

MACON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

April 17, 2007

CALL TO ORDER:

A meeting of the Macon County Planning Board was held on April 17, 2007 at the Cowee Community Center in the Cowee Valley Community. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm. Planning Board members present were L. Penland, E. Pierson, E. Owens, L. Sprinkle, M. West, K. Gillespie, J. Goodman, S. Ervin, M. Decker, L. Stenger, Commissioner Liaison R. Beale, G. Hunt Administrative Staff Assistant to County Planner, M. Mason – County Soil and Erosion Control Officer, Franklin Press, Macon County News and 10 members of the public

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Goodman made a motion to accept the minutes as read, Owens seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

PUBLIC SESSION:

Rose Creek Mine Owner complained and expressed concern on mobile homes being brought into and setup in the County from other Counties.

Shirley Chess asked for potential zoning to protect the mountains and presented a letter to the Board requesting steps the Board should be taking to the Commissioners to help in this protection.

Rich Robb spoke on his concern of Wildflower needing fire department response from the Cowee fire department and that no paved roads are in the development as promised by the developer, thus creating a problem for the fire department equipment.

Kenneth McKee asked how many Board members attended the Commissioners public hearing on the initial proposed subdivision regulations. He then spoke on roads and how not all roads can accommodate fire trucks on them and something needs to be done to make sure the safety of emergency responders are considered when approving roads in the County.

Penland thanked the public for their comments and assured them they were heard.

LIAISON COMMENTS:

Commissioner Liaison R. Beale informed the Board on the Commissioners administration work. Gillespie was appointed to a full term to replace Beale as Board member. Pierson has served 2 full terms, which is the term limit for sitting on any appointed board in the County. Commissioners will look at possible future changes to allow more than 2 terms, especially if the Board is currently working on a major project. Pierson is currently sitting on the Board at the pleasure of the Commissioners. Marsh is appointed as the Town of Highlands representative and has expressed a desire to be removed from the Board due to other commitments. Beale addressed the public comments and asked that comments be in the form of a letter to the Board in order that they may be passed on to the Commissioners. Beale asked Penland to prepare a letter addressed to the Commissioners asking that Pierson be retained on the Board. Goodman made a motion to generate the letter and Stenger seconded with all Board members voting in favor of the motion.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

Penland opened the meeting by thanking the Cowee Community Center for the refreshments and their hospitality. Penland asked that each Board member present introduce themselves for the benefit of the public in attendance. After public comments, Penland thanked those who spoke and assured them their comments were welcomed and heard. Stenger shared a personal experience of fire and EMS on a call from a neighbor of his rental property in the Burningtown area. There was a fire at his rental property and he expressed an appreciation and concern for the work and safety in the efforts of the local EMS/Fire personnel. Ervin discussed the Regional Land of Sky meeting and the subject of Forest Service along with Steep Slopes and the difficulty fire and EMS trucks are having getting to steep slope developments. Ervin also spoke on the National Forest Preservation work being done by the Regional Land of Sky. Beale asked Ervin if a discussion on liability came up in the meetings and Ervin stated it had not but they did mention how fire departments are using fire packs to get to steep areas on foot. Open discussion continued regarding the meeting and what was discussed. Penland brought the Board's attention back to the agenda and items for discussion. Penland then opened the discussion on defining what constitutes a minor subdivision as opposed to a major subdivision. M. Mason offered information on road data and how the building of roads is used to determine minor or major subdivisions. Discussion on how or what criteria would be used to determine minor subdivisions began. The number of lots was the main point of consideration for using as a determining factor. The discussion mentioned 10 lots, some wanted 6 lots while 8 lots was the most asked for and was the final number settled on. Penland then asked the Board if acreage could be taken out of consideration due to foreseen problems with using acreage as a measuring tool, all Board members agreed to take acreage out of the discussion. Penland then laid road length on the table for debate and asked if ¼ mile or less

of new roads was okay as a starting point. Board members agreed and Ervin then asked for the language from an example definition from another county that includes provisions referencing subdividing in previous 3 years and single family residences. Goodman made a motion (A minor subdivision would be any single family residential subdivision containing no more than 8 lots, which has not be subdivided in the previous 3 years and does not require a new road exceeding 1320 feet) Gillespie seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Penland then mentioned the article from Land Development Today that was included in everyone's packet for reference purposes. Discussion was opened by Penland on the Review Process and Review Agencies, it was agreed that minor subdivision review would be handled by current staff and major subdivisions would be handled by a review committee established at a later date. Penland then directed the discussion to phased development. Beale suggested having the tax office present at a future meeting to answer any questions and to offer insight on phased development plat submission. He also suggested that the Board go back to Haywood County's Subdivision Ordinance for guidelines. Goodman made a motion to accept the language for phased development in the hand out from the County Planner as written and Ervin seconded the motion with it passing unanimously. Penland opened a discussion on utilities in subdivisions and stated he would like to see all utilities underground. The Board also discussed qualifying contractors, slope requirements and storm water issues. Beale suggested the Board take another field trip to see developments being constructed in the County. Dates for field trip led by M. Mason to be set up by Planning Department and confirmed with Board Members via email.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEXT MEETING:

Ervin announced the Steep Slope Committee from the Regional Land of Sky was conducting 4 community sessions and on May 7th at 3:30 and 7:30 pm they would be at Tartan Hall in Franklin. Owens announced that the Business and Industry Development Committee in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce was creating a "How To" guide for potential or incoming development in the County and should be printed by end of the 2007. Penland highlighted a pattern book for WNC being worked on for developers and others coming into WNC to build. Beale announced the dedication of Cowee Mound on Monday April 23rd at 10:00 am. The next meeting was set for May 15, 2007, at the Otto Community Building in Otto.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM.

Lewis Penland, Jr - Chair

Stacy J. Guffey - Clerk to Board