



City of Mount Airy Planning Board Meeting Minutes

October 26, 2020 – 5:30 PM
First Floor Conference Room, City Hall
300 S. Main Street – Mount Airy, NC 27030

Members Present: Jeannie Studnicki (Chair)
Paul Madren (Vice Chair)
Tami Springthorpe (via phone)
Randal France
Jim Cavallo
Joseph Zalescik
Calvin Vaughn
Dwight McAlexander

Member(s) Absent: Gray Trotter

Staff Present: Andy Goodall, Jr., CZO – Planning Director
Ben Barcroft – City Planner

I. Call to Order

Jeannie Studnicki called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

II. Determination of a Quorum

With eight (8) members present, Jeannie Studnicki determined there was a quorum.

III. Swearing in of Planning Board Members

All present Planning Board members were sworn in per NCGS 160D.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Jeannie Studnicki asked for a motion to approve the September 28, 2020 minutes. A motion was made by Dwight McAlexander and seconded by Joseph Zalescik. The motion then passed unanimously (7-0).

V. Approval of Agenda

Jeannie Studnicki asked for a motion to approve the agenda. A motion was made by Paul Madren and seconded by Jim Cavallo. The motion then passed unanimously (7-0).

VI. Planning Board Case(s)

2020-REZ-06

Mr. Goodall introduced the rezoning case of 7 parcels that make up the municipal campus. He said they went through the ordinance to see what was the best zoning for the new arts building and the entire campus. Mr. Goodall said that the property lines will move in the near future so, it would be easiest to zone the whole campus the same. He read the definition of R-4 and said that it perfectly described the campus. Mr. Goodall said that all adjacent property owners were notified and no comments had been received.

Calvin Vaughn asked about the exact location of the proposed building. Mr. Goodall described the location. Calvin Vaughn then expressed his concern of adding another entrance and exit off Rockford. Mr. Goodall reminded the board that the project had already been approved by the city and that they were only proposing a rezoning for the parcels.

Jeannie Studnicki asked for any further comment.

Calvin Vaughn made a motion to recommend that the board consider recommending that all new exits and entrances be located on Spring Street because of safety, parking, and traffic. The motion was seconded by Paul Madren and passed unanimously (7-0).

Jeannie Studnicki asked for a motion to adopt a statement of consistency and reasonableness with the Comprehensive Plan. Randal France made a motion that the proposed zoning is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and recommended the proposed zoning. The motion was seconded by Joseph Zalescik and passed unanimously (7-0).

Jeannie Studnicki asked for a motion to recommend approval. Paul Madren made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed zoning request. The motion was seconded by Tami Springthorpe and passed unanimously (7-0).

VII. Other Business

Landscaping Ordinance Revision Project Discussion

Jeannie Studnicki started off a general discussion regarding the landscaping around Mount Airy. Joseph Zalescik agreed with comments from other members that the city has done a great job with landscaping around the city however, he felt that there are businesses that could do a better job. He felt that we should require trees to be larger at planting. Mr. Goodall asked the board to think of a business in town whose landscaping they liked. He said his favorite in town is Chick-fil-A.

Paul Madren asked about the authority for requiring that trees be trimmed. Mr. Goodall said that they only require that the trees remain and not be removed. He said unmaintained trees

might fall under the nuisance ordinance if on private property and if they are hanging in the right-of-way the power company or city usually trims them back.

Mr. Goodall said that it is sometimes difficult to get trees with a 3-inch diameter. He said they tend to look at the height more. Mr. Goodall pointed out that some of the newer ordinances require smaller diameter trees since that is more realistic. Calvin Vaughn mentioned that he liked how the plants were scattered at Ridgecrest. Mr. Goodall said that most businesses don't think about planting like that since they don't hire landscape architects. He said their department could do a little better job encouraging cluster planting. Dwight McAlexander suggested adding pollinator plants to the landscaping ordinance. Tami Springthorpe agreed that the Landscaping at Chick-fil-A was very good. She also liked the landscaping for the Dentist office near Chili Rojo. Calvin Vaughn pointed out that the dentist had planted flowers around the trees instead of shrubs.

Calvin and Dwight commented they liked the simplicity of the current ordinance. Jeannie Studnicki said adding illustrations and charts would be helpful. Calvin said it would be good to have a diverse list of trees, plants, and shrubs so that people who are not landscape architects would have some ideas on what the city is looking for. Tami Springthorpe mentioned discouraging plants that would require high water usage. Mr. Goodall said that they require local varieties which would eliminate plants that require high water use. He liked the idea of adding a list of pollinator plants.

Rules of Conduct & Procedure Discussion

Jeannie Studnicki led a discussion on the rules of conduct and procedures for the Planning Board. She felt the board, especially new members, needed to have a better understating of what is expected of them. She said that planning and their role as an advisory board play a crucial role in shaping the town. She said that she felt the board has been more reactionary than proactive. Jeannie Studnicki said the board should be regularly reviewing things and coming up with ways to improve/plan Mount Airy. She felt they should have objectives and a timeline. Mr. Goodall said that a major project a few years ago was the rewriting the sign ordinance. He said that it was a project listed in the comprehensive plan. He said that in the past there were plans being written almost every year however, many things had not been done due to lack of funding/budget. However, Mr. Goodall said that despite the lack of funding, many items in the Comprehensive Plan had been completed. Tami Springthorpe suggested every month picking an area of town to review. Jeannie Studnicki suggested to start by identifying the areas of influence. Each month an area could be put on the agenda to be reviewed at the meeting. Tami Springthorpe read the definition of the planning board from the web site. She said while the definition is broad if they break it down, that will help them do their job as a board.

Jeannie Studnicki read the following rules of rules of conduct and emphasized the importance of attended meetings.

- *Members of the board may be removed for cause, including violation of the rules stated below.*
- *In order for the board to carry out its duties and responsibilities, it is necessary for all members to attend the meetings. If any regular member is absent for two (2) consecutive regular meetings, the chairman may direct the secretary to notify such member in writing of his absence and if such member fails to attend the next regular meeting, the planning board, by a majority vote of the remaining members, may request that the position be vacated and also request that a replacement be made.*
- *Should any member of the board be financially or otherwise closely associated with any issue that comes before the board, said member shall disqualify himself from participating in considering the issue and shall not sit with the board during such consideration. A member of the board may raise the question of conflict of interest of another member regarding a specific issue that is before the board. A majority vote of those members without such conflict shall determine if such conflict does exist.*

Jeannie said that members are encouraged to contact the city commissioners as private citizens however, one may not use their position on the Planning Board when doing so. Comments from the planning board must be agreed upon and presented by either staff or the Chair.

There was discussion on what is considered a potential financial benefit. My Goodall said if you are unsure you should address the board for everyone to decide.

Joseph Zalescik asked why there are not any public notices for the Planning Board meeting. Mr. Goodall explained that the meetings are held on a regular schedule which is on the city website. He said that anyone may attend or submit comments to the Planning Department for the Planning Board. Joseph Zalescik suggested adding public comments to every agenda.

Paul Madren spoke about parliamentary procedures. Mr. Goodall said it was written in their rules and procedures that they follow Robert's Rule of Order.

Jennie Studnicki said that she and Mr. Goodall had put together a draft introduction to the Planning Board for those interested in joining. She then passed out the draft and asked everyone to review before the next meeting.

VIII. Adjournment

At 7:10 PM, Paul Madren made a motion to adjourn the meeting, with Joseph Zalescik seconding. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).