

Cullowhee Community Planning Council

Minutes

January 6, 2025

6:00 p.m.

WCU Ramsey Center, Hospitality Room

Cullowhee, NC

Members	Present	Absent	Members	Present	Absent	Members	Present	Absent
David Claxton	X		Karen Kandl		X	Vacant		
Mike Byers	X		Rebecca Manring	X		Vacant		
Chris Stuckey	X		Damon Sink	X				

Staff Present

Michael Poston, Planning Director

John Jeleniewski, Senior Planner

Ashley Clapsaddle, Planner I

Allison Kelley, Administrative Assistant III

Others Present

Michael Hopkins, Jackson County Parks and Recreation Director

Call to Order

Chairman David Claxton called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m. and a quorum was present.

Approval of Agenda

Rebecca Manring made a motion to approve the agenda as written. Chris Stuckey seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Rebecca Manring made a motion to approve the minutes from December 2, 2024. Chris Stuckey seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

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

There were no public comments.

New Business

a) Architecture Review: Sazon

Mr. Jeleniewski presented the staff report for project Sazon Business Center submitted by applicant Old Cullowhee Properties, LLC located at 2786 Old Cullowhee Road; PIN 7559-57-3019 in the Cullowhee Planning Area Commercial District.

Project Summary: This proposed restaurant and office development will be on a property of 0.50 acres located at the north side of Old Cullowhee Road approximately 1,200 ft east of the intersection of Wayehutta Road. This property is located within the Cullowhee Community Planning Area and is in the Commercial District. Two, one-way access points are provided to this property from Old Cullowhee Road, which has a pavement width of approximately 22'; sidewalk is required and provided along the frontage of this property. This proposed development will consist

of restaurant (2,293 s.f. dining, 1,098 s.f. patio) and office spaces (1,405 s.f.). Proposed siding material for the proposed structure will be vertical "Hardie" board & batten and horizontal "Hardie" lap siding with stone accents. Water and wastewater service will be provided by TWSA and these utilities will be reviewed by TWSA when final plans are submitted to their office. Final plans have been provided to the NCDOT for review and they will be coordinating their requirements with the project engineer of record (Wyatt Edsel) for encroachment or driveway connection permits as well as traffic safety issues. Fire protection will be provided by the Cullowhee Fire Department.

This property is located in a designated flood hazard area (100-year floodplain) and the Jackson County Floodplain Administrator will coordinate building code requirements for the proposed structure. The average slope of the property is less than 2% and the administration of the Mountain and Hillside Development Ordinance will not be required.

Staff's Comments: This proposed commercial project was reviewed applying the *Cullowhee Community Planning Area* architectural design standards and this project will be required to meet or exceed those standards set forth. The proposed "use" type of a restaurant/office is permitted in the Commercial District of the *Cullowhee Community Planned Area*.

Staff Recommendation: The Architectural Design Standards for this project meet or exceed the regulations set forth in the *Cullowhee Community Planning Area Ordinance*. Staff recommends approval of the architectural plans regarding style, features and materials as presented.

Rebecca Manning made a motion to approve the Sazon Business Center architectural plans. Chris Stucky seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

b) Greenway Update

Michael Hopkins stated the County has invested roughly \$1.7 million in property acquisition over the last nine months. A rough estimate to construct a mile of Greenway is \$2 million and with the property that the County has recently acquired they could add approximately 1.6 miles to the to the current Greenway. The County has put in a substantial amount of money in heavier equipment that the Public Works Department can use to help with infrastructure to save costs. The Council had questions regarding the Maturo property which is approximately 19 acres that abuts University Heights. The Greenway Master Plan discusses a trailhead in that area and the parking spaces would be similar to what they have on Monteith Gap, which is approximately 10 to 15 parking spaces. Currently, the Parks and Recreation Department would hope to keep that area passive with possibly a picnic shelter. There has been some discussion of intermediate mountain biking trails within that area, but they want to take into consideration what the residents of University Heights would want to see in that area and would likely have community input meetings. Mr. Hopkins stated they have hopes to continue the Greenway to bring it to the bridge where CuRev has plans to do a River Park area. In addition, they have reached a bottleneck area along Ledbetter Road where DOT is not looking to do any kind of road expansion or sidewalk, and they have contracted with Equinox to do a feasibility study on how to could get through that bottlenecked area to make it more feasible and less harmful to the environment.

Mr. Poston stated as a reminder and part of the road project to update Monteith Gap Road, there would be sidewalks along Monteith Gap Road from South Painter to Old Cullowhee Road. Also, included in the project is a missing link of sidewalk around the old Moss General Store that the University worked with the DOT to connect to that community and potentially into the University sidewalk network and pedestrian network to Forest Hills Road. The County was awarded a carbon reduction grant to put approximately a mile of a greenway side path along Highway 107 from North Country Club Road to Wisdom Drive. In addition, the County still has a couple of properties that need to be acquired, but we are close to a robust bike and pedestrian network through the Cullowhee area.

Mr. Hopkins stated the Recreation Department had recently completed the 10-year master plan and they are preparing to start planning for the new 10-year master plan process that will go throughout 2025. Community members can learn about the 10-year master plan process on the

Parks and Recreation email list, newspaper, social media, County website, etc. The Parks and Recreation Department hopes to begin the master plan process in spring of 2025.

c) Public Hearing: Text Amendment request to the Unified Development Ordinance Article IX, Section 9.4, Table 9.9 to allow Recreation uses, government as a permitted use in the Single Family (SF) and Single Family-Manufactured Home (SF-MH) Districts

Chairman David Claxton opened the public hearing.

Mr. Poston presented the text amendment request to the Council for review and that the request would be needed for preparations of the expansion of the Greenway. The text amendment would allow recreation uses, government as a permitted use in the Single Family (SF) and Single Family-Manufactured Home (SF-MH) Districts. The process includes a recommendation from this Council, then it would be forwarded to the Planning Board for recommendation, and then the Board of Commissioners would hold a public hearing for the final determination.

There was a public comment from an unnamed resident for support of the text amendment and that the Greenway was a nice, safe place to run rather than on the road and that they would love to see the Greenway extended.

Chairman David Claxton closed the public hearing.

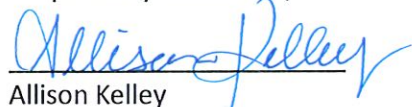
Rebecca Manring made a motion to approve the text amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance Article IX, Section 9.4, Table 9.9 to allow Recreation uses, government as a permitted use in the Single Family (SF) and Single Family-Manufactured Home (SF-MH) Districts. The motion included that it is consistent with the Jackson County Land Use Plan 2040 and Cullowhee Small Area Plan and to adopt the consistency statement. Damon Sink seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Poston provided an update of the recently adopted senate bill 382 regarding the Helene relief package. Subpart III-K. Local Government impacts local government and land use decision making authority. This change in the statute limits local governments ability to initiate down-zoning without consent of affected property owner. Mr. Poston also expanded the definition of down-zoning, which means if you change or reduce the number of uses in any given district, that it would create a nonconforming use, structure, site, etc. For example, if they wanted to change site design standards and require sidewalks they would have to get written consent from all of those properties that would be impacted. This change in language may impact areas such as considering future uses, prohibition of uses and the Cullowhee Small Area Plan goals. Currently, staff is waiting on the UNC School of Government to advise and provide guidance to local governments on this issue on how to move forward.

Adjournment

With no further business, Damon Sink made a motion to adjourn. Chris Stuckey seconded the motion and it carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Allison Kelley
Administrative Assistant- Planning



David Claxton
Planning Council Chair