

BURNSVILLE PLANNING BOARD
Regular Meeting
Monday, June 18, 2012

The Burnsville Planning Board, with members Chuck Aldridge, Randy Banks, Dean Gates, Schell McCall, and Harrison Tyner present, held a regular meeting on Monday, June 18, 2012, in the Town Hall. Also in attendance was town staff members Anthony Hensley, Jeanne Martin, George Nero and Ronnie Tipton; Mayor Danny McIntosh and Town Councilors Ruth Banks, Judy Buchanan, Ron Powell, and Bill Wheeler; and many visitors, including Ann Berdeen, Ron Hancock, Jody Higgins, Craig Hughes, David McIntosh, Dennis Matelski, Wanda Proffitt, Alan Orowitz, and Armin Wessel. Chairman Dean Gates, who presided, called the meeting to order, stating that the purpose of the meeting was to consider regular business for the month of June, 2012.

- Approval of Minutes – Minutes from Planning Board meeting held May 21, 2012 were available; however they were tabled for consideration at the Planning Board’s regular meeting in July.
- Public Comment – Armin Wessel spoke to the Planning Board members about signage along the bypass. He said signage should be similar in size to that in the downtown area, and there should be consistencies in lighting and landscaping as well.
- Reports – Craig Hughes, with the High Country Council of Governments, distributed *Mt. Mitchell Scenic Drive Corridor Plan* and explained the program. He said our scenic highway extends from Highway 19 through downtown and up to Highway 80. He commented that a scenic highway affects the downtown area in very few ways; billboards are prohibited and off-premise advertising restrictions are county and state enforced. He said it will be up to the D.O.T. to regulate billboards/signs on the bypass, but the town and county will continue to monitor and enforce.

The “scenic highway” designation makes the community eligible to apply for grants; town and county support/application will be needed, depending upon the jurisdiction.

Mr. Hughes said surveys regarding the corridor management plan have been circulated, and once the responses have been received, the county will be able to move forward.

Wanda Proffitt said the main purpose of the designation is to protect our gateways; the federal designation allows us to be eligible for enhancement money.

- Purpose and Procedure for Meeting – Chairman Dean Gates explained the purpose of the meeting, which is to acquaint the public with the volunteer planning board. He said Ron Hancock, with the Community Assistance Division of the NC Department of Commerce, would later explain the manner in which the next meeting will be conducted. Mr. Gates said the Planning Board has completed the mission statement and is 98% through the update of the sign ordinance. He asked the public to visit the town’s website where sign definitions and regulatory criteria appear.
- Adopted Mission Statement – Chuck Aldridge read the mission statement that was unanimously adopted by the Planning Board in an earlier meeting.

- Request for Quote – Ron Hancock explained that the Planning Board is looking for a design firm to help establish design standards for the community.
- Explanation and Procedure for Public Forum – Ron Hancock informed those attending that the next Planning Board meeting will be held on July 16th and will be conducted as a public forum. Dean Gates explained that the intent of the meeting will be to explore planning topics and concerns in a round-table setting. Armin Wessel said he would like to see before-and-after examples of design landscaping, signage, lighting, etc. on the bypass and the scenic highway.

Ron Hancock advised that the Planning Board will be developing a “user manual” for new development. Randy Banks said the Board hopes to be able to offer several aesthetically-pleasing options to new business developers, but the intent is not to discourage new business. Dean Gates remarked that the Board is attempting to approach problems slowly and preserve the character of the community. Alan Orowitz commented that the process will improve the quality of life in the community. Dean Gates asked visitors for their trust and involvement in the process.

- Public Comment and Discussion

- ✓ David McIntosh – asked about the process to adopt the sign ordinance, questioning whether it will be adopted as an addendum rather than having to hold a public hearing to consider an entirely new ordinance. Dean Gates answered that there will be a public hearing to adopt a whole new ordinance. David McIntosh said if the town accepted the changes as an addendum to its existing sign ordinance it would expedite the process.
- ✓ Armin Wessel asked why signage couldn’t be treated as art and approach them from that standpoint. He suggested that there be a review board for signs. Other recommendations included:
 - Freestanding signs shorter than 18’;
 - No message board signs allowed on the bypass or the scenic highway;
 - No internal illumination;
 - Shorter signs in the east-west corridor (6’ instead of 12’);

Mr. Wessel asked if signs are allowable offsite on public or private property. Harrison Tyner answered that they are temporary and should be removed. Mr. Wessel said construction and real estate signs at 8’ are too high. Schell McCall said the Board did not want to make every sign fall into a non-conforming state and present that to the Town Council. David McIntosh reminded that most business owners don’t get very upset if everyone receives equal treatment; the process is meant to encourage business.

- ✓ Other concerns included:
 - Problems with little temporary signs;
 - Shopping center regulations – Mr. Gates advised that this issue falls in the 2% of what has not yet been addressed by the Planning Board;
 - The need to include “the protection of property rights” in the mission statement;
 - The prohibiting of air-inflatable signs;
 - The consideration of dark skies when designing lighting; LED lights should be included in the form of lighting
 - A requirement in the ordinance for street numbers on signs.

After the comment/discussion period, visitors left the meeting. Planning Board members addressed the following concerns:

- ✓ New verbage about aesthetic criteria - Schell McCall suggested "all signs subject to approval in relationship to design guidelines."
 - ✓ Protection of property rights - agreed that the Board could not address.
 - ✓ LED lighting - Chuck Aldridge made a motion and motion carried to amend the Sign Definitions (#24. Illuminated Sign) as follows:
 - 2. *Light source (lamp) – only incandescent, florescent, metal halide, LED, or color corrected high-pressure sodium may be used.*
 - ✓ Street numbers – Harrison Tyner made a motion to require the street numbers on signs. Motion carried.
 - ✓ Review board for signs – Planning Board members discussed the idea of the Planning Board acting as the review board, with recommendations going from that board to Code Enforcement Officer, where decisions would be made, subject to appeal.
 - ✓ Design guidelines – Schell McCall made a motion, which carried, that all signs are subject to design guidelines as set out in the ordinance.
 - ✓ Review committee for design guidelines – Harrison Tyner made a motion to establish a review committee for design guidelines. Motion carried. Mr. Tyner later withdrew the motion.
 - ✓ Message boards – Harrison Tyner made a motion to prohibit message boards in the C-1 and C-2 district of the East-West Main Corridor. Motion carried. It was agreed to use the name "East-West Main Corridor."
 - ✓ Chuck Aldridge made a motion to restrict freestanding signs in the East-West Main Corridor to 8' with no internal illumination.
 - ✓ Randy Banks suggested a requirement that new businesses occupying former business location with non-conforming sign cannot use the non-conforming sign. The new owners are not grandfathered.
- Next Regular Planning Meeting - The next regular meeting of the Planning Board will be held at 6:15 p.m. on Monday, July 16, 2012, at the Burnsville Town Center There being no further business, Chuck Aldridge made a motion to adjourn and the motion carried.

Recorded by:



Jeanne Martin, CMC
Town Clerk