

JACKSON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

MINUTES

Date: February 13, 2020								
Time Begin: 6:14 p.m.								
Time End: 6:42 p.m.								
Location: Jackson County Department on Aging, Heritage Room								
Members	Present	Absent		Present	Absent		Present	Absent
Bonnie Claxton	X		Tamera Crisp	X		Scott Ogle		X
Sandy Davis	X		Brad Waldrop	X		Steven Johannessen	X (BY PHONE)	
Jeremy Hyatt		X	Mark Letson	X		Tommy White	X	
Kirk Shufelt		X	Mary Sue Casey		X			

Staff Present:

Michael Poston- Planning Director
 Caroline LaFrienier- Planner II
 Heather Baker- County Attorney
 Allison Kelley- Administrative Assistant

Call to Order and Quorum Check

Vice Chairman Mark Letson called the meeting to order at 6:14 p.m. and a quorum was present.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Approval of the Agenda

Bonnie Claxton made a motion to approve the agenda as written. Tommy White seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes

Tamera Crisp made a motion to approve the minutes from January 9th, 2020. Bonnie Claxton seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

New Business

a) Cullowhee Small Area Plan

Ms. LaFrienier presented to the Board the process of creating the Small Area Plan. Staff held a kick-off meeting on March 4th, 2019 with stakeholders (over 30 participated). In April staff gathered public input and distributed an online survey to the community, WCU students, and received over 300 responses. Other opportunities for public input and involvement included a 3 day design charrette, a walking tour of Old Cullowhee, visual preference activities, tabling on WCU's campus to gather student input and a coffee talk. Staff then spent a couple of months in plan development before bringing a draft back to the steering committee (Cullowhee Planning Council and a WCU student representative) for review and edits. After several revisions were made to the document, a public hearing was held on January 28th, 2020, and the Cullowhee Planning Council recommended adoption at their regularly scheduled meeting on February 3rd, 2020.

The Small Area Plan will establish a framework for accommodating growth and development while maintain the character, environmental quality and livability of the area. The

plan looks at existing plans and studies for the Cullowhee area, the existing conditions and analysis of demographics, land use, environmental restraints and the economy. The plan also looks at and creates goals for future land use, housing and economic development, infrastructure, parks, natural resources and cultural recommendations.

The vision and overarching goals for Cullowhee are as follows:

- Build Cullowhee's image and identity and promote business and economic development
- Grow in a predictable, context appropriate manner
- Increase housing options
- Provide recreational opportunities and protect, enhance and respect the area's natural beauty
- Enhance multi-modal transportation options

The following are recommendations examples based on the vision and goals:

- Improve the design of new housing development to reduce conflict and improve compatibility with existing neighborhoods
- Revitalize Old Cullowhee
- Develop programs and initiatives to encourage biking and walking and enhance mobility options
- Study preservation, environmental education and restoration opportunities along the Tuckasegee River and Cullowhee Creek
- Protect cultural resources in the Cullowhee area

Ms. LaFrienier requested that the Board consider recommending the plan to the Board of Commissioners for adoption.

Tommy White made a motion to recommend adoption of the Cullowhee Small Area Plan to the County Commissioners. Tamera Crisp seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

b) Discussion of New State Statute Changes

Mr. Poston stated over the last seven years, the North Carolina Bar Association, and NC Planning Association and other groups have been discussing the land use section and modernizing their enabling statutes. Enabling statutes are the regulations that give authority from the state to implement zoning, and development regulations. He stated there are two different sections for counties and cities, and there has been many issues as the documents as they have added to the regulations, and not updated since the 50s or 60s. Mr. Poston stated in 2019 the state adopted Chapter 160D, which combines both sections for counties and cities that have clarified modernized language.

Mr. Poston informed the Board staff would be looking to amend the ordinance in the sections where 150A is referenced, and replace with Chapter 160D and other new required language within the ordinance. There are new requirements by the state statute such as oath of offices, conflicts of interest that will make it more challenging in smaller communities. These new regulations requires those that want to have zoning authority must have a comprehensive plan. He stated Jackson County has a comprehensive plan, but small towns would be impacted by this change such as Dillsboro and Webster. Mr. Poston stated the county has until the end of 2020 to make these changes to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

c) Census 2020 Update

Mr. Poston informed the Board that on March 12th staff expects the first mailing to be sent out from the Census Bureau. Staff has collaborated with the county libraries and Department

on Aging to allow those that do not have access to computers to take the Census. He stated many people worry about confidentiality, and there is high penalties for not adhering to that. The numbers that are reported is the raw data, not specific data and that would release 72 years later, and it is for historical research and genealogy research. He stated George Washington University conducted a study that \$1,623 dollars is the per capita relationship with federal funding North Carolina receives through local programs. Staff has had stories regarding the Census in the Sylva Herald and Crossroads Chronicle. Mr. Poston asked the Board to encourage community members to fill out the Census. On February 27th staff would hold a community meeting at 2 pm and 6 pm at the Jackson County Public Library in the Community Room. In addition, on February 25th at 2 pm and 6 pm in Cashiers they will have a community meeting at the Albert Carlton Community Library in the Community Room. These community meetings will inform the public how they would be contacted to take the Census. Mr. Poston stated a numerator may knock on your door, or drop off Census form at door if they have not registered, and a mobile unit will go throughout the county. The Census would be advertised on the radio, and they radio is producing a short video with community members in public health and the school system speaking about how the Census affects their programs.

Tommy White asked staff how the WCU students would affect the Census. Mr. Poston stated the students that live on campus, the housing department would report as group quarters. However, students that live off campus it would be like any other reporting, staff is determining the best way to reach out to those off campus as most off campus apartments have post office boxes. Mr. Poston stated Lane Perry is the Executive Director for student outreach, and they have two Census Fellows that are interning college students for the Census. Staff plans to meet with Mr. Perry and the Census Fellows to discuss the best method to communicate with students that live off campus, and they might use the same method of the mobile unit. In 2000 Jackson County voluntary response rate for the Census was 48%, and in 2010 it was 70% that was tied last with Graham County the western region.

Adjournment

With no further business, Tommy White made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sandy Davis seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Submitted by:



Allison Kelley
Administrative Assistant – Planning

Approved by:



Mark Letson
Planning Board Vice Chairman