



TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE Planning Board

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Susan Teas Smith (**Chairman**)
Gregory Wheeler (**Vice**)
Stuart Bass
Michael Blackburn
Ginger Hain
Don McGowan
Marty Prevost
Tommy Thomas
Barbara Christian Thomas

Development Services
Director
Elizabeth Teague

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE PLANNING BOARD **Regular Called Meeting** **Town Hall – 9 South Main St., Waynesville, NC 28786** **August 16, 2021**

THE WAYNESVILLE PLANNING BOARD held a Special Called Meeting August 16, 2021, 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
Marty Prevost
Tommy Thomas
Don McGowan
Michael Blackburn
Ginger Hain
Barbara Christian Thomas (who stayed in audience/did not vote)

The following Board members were absent:

There were no Board Members absent.

The following staff members were present:

Elizabeth Teague, Development Services Director
Byron Hickox, Land Use Administrator
Olga Grooman, Planner
Kathy Johnson, Deputy Clerk

The following media were present:

There were no media present.

Chairman Susan Teas Smith called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm and welcomed everyone and asked Development Services Director Elizabeth Teague to go over the calendar.

Ms. Teague welcomed New Board Member Barbara Christian Thomas and explained she has not been sworn in yet and so would not be officially setting in until the next Planning Board meeting. She asked Ms. Thomas to say a few words. Ms. Thomas spoke on her past volunteer endeavors and explained how she came to the planning board and expressed that she was looking forward to working with the board.

Ms. Teague said during the last Board of Aldermen meeting Martha Bradley had been introduced as the new Town attorney and explained that Ms. Bradley was familiar with the Planning Board, and would be coordinating with Attorney Ron Sneed as needed.

2. Adoption of Minutes

Chairman Smith asked the Board to review the July 26, 2021 minutes.

A Motion was made by Board Member Michael Blackburn and seconded by Board Member Gregory Wheeler to approve the minutes of the July 26, 2021 Planning Board meeting as presented (or amended). Chairman Smith abstained from voting due to being absent on this date. The motion carried unanimously.

B. BUSINESS

Board member Don McGowan asked about the continuation of congregate housing definitions.

Ms. Teague said that the recommendation had been sent to the Board of Aldermen. The Board wanted to wait and see what came from the Homelessness Task Force, and would like further Planning Board review. She said that some Planning Board members also had expressed desire to wait until the Homelessness Task Force report has been discussed before the Planning Board took the issue back up.

Board member Marty Prevost discussed a petition she had received via email concerning Low Barrier shelters. Ms. Teague stated that Ron Sneed was not present, but that she would advise that the Board not sign any petitions in case there comes a time when a quasi-judicial proceeding is before this board concerning any type of congregate housing. Board Member Don McGowan said he felt the decision to have low barrier shelters was a political decision and not a Planning Board decision.

1. Continued Planning Board discussion of work tasks and priorities for the coming year;
 - Suggested revisions to Sign Ordinance to accommodate school signs;

Land Use Administrator Byron Hickox provided the Board with a presentation and read the staff report on Electronic Changeable Face Signs. He explained that electronic signs were permitted in Regional Center Districts (RC) only and reviewed the Land Development Standards Section 11.7.4. Board Member Marty Prevost asked if there was a size limit on these types of signs. Mr. Hickox explained

there was a maximum of forty-eight square foot on signs in the Regional Center District, and then reduction in sizes allowed based on district.

Mr. Hickox explained that the rules related to electronic changeable face signs are straightforward, and the these types of signs are permitted in Regional Center Districts only. Shining Rock Classical Academy is the only school that is inside this district. All other schools are outside the RC District. The Waynesville Middle School is in the Hazelwood Urban Residential District and has a legal, pre-existing non-conforming sized sign, but would not be allowed to have an electronic sign. The Middle School and, potentially other schools, would like to have a changeable electronic face sign to disseminate information to parents, students, and staff regarding quickly-changing circumstances, especially involving weather-related closures and delays, public health, and last-minute event cancellations.

There are six schools within the town's jurisdiction: Hazelwood Elementary, Waynesville Middle, Junaluska Elementary, Haywood Christian Academy, and the two Shining Rock Classical Academy campuses. The Shining Rock campus at 1023 Dellwood Road, located within the Dellwood/Junaluska Regional Center District is the only one that could install an electronic changeable face sign under the existing sign standards. There was much discussion between Board members and staff on signage regulations and schools.

Mr. Hickox explained Town staff was seeking guidance from the Planning Board on the possibility of amending the Land Development Standards to allow electronic changeable face signs for schools. The Planning Board should consider the potential impact of electronic changeable face signs on surrounding properties and public rights-of way, the potential benefits to the school's students, staff and parents, and whether any additional standards should be applied to the design and operation of such signs.

Mr. Hickox presented photographs of each of the schools. There was discussion on each school frontage and how electronic signage would affect neighboring residents. Mr. Blackburn stated his approval for schools having electronic signage to help with dispersing information. Ms. Hain expressed concerns with light impacts of electronic signage on neighboring residents and questioned if there was really a need for electronic signs. Mr. McGowan stated that he didn't like electronic signs, but suggested that perhaps a special use permit would be appropriate. Mr. Hickox indicated that size and time limitation on these signs could be put into place restricting use during nighttime hours.

