

TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE Planning Board

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Susan Teas Smith(Chairman)
Stuart Bass
Robert Blackburn
H.P. Dykes Jr.
Ginger Hain
Don McGowan
Marty Prevost
Tommy Thomas
Gregory Wheeler (Vice)

Development Services
Director
Elizabeth Teague

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE PLANNING BOARD

Regular Meeting

Town Hall – 9 South Main St., Waynesville, NC 28786

November 16, 2020

THE WAYNESVILLE PLANNING BOARD held a Regular Meeting November 16, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. in the board room of the Town Hall, 9 South Main Street, Waynesville, NC. 28786

A. CALL TO ORDER

1. Welcome/Calendar/Announcements

The following members were present:

Susan Teas Smith (Chairman)
Gregory Wheeler (Vice Chairman)
Stuart Bass
Robert Blackburn
Bucky Dykes
Don McGowan
Marty Prevost
Tommy Thomas

The following Board members were absent:

Ginger Hain

The Following People Spoke:

Mandy Haithcox, Executive Director of Pathways

The following staff members were present:

Byron Hickox, Land Use Administrator
Elizabeth Teague, Development Services Director
Jesse Fowler, Assistant Town Manager
Esther Coulter, Administrative Assistant

Chairman Susan Teas Smith called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

Land Use Administrator Byron Hickox, reported that the Board of Aldermen adopted the text amendments on Accessory Uses and Structures, and on the definitions of recreation facilities, outdoor campgrounds, RV parks, and golf course/country clubs, as well as the Planning Board's recommendations on the permitted uses table.

2. Adoption of Minutes

A motion was made by Board Member Robert Blackburn, seconded by Board Member Don McGowan, to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2020 board meeting as presented (or amended). The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Board Member Don McGowan, seconded by Board Member Robert Blackburn, to approve the minutes of the October 19, 2020 board meeting as presented (or amended). The motion passed unanimously.

B. BUSINESS

1. Continuation of discussion on definitions and zoning relative to halfway houses and other congregate care facilities.

Development Services Director, Elizabeth Teague reminded the Board of their discussion on definitions related to emergency shelters, halfway houses, and family care homes, etc. from the last meeting. The Board had discussed that there is a gap in the zoning between group homes and residential facilities, and "low-barrier" or emergency shelters. Elizabeth introduced Mandy Haithcox of Pathways who can provide information for the Board.

Chairman Susan Smith asked if anyone had questions or concerns before Ms Haithcox speaks.

Board Member Don McGowan said he looked over the definitions and some of what was discussed are missing, like soup kitchens and homeless shelters. Elizabeth added that the Board also wanted to differentiate or exempt domestic violence shelters from the broad category of homeless shelters.

Mr. McGowan said that religious institution is a very broad definition and he would like to add 2 things: 1. As defined under IRS tax code. 2. When it comes to soup kitchens they need to be located on the primary campus and not on satellites campuses.

Mr. McGowan and Ms. Smith mentioned that while researching they have seen other counties require a license. Mrs. Teague said the NC Health and Human Services and Haywood County Health Department do require licenses for group homes and residential facilities. The Town defers to those regulatory agencies for licensure and only regulates zoning, building inspection, fire inspection, and public safety issues. Town code enforcement responds to complaints and informs the State or County as appropriate.

Chairman Smith asked to hear from Mandy Haithcox. Pathways Executive Director Mandy Haithcox said that 6 years ago Pathways started as three functions: a halfway house, a soup kitchen (like the Open Door), and as a cold weather emergency overnight shelter. Now however they provide services to their clients and have restrictions on whom they serve. She indicated that they do not have any State or Federal funding; they feed residents 3 meals a day and will also provide dinner meals for community needs. Now with Covid-19, all meals are provided "to-go." She stated that their kitchen is inspected by the County Health Department and 3 months ago they started the Holy Cow food truck which is also inspected.

Pathways does provide emergency shelter for a limited number of people when temperatures are 32 degrees or below are for both men and women. This is referred to as a "cold grace" policy. Pathways can also provide emergency shelter for someone not in their program up to 3 nights. Their short-term housing program allows someone to stay up to 6 months in the shelter with case management support. Pathways have 32 beds for men and 28 Beds for Women and 10 beds for Moms and Children.

