



Town of Weaverville Minutes

Joint Meeting of Town Council and Planning and Zoning Board Tuesday, March 10, 2020 – Town Hall

The Town Council and Planning and Zoning Board for the Town of Weaverville met for a Joint Meeting on Tuesday, March 10, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers within Weaverville Town Hall at 30 South Main Street, Weaverville, North Carolina.

Council members present: Mayor Al Root, Vice Mayor Doug Jackson, Councilmembers Dottie Sherrill, Jeff McKenna and Andrew Nagle. Councilmember Patrick Fitzsimmons was absent.

Planning and Zoning Board members present: Chairman Gary Burge, Vice Chairman Catherine Cordell, Board Members: Peter Stanz, John Chase and Steve Warren, Alternate Board Members: Tom Balestrieri and Rachael Bronson

Staff present: Town Manager Selena Coffey, Town Attorney Jennifer Jackson, Town Planner James Eller, and Town Clerk Derek Huninghake

1. Call to Order

Mayor Root called the meeting to order on behalf of Town Council at 6:00pm.

Chairman Gary Burge called the meeting to order on behalf of the Planning and Zoning Board at 6:00pm.

Chairman Gary Burge introduced guest speaker Joseph Quinlan, the Self-Help Program Manager from Mountain Housing Opportunities, who was asked to discuss ways that the Town can support the development of affordable housing in Weaverville.

2. Affordable Housing Presentation

Mr. Quinlan noted that Mountain Housing Opportunities sees affordable housing as well built, energy efficient, modest homes, that are affordable to families earning 80% or less of the area median income. The median income changes every year, but right now a family of 4 would earn less than \$53,000 to qualify for their affordable housing. Also, these families should have a mortgage payment, which includes property taxes and homeowner's insurance, that doesn't exceed one-third of the family's budget. Mr. Quinlan mentioned that there is no requirement for the homeowners to stay in the house for 15 years. They can turn around and sell the house the next day, but these houses are not sold for less than their value so there is no equity for families to benefit from. All the neighborhoods are mixed income neighborhoods and they do not provide first mortgage financing to owners since they don't have the financial capacity to do so. However, they do offer some second mortgage financing which typically does not require the owner to make monthly payments when the primary mortgage is still outstanding. The second mortgage gets paid back either when the first mortgage is paid off or when the house is sold. This loan is without interest but does have an equity sharing component that raises the second mortgage loan amount as the value of the house increases.

Mayor Root wondered how many owners leave after their first 5 years in the house. Mr. Quinlan stated that they don't really keep those statistics, but have some informal numbers. They have different home ownership products: Turn Key Ownership and Self-Help Ownership. Turn Key homes are built and sold so owners don't have any input in the process, and are built as both affordable and market rate homes. The market rate sales are used to generate funds to support the development of the affordable ones. The Self-Help homes have families working together to build a small community of homes. No one can move into the Self-Help homes until all the homes are built which builds a sense of

community literally from the ground up. The Self-Help houses are hardly ever sold since the owners worked so hard to get them, but about 10% have sold for various reasons that are typically related to taking the owner outside of the geographic area.

Vice Mayor Jackson asked if they were 30-year mortgage loans. Mr. Quinlan noted they don't provide the first mortgages since this area is USDA eligible and a lot of families get NC 502 loans that can be 33 or 38 years.

Councilmember Nagle wondered what the Town of Weaverville can do to help them out with more affordable housing. Mr. Quinlan mentioned that the key component would be allowing higher density, since that is the only way they can make the numbers work. Also, when they ask for greater density, Town Council usually asks for certain conditions and the added conditions has a direct impact on whether they can make a project work or not. The fees for the water depletion have also increased to \$2,232, which is high for them so if the Town could help on that as well it would be beneficial.

Catherine Cordell wondered if all their homes come with city water and sewer. Mr. Quinlan mentioned that most of all their homes come with city utilities or that is what they look for when they are picking sites.

Peter Stanz asked how they find owners to buy these affordable houses. Mr. Quinlan noted that they do advertisements and flyers. All low-income families are required to take classes for credit counseling and they send a representative to discuss affordable housing options. They also have affordable apartments in the area and they send information to those affordable apartment tenants in case the tenants want to consider moving into a home.

