

JACKSON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

MINUTES

Date: April 13, 2023

Time Begin: 6:00 p.m.

Time End: 7:34 p.m.

Location: Department on Aging, Heritage Room

Members	Present	Absent		Present	Absent		Present	Absent
Emily Moss	X		Nathan Shepherd	X		Thomas Taulbee	X	
Sandy Davis		X	Ollin Dunford	X		Beverly Crespo	X	
Brian Barwatt		X	Joyce Cooper	X		<i>Vacant</i>		
Adam Holt	X		Ken Brown		X			

Staff Present:

Michael Poston- Planning Director

Anna Harkins- Planner I

Allison Kelley- Administrative Assistant III

Call to Order and Quorum Check

Chairman Thomas Taulbee called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and a quorum was present.

Approval of the Agenda

Chair Thomas Taulbee made a motion to approve the agenda as written, and it carried unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes

Joyce Cooper made a motion to approve March 9, 2023 minutes. Ollin Dunford seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

New Business

a) Outdoor Lighting Discussion

Ms. Harkins stated the Board came to the consensus to further look at the county Outdoor Lighting Ordinance to modernize and update the language. Within the comprehensive land use plan, the outdoor lighting goals and objectives are in the Natural Resources section that include the following:

- Ensure that all County facilities are Dark Sky compliant.
- Create an educational outreach program for contractors, designers, and homeowners regarding Dark Sky compliance.
- Update the Outdoor Lighting Ordinance to address modern technology and practices.
- Collaborate with local retailers that stock outdoor lighting to provide information about Dark Sky compliance.

Ms. Harkins stated the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) reviews and suggests lighting practices and technology that decreases light pollution. The IDA does not commonly use the term “dark sky compliant” anymore, and instead use the terms “dark sky friendly” and “dark sky approved.” Dark-sky friendly refers to the recommended lighting practices that help to reduce

light pollution, like shielded lights and automatic cut offs. Dark-sky approved is the seal of approval that the IDA gives to lighting products certified to minimize glare, reduce light trespass and help protect night sky. Ms. Harkins stated they are not trying to meet compliance with the IDA, but taking their practices and suggestions to incorporate into the ordinance.

Jackson County's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance is administered by the Permitting and Code Enforcement Department, and is not applied in the Cashiers Commercial Area or the planning jurisdiction of any incorporated municipalities as they have their own set of lighting standards. The Jackson County Outdoor Lighting Ordinance covers regulations for the following:

- Detached Single Family Homes
- Multi-family and Non-Residential
- Lighting for Special Applications:
 - Lighting for vehicular canopies
 - Outdoor sports field/outdoor performance areas
 - Lighting of buildings
 - Permanent sign and billboard lighting
 - Holiday/festive lighting
 - Landscape lighting

Areas of Concern for Outdoor Lighting Regulations:

- Inefficient compliance process.
- Difficulty in administration, specifically in calculating allowed lighting power/wattage and light trespassing.
- Newer technology and trends in lighting like LEDs, solar powered landscape lighting, automatic shut-off security lights are not addressed within the regulations.

The Board unanimously recommended staff to proceed forward with modernizing the Outdoor Lighting ordinance and bring back additional information at the next meeting.

b) Jackson County Land Use Plan 2040 Discussion

Mr. Poston stated the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to create a guiding policy document for the County in addressing the impacts of growth over the next 25 years. The plan examines existing development trends and growth. It also provides future growth projections and identifies goals and objectives that are designed to manage growth. In addition, the plan includes a section that guides how these goals and objectives can be implemented over a 25-year time period. Mr. Poston stated the land use plan was adopted in 2017, and as of today, the state of North Carolina requires any county or municipality that exercises any zoning authority must have a comprehensive plan that must be updated and valid. The industry standard in the planning field is to review and update long-range plans every five to seven years.

Comprehensive Plan Update Process

- Steering Committee formed in 2014.
- Administered a public survey.
- Steering Committee began research and presentations of plan elements.
 - Education, Public Health, Recreation, Land Use, etc.
- Steering Committee broke out into Sub-Committees for each plan element.
- Sub-Committees formed goals and objectives for each plan element and brought them back to the Steering Committee for review.
- Planning staff created an action plan/implementation schedule for each goal.
- Steering Committee held 5 public meetings to receive comments on the plan.
- Sylva, Cashiers, Tuckasegee, Qualla and Savannah.
- 65 comments received and incorporated into the implementation schedule.
- The Committee refined the document based on the public comments received to create the final draft.

- Received recommendation from the Committee and Planning Board to take the plan to the Board of Commissioners.

