

Cullowhee Planning Council
Minutes
April 3, 2023
6:00 p.m.
Department on Aging, Heritage Room
Sylva, NC

Members	Present	Absent	Members	Present	Absent	Members	Present	Absent
David Claxton	X		Chris Stuckey	X		Rebecca Manring		X
Carol Burton	X		Donna Huguelet	X		Damon Sink	X	
Mike Byers		X	Karen Kandl	X				

Staff Present

Anna Harkins, Planner I
Allison Kelley, Administrative Assistant III

Call to Order

Chairman David Claxton called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. and a quorum was present.

Oath of Office

Allison Kelley, clerk to the Council read the Oath of Office for reappointed member Donna Huguelet. Ms. Huguelet affirmed to execute the duties of Cullowhee Community Planning Council Member according to the best of her skills and abilities.

Approval of Agenda

Carol Burton made a motion to approve the agenda as written. Damon Sink seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Damon Sink made a motion to approve the minutes from March 6, 2023 with the correction to mark him as present at the last meeting. Karen Kandl seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Public Comment- Sign-up sheet- 3 minutes per speaker

There were no public comments.

New Business

a) River District Discussion

Ms. Harkins stated the Council asked staff to bring back more information regarding the River District. The Cullowhee Small Area Plan suggests allowing for slightly taller buildings, zero setbacks, more pedestrian friendly aspects along with connectivity, and street trees. Ms. Harkins discussed and highlighted the current parking standards as follows:

- Multi-family dwellings: one parking space required per 1 bedroom plus 0.25 space per unit for guests
- Offices: 300 sq.ft.
- Restaurants (plus stacking area for 8 vehicles for each drive-thru lane): 3 seats plus 1 space per 2 employees on shift of greatest employment
- Retail sales: 300 sq.ft.

Ms. Harkins stated there is not much of a pattern with every use as it is either by square footage, number of bedrooms, or number of employees on shift and seats in the restaurant. In addition, she stated that parking is a fluid and the state or American Planning Association did not require these standards. This Council created these standards and they most likely took those from other similar areas and were adjusted to better fit the community, and they can continue to be adjusted or exempt to fit what would work best for the community area.

The following Cullowhee Community Planning District ordinance standards regarding shared and remote parking:

- **Shared parking**

- The Planning Director shall approve the joint use of up to 100 percent of the required parking spaces for two or more uses located on the same or adjacent parcels, provided that the developer can demonstrate that the spaces provided will meet the need for parking. This may be done by demonstrating that an adequate number of spaces are provided for all uses or by demonstrating that the uses will not overlap in hours of operation or in demand for the shared spaces. Any sharing of required parking spaces by uses located on different parcels shall be guaranteed by a written agreement between the owner of the parking area and the owner of any use located on a different parcel and served by the parking area.

- **Remote parking**

- If the required number of parking spaces for any land use cannot be reasonably provided on the same lot on which the principal use is located, the parking spaces may be provided on any land within 500 feet of the property on which the principal use is located. The zoning district regulations for the property on which the parking is located must permit the principal use that the parking spaces serve. Any remote parking spaces located on a different parcel than the use served shall be guaranteed by a written agreement between the owner of the remote parking area and the owner of the principal use.

The Council asked staff to extend the River District across the bridge to create continuity between both sides of the bridge by keeping both sides zoned commercial and to encourage redevelopment. Ms. Huguélet made a motion to expand the River District area, and Ms. Burton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. In addition, the Council asked staff to keep the parking standards the same within the River district.

Ms. Harkins presented building height examples from the Town of Sylva's Main Street, and Noble Residence Hall from WCU campus. In the Cullowhee Commercial District, the maximum building height is 40 feet, which is often more likely a three-story building. In addition, she stated during her research of building heights and downtown districts, especially in the mountains is that slopes come into play when it comes to building height. In Boone, they have very specific rules for their downtown area with a building height maximum for one street, and another building height maximum on the other of the street. In addition, in Waynesville they go by stories and have a max of four to five stories in their downtown district. The Town of Sylva downtown district has a maximum building height of 50 feet from the lowest point which is measured from the backside on Mill Street. Ms. Harkins stated the River District in Cullowhee is unique as there will not be any backstreet and they would be focusing on Old Cullowhee Road. In addition, she stated during her research the building height standards with feet include to the top of the parapet or roof gable, therefore having a higher building height would allow for additional architectural flexibility.

Ms. Harkins asked for feedback from the Council regarding if they would want to consider daylight basements as part of the height or at street level. In addition, she said they could also consider creating a height limit, and story limit. The Council asked staff to begin working on determining a maximum height from the street, and not increase the current building height maximum of 40 feet, and consider daylight basements. In addition, the Council asked if staff could ask the Code Enforcement & Permitting office to come to a future meeting to discuss floodplain, and flood damage mitigation within this area.

Ms. Harkins stated within the Commercial district the current open space requirement is 10%, and it has to be left in a natural vegetative state. At the last meeting the Council discussed alternatives for open space such as outdoor dining, small plazas, pocket parks, etc.

Open Space/Streetscape Options:

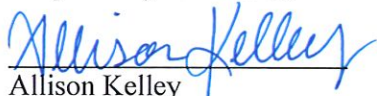
- **Open Space/Setbacks:** Buildings shall be subject to a zero foot (0') street setback, measured from the back of the required public sidewalk. Additional setback up to fifteen feet (15') is allowed if the area created by an additional setback is designated as plaza space and/or landscaped greenspace that retains the intended connection between the publicly accessible pedestrian realm and ground-level internal portions of the building.
- **Required Open Space:** Required percentage of open/public space. Streetscape alternatives could be used to meet the requirement. Murals, benches, bike parking, public art, planters, etc.

Ms. Harkins stated they do have a recommended local plant list that includes local and native plants. Ms. Kandl inquired if they could make a requirement to put in native species on the local plant list. Ms. Harkins stated she would look into if they could apply that requirement for just this specific district.

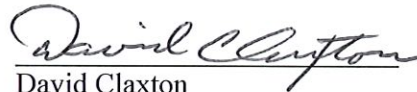
Adjournment

With no further business, Damon Sink made a motion to adjourn. Karen Kandl seconded the motion and it carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Allison Kelley
Administrative Assistant- Planning



David Claxton
Planning Council Chair