3. Mixed Use Recommendation

Town Planner Eller noted that at their February 2020 meeting, the Planning and Zoning Board was charged with considering a set of language that would transition the permitting of mixed-use structures/developments from the existing conditional zoning district to permitted with standards. It is important to know that this is only in the C-1, C-2, and R-12 zoning districts and for only projects of certain size. Any projects over 25,000sq/ft would still require the conditional zoning process. The Planning and Zoning Board offers a unanimous recommendation to Town Council. Town Attorney Jennifer Jackson mentioned that the public hearing has been scheduled for the next Town Council meeting on March 23, 2020.

Town Planner Eller mentioned that they are recommending a set of additional standards that would permit to get mixed use structures within the C-1, C-2, and R-12 zoning districts. These additional standards largely revolve around parking requirements, garbage container requirements, density requirements, and dimensional requirements of the underlying zoning district.

4. Comprehensive Land Use Plan Priorities and 160D Update

Town Planner James Eller noted that it is his understanding that mixed use development was the last priority listed as the highest priority, which, if adopted by Town Council, would have been addressed. That would leave the secondary priorities, so at some point it might be to our advantage for the priorities to be reranked by Town Council and the Planning and Zoning Board to give some guidance to staff.

Town Attorney Jackson mentioned that they would like a reranking of the priorities but right now the top priority is tackling the revisions to both the subdivision ordinances and zoning code that are necessary due to 160D, since we are on the clock. She indicated that there will be some substantive changes and some policy issues they would like to get some upfront input from Town Council and the Planning and Zoning Board as they work on the 160D revisions. They hope that by the next joint meeting four months from now, the 160D changes would be presented to Town Council in draft form.

Chairman Burge mentioned that as far as he can see there is nothing in these changes that is controversial. It is mainly following the lead of the legislature.

Town Attorney Jackson thinks that while they go through the process, they will see some policy issues and ordinances that have been on the list for compliance reasons and now may be the time to tackle them. She does anticipate that there will be some substantive policy and procedures that will be brought forward, like the subdivision review process, to see if there is a way to streamline it.

Mayor Root noted that he would like at some point to have discussion on what we see as limits to growth.

Catherine Cordell mentioned that her concern is still the availability of water, since there are a lot of projects still being built with water allocations. She wants to know when the water plant is going to be expanded. Town Manager Coffey mentioned that the water plant is going to be completed and is the top priority on the budget list. Also, with the water allocation projections it appears that the prior Public Works Director might have done some over calculations, so we have plenty of available water.

5. Miscellaneous Items

Councilmember Nagle mentioned that if we are looking at how to make things affordable instead of subdividing. He has 15 acres and already has one out building, but isn't allowed to build another outbuilding. However, someone who has a quarter acre lot can have one out building, so it doesn't seem affordable if the only way is to subdivide. He thinks that there should be some proportionality of the number of out buildings based on the amount of property owned, instead of just one out building for any property regardless of size.

Catherine Cordell mentioned that with roads being made private and soon to become public if there is a way to put sidewalks into Town standards. Councilmember McKenna noted that he wonders if when they widen I-26 if they can add sidewalks for bikes to go across the bridge. He believes they need to take every opportunity with developments and ask what they plan for sidewalks and if they don't have a plan then we can discuss it.

Town Planner Eller mentioned that this may speak to the reprioritization of some of the goals within the land use plan as well and it is certainly a topic at the Planning and Zoning Board and if this two bodies can agree then it can certain be placed at the front of the priorities.

Town Attorney Jackson mentioned that right now the regulations on sidewalks is required for commercial development, but for residential subdivisions, even large ones, it is not required at all. The Board of Adjustment can waive the sidewalk requirements. The Town has been able to require sidewalks for residential projects through conditional zoning districts. Policies concerning sidewalks and the implementation of a sidewalk improvement plan are noted priorities in the comprehensive land use plan.

Town Planner Eller noted that based on this conversation, our sidewalk requirements should be closely examined and the type of developments that are subject to these sidewalk requirements be expanded upon.

6. Adjournment.

Vice Mayor/Councilman Jackson made the motion to adjourn the Town Council meeting; Councilman Nagle seconded and all of Town Council voted to adjourn the Council's meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Vice Chairman Cordell made the motion to adjourn the meeting of the Planning and Zoning Board; Board member Stanz seconded and all Board members voted to adjourn the Board's meeting at 7:30 p.m.



DEREK K. HUNINGHAKE, Town Clerk


MAYOR ALLAN ROOT