Ms. Haithcox said the program eligibilities are:

- must be a resident of Haywood County
- not be a registered sex offender
- must be able to pass a drug screen and BAC,
- cannot have recent violent felonies in criminal background.

With Covid-19, Pathways can only operate at 60% capacity and are at 40% now. Every person in the 6-month program works with a case manager and each resident sets goals to be reached. For example, the caseworker will work with them on questions of what they need to do for income, for housing, and stability; what is needed to address mental and physical health, or recovery needs; what life skills need to be developed; what social support is needed; and what spiritual needs does someone have. Clients meet with their case manager a minimum of once a week with the expectation that they work on those goals. The outcome is that over the last three years 30% to 60% of clients find housing. In the family program, 80% of clients achieve housing. 30% to 50% of clients get jobs that are full time.

Ms. Haithcox continued to say that the Pathways facility is not a low-barrier shelter in the sense that someone must pass a drug test to be admitted. Pathways is not a treatment center and is not a mental health facility. When domestic violence is an issue, A program like REACH is recommended and is more private.

Ms. Haithcox was asked if clients must follow some religious program and she said no. She explained that clients don't have to believe in any certain way, but there are resources if someone wishes to pursue that direction. Pathways' focus is helping people build life-skills. She was asked where people go when they don't qualify to stay at Pathways. She stated she didn't know and that there is a need for providing shelter and assistance in those cases. This is what's missing in Haywood County. The Board thanked her for educating them.

Ms. Teague referred the Board to example definitions. Mr. Thomas stated that the Greensboro, NC definitions for emergency shelter, shelters for the homeless, and temporary

shelters are all relevant. Board Member Blackburn asked to document the specifics on why they would amend or expand on definition.

Chairman Smith stated that these were a great place to start. She added that the Board should determine if the community's concerns were truly with these establishments or is it more an issue of spacing and if these shelters can be in certain neighborhoods. Limiting them to certain areas is a zoning issue. Mr. Hickox said he agreed.

Mr. Blackburn said he does not want to limit these facilities from growing with the services that they offer. He does understand concerns in certain residential areas. Ms. Smith said you must be concerned with the spacing of facilities as you don't want two homes where people can hang around together and interfere with the goals and offered services. Mrs. Teague said you could expand shelter with supplemental standards that specifies the distance between them. Mr. Hickox pointed out that "halfway houses" with the current definition is the only one with a supplemental standard of half mile distance.

The Planning Board discussed differences between homeless shelters and halfway houses. Mrs. Teague suggested that certain shelters should be in commercial districts to have access to business, sidewalks, and transits services. However, as brought up before, a woman's shelter is appropriate in a more discreet location. Ms. Smith said the definitions should include some exclusions for domestic violence, and sexual assault shelters for men and women. Mr. McGowen stated that there should be a specific definition for domestic violence shelters. Mr. McGowen suggested referring to sample definitions from Greenville but make a separate definition for domestic violence or add it as an exclusion to the definition. Mrs. Teague thanked the board for their discussion and so did Ms. Haithcox.


2. Planning Board Training Part 1 as time allows.

Development Services Director Elizabeth Teague said that as the Board requested, she is providing some Planning Board training. She started by saying the Board can only act as authorized general statutes. A municipality may adopt zoning and development regulations ordinances, but only in accordance with an adopted Comprehensive Plan and General statutes. The State is updating all the authorization legislation into 160D and the Town will have to update our ordinance accordingly.

Ms. Teague discussed further the role and authority of the planning board and its assigned duties, including research, coordinating citizen engagement, recommending policies and ordinances, and advising the governing board on land use. She further discussed how the board makes quasi-judicial decisions related to designated types of development applications. She gave a handout of boards and commission manual to everyone that includes specific responsibilities of the planning board. Ms. Teague continued by discussing the 2035 Comprehensive Plan which was adopted September 8, 2020 and land use maps.

C. ADJOURN

With no further business a motion was made by Board Member Marty Prevost, seconded by Board Member Don McGowan, to adjourn the meeting at 6:45pm. The motion carried unanimously.



Susan Teas Smith, Chairman



Esther Coulter, Administrative Assistant