Ms. Teague asked if the Board would consider a school sign ordinance that aligned with zoning context and that limited the operational hours so as not to create night-time light pollution. She stated that the existing light standards would apply and that size and height standards of the RC district - no more than eight feet tall - using the sign at Waynesville Middle School as a model - could establish the maximum height and size limit. There could also be a distance provision on how close the sign could be located relative to residential structures. Mr. Hickox suggested staff could put together an ordinance to present to the Board at the next meeting. Ms. Teague explained that Waynesville Middle School had agreed to wait on the outcome of a possible new sign ordinance before they implemented an electronic message board. The Board agreed by consensus to have staff to produce a draft ordinance for the next meeting.

- Railroad Corridor Study Initiation

Ms. Olga Grooman, Planner for the Town of Waynesville, presented the Railroad Corridor Study Initiation plan. This study came out of the 2035 Comprehensive Land Use Plan which recommended examination of development constraints and opportunities along the railroad corridor. Specifically, the plan states:

“Goal 1. Continue to promote smart growth: ‘Study/implement a railroad overlay district to encourage redevelopment along the railroad corridor, especially in areas with access to existing/future greenway.’

“Goal 5. Create opportunities for sustainable economy. ‘Review the LDS to create opportunities within the Town of Waynesville’s industrial areas and along the railroad corridor.’”

Ms. Grooman stated that the Town has an opportunity to consider the railroad corridor for its development potential. There has been a loss in the industrial sector from what it used to be, but industrial and commercial properties within the corridor create new opportunities. Ms. Grooman went over the Railroad corridor on the maps presented. She explained historically that the railroad claims one hundred feet on each side of the railroad tracks based on right-of-way maps from 1927. A burden to prove a different ROW is on the property owner. The railroad passes through eleven of thirty of the zoning districts:

- Central Business District (CBD)
- Hazelwood Business District (HBD)
- Commercial Industrial (CI)
- Racoon Creek Neighborhood District (RCD)
- Walnut Street Neighborhood Residential (WS-NR)
- Main Street Neighborhood Residential (MS-NR)
- Hyatt Creek Regional Center (HC-RC)
- South Waynesville Residential Medium Density (HM-RM)
- Howell Mill Residential Medium Density (HM-RM)
- East Waynesville Urban Residential (EW-UR)
- Hazelwood Urban Residential (H-UR)

There are forty-eight properties within the one-hundred-foot buffer. Commercial use, industrial and some single-family residential uses are included within that area. Forty-eight deeds were studied and few of them mentioned the railroad right of way (PR-ROW). If mentioned restrictions are vague, such as, “this property is subject to the right of way and all easement for the Southern Railroad Tracks.” Most plats do not show the RR-ROW, and the ones that do, range between forty feet and one hundred feet.

Ms. Grooman said she has been in contact with NCDOT railroad division, Brock Parham, Assistant Road Master with Blue Ridge Southern Railroad, and Surveyor Kevin Ensley. There was a staff level discussion on June 17, 2021 which board member Stuart Bass and Danny Wingate, owner of Haywood Builders and other properties near the railroad, attended, recommending the formation of a committee.

Chairman Smith asked if there were any enforcement actions in this area to enforce the one-hundred-foot right of way. Ms. Grooman explained that the railroad can impose lease agreements on the property owners with owners being responsible for maintenance. Many properties have buildings and parking within the right of way that have existed for many years without lease agreements.

Staff's recommendation is to create a work group to undertake a railroad corridor study with two or three volunteers from the Planning Board and stakeholders such as Southern Railroad, major property owners, attorneys, surveyors, etc. Staff could facilitate discussion to identify goals and benefits of a potential plan to promote mixed-use development and create opportunities for revitalization. Outcomes could be to ease constraints imposed by the railroad through collaboration or the development of a possible railroad district or overlay that promotes redevelopment.

There was additional discussion among board members questioning what types of business' would go in this district and what the Town could do to protect property owners. Ms. Teague said there was a desire to collaborate with the RR in creating a greenway and that completing this study could provide a context for future land use development.

Ms. Grooman asked for volunteers from the Planning Board to assist with the Railroad committee. Board members Michael Blackburn and Stuart Bass volunteered. The goal would be for the committee to report back to the Planning Board in six months with some recommendations.

- Planned Unit Development Standards (PUD) for alternative development to adjoined townhomes.

Ms. Teague said that one of the things that has come up in the past is tiny home or cottage development. The idea is to create smaller scale housing such as "cottage parks" that would accommodate individual single-family residential structures with shared parking and common areas. There is currently nothing in the LDS that would allow conveyance of multiple homes on a single lot similar to a condominium or town home development where property underneath the structure or within a unit could be conveyed to an owner while shared, surrounding property would go into an HOA or owners' maintenance agreement.

Ms. Teague asked for preliminary feedback on a development option that would allow these types of development and indicated that staff could come back to the Board with models from other communities, to present suggestions for procedures and criteria.

Board Member Ginger Hain said the Haywood County Planning Board was having similar discussions on these types of communities. She said the County was receiving applications for tree-house communities, dome communities, and tiny-home communities. There is currently no permitting for these types of homes.

Ms. Teague said that Planned Unit Development or "PUD" regulations are ways in which multiple units can be placed on a single piece of property as part of a unified development plan. Such development must keep within the density requirements, perimeter setbacks and other regulations of the underlying district. This could be administered much like a special use permit for a school or apartment complex. There was more discussion between Board members on "microhomes" around neighboring counties. Ms. Teague said the staff would be working on more formal recommendations for the Board to review.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT/CALL ON THE AUDIENCE

There were no public comments.

C. ADJOURN

With no further business Chairman Susan Teas Smith adjourned the meeting at 7:26 pm.

Susan Teas Smith, Chairman

Kathy Johnson, Deputy Clerk