

Cullowhee Planning Council

Minutes

August 7, 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

Michael Poston, Planning Director

Anna Harkins, Planner I

Allison Kelley, Administrative Assistant III

Call to Order

Chairman David Claxton called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. and a quorum was present.

Approval of Agenda

Chairman Claxton made a motion to approve the agenda as written. Carol Burton and it passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Carol Burton made a motion to approve the minutes from June 5, 2023. 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/Open Space Discussion

Ms. Harkins provided an update that the Council decided to expand the River District over the bridge near WCU campus and showed the Council a rough draft of the new boundary that was based off of the current general commercial zoning in that area. The Council also discussed building height and concluded the max height should be three stories if it is fronting Old Cullowhee Road, and if they wanted to add a basement on the back, it could be taller than three stories. In addition, the Council also discussed wanting bicycle parking, and flexible parking standards, which will be coming later to the Council. Ms. Harkins stated staff is working with a consultant to rewrite the Cashiers Commercial Area zoning ordinance. In addition, a part of that process would be redoing the parking standards, which the Council may want to include some of these suggestions within the new flexible parking standards.

Ms. Harkins provided open space options for the Council to review and consider as follows:

Open Space Option #1

- 10% of total property must be set aside as open space. We would update what is allowed to be considered open space from "natural vegetated state" to more "urban" options such as outdoor seating and patios.

Open Space Option #2

- No percentages for requirements. Rather it would be a required choice between certain types of open space on two levels.
- Level 1 being basic streetscape elements such as benches, planters, public art.
- Level 2 being larger amenities such as patio spaces, walking paths, pocket parks, and natural vegetated spaces.

Terms for this process:

- Base Requirement: Two choices from Level 1, one choice from Level 2.
- If the property is less than half an acre, they are permitted to choose the base requirement or four elements from Level 1.
- All properties that are directly adjacent to the Tuckasegee River must have a walking path along the river as their Level 2 choice or only choice if under half an acre.

Ms. Harkins stated Option 2 allows property owners some flexibility of what they believe would work best for their property. In addition, she stated after brainstorming these options they realized there are many properties within the district that are less than an acre or half an acre. For example, if the property is less than half an acre, they can choose between doing the base requirement or four elements from Level 1. Ms. Harkins asked the Council for feedback on the proposed options and if they had any further suggestions.

Chris Stuckey inquired if they were to choose Option 1 if it would prevent and give a less incentive for developers from wanting to purchase these properties. Ms. Harkins stated Option 1 would be less restrictive than the current regulations, and would be flexible, as we would change the requirement of a natural vegetative state to allow “urban” options.

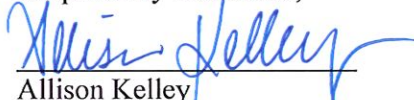
The Council asked staff to move forward with both options and bring back further information with the menu items and visual examples of what these options would look like on a property.

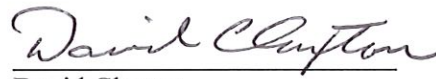
Ms. Kandl stated as they are thinking about vegetation and planters that the Council should consider native and edible vegetation, for example at City Lights Café they have pepper and tomato plants. Mr. Poston stated there is a plant menu list schedule in the Cullowhee ordinance that he would be interested having the Council’s feedback. In addition, Mr. Poston stated the next regular scheduled meeting date falls on the Labor Day holiday and asked to push it to the following Monday, and the Council unanimously approved to move the next meeting to September 11th.

Adjournment

With no further business, Rebecca Manring made a motion to adjourn. Carol Burton seconded the motion and it carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


Allison Kelley
Administrative Assistant- Planning


David Claxton
Planning Council Chair