lines.
6. Permit only on premises.

The alternatives to the sign issues are:

1. Do nothing.
2. Tighten enforcement – possibly a written citation for portable signs placed.
3. Find an allowance for portable signs.

Mr. Benson introduced Jason Rogers, Codes Administrator for the Town of Waynesville. Mr. Rogers and his staff currently enforce the sign ordinance. Mr. Rogers stated the signs crop up consistently in Waynesville. He said he researched ordinances for other towns in North Carolinas, and he found some towns that allow these types of signs to be placed in front of their businesses when they do not have a permanent sign in place. He said the American Disability Act (ADA) requirements are a 48 inch clear path on the sidewalk, and should not block the ingress and egress patterns to a business. Most businesses on Main Street have "insets" off the sidewalk to their buildings. If a portable sign is placed in this area, it would probably be blocking an entranceway. Mr. Rogers said that most businesses on Main Street do not have enough private property to place a sign.

Chairman McDowell opened the meeting for Public Comments.

Richard Miller, 20 Church St – Wine Shop

Mr. Miller asked the Board to consider the streets of Depot, Miller, and Church Street. These streets need signs to draw people off the Main Street to the businesses located on these streets. Mr. Miller stated he had placed portable signs on Main Street in order to draw attention to his business that is on a side street. He says that having a sign on the sidewalk makes a difference in the foot traffic and he added that there should be definite rules for these signs.

John Keith, Twigs & Leaves

Mr. Keith stated he had never had a portable sign for his business, but he feels having a sandwich board sign adds "character" to the Main Street area. He feels there should be tasteful signs and these signs would help businesses along the streets.

Buffy Phillips, Director Downtown Waynesville Association

Ms Phillips said several years ago these same discussions had been brought before the Town and businesses. At that time the Board of Aldermen decided to not allow any type of portable signs in Waynesville. She said most towns that allow portable signs have much wider sidewalks than Waynesville. She feels that if sandwich boards are allowed, the Town needs strict guidelines so the sidewalk is not blocked in any way.

Katie Hughes, Montgomery St – Sunburst Market

Ms. Hughes stated her business is a fairly new business located on Montgomery Street. She has been placing a portable sign on Main Street advertising her business, and there has been a positive response from this sign. Ms. Hughes said she felt that having sandwich boards would benefit businesses on the side streets.

There was much discussion about placing poles on Main Street with the names of the businesses operating on the sides streets, and also allowing those businesses to have a portable sign in front of their business.

A question about whether businesses that already have a permanent, freestanding sign should also have a smaller portable sandwich sign was discussed. Board Members discussed the fairness of this possibility. Mr. Rogers stated that businesses that have a ground or permanent sign, could have interchangeable sections to advertise daily specials if they choose to do so.

Buffy Phillips brought up the fact that most of the businesses have window space that can be used to advertise.

Chairman McDowell reminded the Planning Board that they were looking at the sign ordinance as a whole and that any consideration for signs would affect the Central Business, Hazelwood Business, and North Main Business Districts, and to move cautiously.

The Planning Board agreed to go forward with a study for the sign ordinance.

C. ADJOURN

With no further business, a motion was made by Marty Prevost, seconded by Shell Isenburg to adjourn at 6:25 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Patrick McDowell, Chairman

Eddie Ward, Deputy Clerk

