

Town of Mills River
Minutes of the Planning Board
Tuesday, October 3, 2017

The Town of Mills River Planning Board met on Tuesday, October 3, 2017, at 7:00 PM in the Mills River Town Hall. Board members present were: Jim Humphrey, Randy Austin, Sherri Hill, Chae Davis, Jim Foster, Ronnie Edwards, Matt Holloway, and Brian Kimball. Cheryl Janoski was absent (excused). Also in attendance were Town Manager Jeff Wells, Zoning Enforcement Officer Jesse James, and Town Clerk/Finance Officer Sue Powell. There are no open seats.

Chairman Jim Humphrey called the meeting to order and those present stood for a moment of silence and gave the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adjustments/Additions to Agenda: None

Brian Kimball made a motion to approve the minutes from August 1, 2017, the motion was seconded by Matt Holloway and the motion passed by unanimous verbal assent.

Public Comment: No Public Comment

Old Business:

A. Ordinance Updates – Zoning Enforcement Officer Jesse James

Mr. Humphrey noted the amendments taken to Council for approval on the Sign Ordinance and a few other “clean ups” to the Mills River Code specifically in regards to minor subdivisions were approved. The amendments were approved by Council and go to public hearing on November 9 at the regular Council meeting.

Also, Mr. James recommended the Planning Board consider adding Recreational Vehicle-Tiny Home Park Standards as a special use and allowable only in the MR-MU, Mixed Use district. This adds to the Code specific standards for this type of use which are not set out now. The wheels would be required to stay on a tiny house or park model because they are considered temporary housing and are titled through the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles. Enforcement would be difficult, so Mr. James recommended the Board consider setting limits on the terms of slip leases. There are other standards and requirements to consider such as parcel size limits for the parks, maximum density, landscaping requirements, property line buffers, commercial dumpsters, on-site management/leasing office to manage rentals, open area maintenance, and two (2) parking spaces per slip to keep cars off the streets. He also recommends the parks be required to comply with all other permitting agencies outside of the Town of Mills River. Extensive discussion followed. The general consensus was the Planning Board did not want to rush creating standards for these parks and, at Randy Austin’s suggestion considered asking Council to pass a moratorium on the permitting of these parks until they could devote some time to the study and development of standards for tiny home, park model and recreational vehicle parks. Randy Austin made a motion to recommend Council place a moratorium on the permitting of tiny house/park model/recreational vehicle uses town-wide for the term of one (1) year for Staff and the Planning Board to develop standards

consistent with the existing character of Mills River residential standards for other dwelling units. Brian Kimball seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous verbal assent.

At this time conversations turned to the next meeting and that it was on Election Day. In order to ensure the Board members having ample time to vote, Brian Kimball made a motion to reschedule the meeting planned for Election Day, November 7 to November 14 at 7:00 PM. Jim Foster seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous verbal assent

Mr. James then reviewed proposed modifications to the Zoning Code which would change the Landscape Ordinance to require one large shade tree and two (2) shrubs for every ten (10) parking spots, instead of one (1) large shade tree for every 1,500 square feet and two shrubs for every 500 square feet. It would remove the 30,000 square foot threshold. In addition, the Ordinance would be amended to add a buffering requirement to major subdivisions extending the ten-foot (10) natural buffer in the current ordinance along the major subdivision perimeter and require a 60 foot buffer along street frontage, or 30 foot with a landscaped berm. This is the same requirement for plantings as stated in chapter 154.232 of the Mills River Code. The final change would remove language of an 80-foot threshold requiring street trees, and add language that requires landscaping (street trees) with any commercial or industrial use that abuts a public right of way. After discussion, Sherri Hill made a motion to recommend the amendments to the Landscape ordinance as proposed by the Zoning Enforcement Officer, and as they apply to major subdivision and commercial and industrial uses. Brian Kimball seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous verbal assent.

During the discussion of the Landscape Ordinance, Jim Foster asked to be excused as he had to leave for a personal emergency. Chae Davis made a motion to excuse Mr. Foster from the remainder of the meeting and any votes, it was seconded by Ronnie Edwards and passed by unanimous verbal assent.

New Business:

A. November 7 Meeting – Town Clerk Sue Powell

This matter was addressed during the discussion on ordinance amendments.

Additional Items –

Sherri Hill asked Mr. James to consider reviewing the major subdivision ordinance to restrict the number of homes allowed without further review; or, perhaps a special use permit over “x” number of homes and leaving the Planning Board review requirement for a fewer number of homes.

Town Manager Update:

Council took the following actions in September:

- Authorized WGLA Engineering to seek bids on Banner Farm Road sewer project.
- Approved and sent to public hearing amendments to the Park Rules which include allowing Pickleball on the tennis courts, and include language limiting drones.

Other Notable Items:

- Cell service issues are still being addressed in the North/South Mills River Road areas with a few viable options.
- Hooper Lane paving has been pushed back again until the Spring of 2018
- GF Linamar will host its opening ceremony on October 5th at 11 AM.

- Current President Andrew Tate is leaving Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development. Mills River Town Council will host a reception and thank you for him on October 26 at Town Hall from 4:00 – 5:30 PM. Planning Board members are invited.

As there was no further business to discuss, Brian Kimball made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Chae Davis seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous verbal assent.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan L. Powell, MMC, NCCMC
Town Clerk/Finance Officer