Jackson County Demographics

- Population estimation for 2015 = 41,265 people
- 2014 Census median household income = \$38,928
- Population growth from 2000 to 2010 was the highest in the Cullowhee Township.
- Jackson County experienced the highest population growth in the surrounding counties = 21.59% from 2000 to 2010.
- NC Office of State Budget and Management estimates Jackson County's population to be 44,873 by 2030 and 47,271 by 2040.
- 1/5 of county population is between the ages of 18 and 24.

Education

Major Goals:

- Build technology infrastructure to provide equity and access (broadband to remote areas).
- Support pathways to vocational jobs.
- Provide workforce housing for faculty and staff to promote recruitment and retention.
- Promote physical activity to promote a healthy lifestyle.
 - Safe Routes to School

Public Health

Major Goals:

- Promote healthy eating and provide access to healthy food options.
 - Community gardens on public land, food sustainability plan.
- Promote physical activity.
- Provide support to prevent substance abuse.
- Provide adequate healthcare access to residents through multi-agency approach supported by the County.
- Support the animal control policies that provide safety to human and animal populations.

Infrastructure

Major Goals:

- Establish an asset management plan that is progressive and fiscally sound.
- Provide open communication between utility providers through a Utility Consortium to include all utilities:
 - Sky Fi, Verizon Wireless, Frontier, Balsam West, TWSA, Duke and natural gas.
- Expand reliable high-speed internet access and mobile phone access across the County.
- Promote efficient use of limited infrastructure resources.

Natural Resources

Major Goals:

- Preserve the habitat for identified endangered species.
- Preserve and protect natural habitats and corridors for migrating wildlife.
- Encourage development that minimizes impervious surfaces.
- Encourage development that is compatible with the natural environment.

- Limit commercial and industrial development along the Tuck and other trout waters.
- Protect the County's natural view-scape.
- Ensure that the County is Dark Sky compliant.

Economic Development

Major Goals:

- Maintain a robust and sustainable tourism destination.
- Build a workforce that will meet the needs of current and future employers.
- County wide high speed broadband availability.
- Create a marketing campaign for Jackson County to support existing business and attract new business.
- County reserve land for economic development purposes.
- Commit to becoming an entrepreneurial/small business capital.
- Maintain and enhance quality of life for citizens, tourists, and small business owners.

Housing

Major Goals:

- Increase housing opportunities for a broad range of income levels and ages (owning, renting, and transitional).
- Promote housing for WCU (students, faculty, and staff) that is compatible with the community, safe, and conveniently located.
- Promote housing conveniently located to access alternate modes of transportation in order to minimize the use of single passenger vehicles.
- Invest in strategic public improvements (pedestrian and recreation facilities) in existing communities to encourage appropriate residential development in the communities.

Transportation

Major Goals:

- Promote connectivity between schools, housing, business districts, recreation and community centers.
- Provide a variety of multi-modal transportation options.
- Improve safety for pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- Educate citizens about alternative modes of transportation.
- Maintain transportation capacity for freight.
- Enhance and support aviation infrastructure and facilities.
- Maintain and enhance County transportation corridors.
- Promote and expand local and regional transit options.

Recreation

Major Goals:

- Provide access to recreational opportunities near all major communities in the County.
- Develop a Special Events Program to host large-scale events, increasing visitation to the County and generating revenue for the
- Parks and Rec Dept. to invest in sustaining programs and expanding opportunities.
- Develop a multi-faceted program to expand bicycling as a form of recreation and active transportation.

- Build, operate, and maintain an indoor pool in Cullowhee, suitable for hosting year-round swim meets for youth, fitness classes, and for physical therapy.

Cultural Resources

Major Goals:

- Identify our past and present historic and cultural resources and events to document them.
- Create partnerships with the EBCI, WCU, etc.
- Educate and communicate with the community and local governments.
- Become a Certified Local Government.

Land Use

Major Goals:

- Balance future growth with the protection of the natural environment.
- Ensure that development regulations meet existing and future challenges and opportunities.
- Preserve the County's agricultural heritage and expand agricultural opportunities.
- Maintain partnerships and coordinate planning efforts along the growth corridors.
- Promote sustainable growth policies.

In addition, Mr. Poston highlighted the land use section goals and objectives with the action item, lead agency, partners and timeframe. In addition, he stated staff would continue moving forward and would bring back more information and details regarding updating the Jackson County Land Use Plan 2040. Currently, staff is working on a report on what they have accomplished, and what still needs to be completed as a community. The Board asked staff to invite Jackson County Economic Development Director Tiffany Henry to discuss broadband at a future meeting.

Adjournment

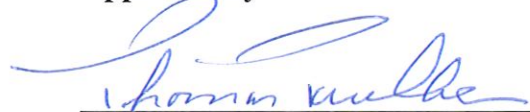
With no further business, Vice Chair Nathan Shepard made a motion to adjourn, and the meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Submitted by:



Allison Kelley
Administrative Assistant – Planning

Approved by:



Thomas Taulbee
Planning Board Chairman

