

**Town of Weaverville  
Planning Board  
Thursday, March 7, 2024  
Meeting Minutes**

The Planning Board of the Town of Weaverville met for a regularly scheduled monthly meeting at 6:00pm on Thursday, March 7, 2024.

Present: Chair Bob Pace, Vice Chair Jane Kelley and Board Members Mark Endries, Donna Mann Belt, and Stefanie Pupkiewicz Busch. Alternate members present Ryan Gagliardi and Michelle Rippon.

Staff Present: Town Manager Selena Coffey, Town Attorney Jennifer Jackson, Planning Director James Eller, Town Clerk Tamara Mercer and Land of Sky Regional Council Planner, Kayla DiCristina.

**1. Call to order**

Chairman Pace called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**2. Adoption of Agenda**

*Without objection, Mr. Pace declared the agenda approved. Carried unanimously. 5-0.*

**3. Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes February 6, 2024**

Ms. Mann questioned the minutes; she said the topic regarding the density concerns in the Reems Creek area by majority consensus of Planning Board members were discussed in February. Mr. Gagliardi said this was stated in the February minutes on page 4 and addressed in the recommendation letter presented to Council and signed by Chairman Pace and was noted by Attorney Jackson.

*Without objection Chairman Pace declared the meeting minutes approved as presented for February 6, 2024. Carried unanimously. 5-0.*

**4. STR (short-term rentals) Engagement Report and Presentation**

Land of Sky Regional Council Planner, Kayla DiCristina

Ms. DiCristina provided the Land of Sky Regional Council presentation: 'Let's Talk about Short-term Rentals'. She reviewed the background of the topic and noted the Town began addressing the short-term rental question in 2023. Town Manager Coffey by authority of Town Council contracted Land of Sky Regional Council to facilitate these public input sessions. The goal was to identify community concerns and issues, and to be pro-active in planning.

She reviewed the timeline of the public engagement sessions with the community. The process, results and key takeaways, and highlights in the report analysis, such as population changes in

increase of population, age, child-dependency ratio, median value of homeownership, housing stock, income, and affordable housing. Ms. DiCristina explained the working age population composition and trend changes in age brackets and in the quantitative data.

Key Takeaways:

- Weaverville's population composition is aging.
- Housing affordability is a national issue compounded by local factors such as there are not enough housing units for the demand.
- It is unclear whether short-term rentals contribute to housing affordability, and housing stock. Portions of the community have preemptive concerns regarding short-term rentals.
- Short-term rental owners and operators who engage directly with neighbors and communities are viewed more positively.
- Short-term rentals have positive economic impact on Weaverville's local businesses. Tourism is a local economic driver.
- Community solutions may be effective in resolving STR issues.
- The Town cannot regulate land use based on ownership.

In response to Chairman Pace's question regarding the ACS (American Consumer Survey), Ms. DiCristina explained the five-year period for data collection in the major metropolitan areas, demographics, housing construction, etc., which provides evidence that we are losing the younger generations. She reviewed the increase in housing values and housing availability and affordability for the demographics and how it compares with rest of the nation. Housing values increased although western North Carolina has a greater demand for housing.

There was discussion of Weaverville as a tourist destination, implementing regulations, strategies as other municipalities are implementing regulations, table of uses in the code, and parking issues.

It was noted that the Short-term Rental Engagement report would be presented by Planner, Kayla DiCristina to the Town Council at the March 25th regular Town Council meeting.

Chairman Pace consulted Attorney Jackson and she said the Planning Board may take a preliminary vote or straw poll on whether the Board would like to see STRs regulated or if we prefer that STRs remain unregulated. This preliminary choice is between regulation or no regulation.

There was general consensus that in order to gauge the Planning Board members, the alternate members may participate in the straw poll.

Attorney Jackson clarified that the Code of Ordinances currently addresses parking, noise and nuisance abatement, and governs short-term rental uses and all zoning table of uses.

Ms. Rippon was concerned that Weaverville will become a haven for short-term rentals if other towns such as Woodfin has very restrictive regulations. In response to Chairman Pace's question, Mr. Eller said it appears Buncombe County is holding a public hearing on short-term rentals on April 22, 2024.

Manager Coffey said enforcement is the issue with regulations. She added that if a recommendation is to regulate short-term rentals, then it is appropriate to add enforcement.

*Chairman Pace called the question as to those in favor of regulating short-term rentals. Vice Mayor Chair Kelley, Mr. Endries, Ms. Mann Belt, Ms. Pupkiewicz, and Ms. Rippon voted 'aye' and Chairman Pace, and Mr. Gagliardi voted 'nay'. 5-2 in favor of regulating short-term rentals.*

Attorney Jackson stated Staff will present the Planning Board straw poll to Town Council at the March 25<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Manger Coffey stated the Town is in discussion with the Buncombe County Manager as they are using Granicus as a monitoring tool. The County has the same concerns regarding enforcement as the costs are challenging.

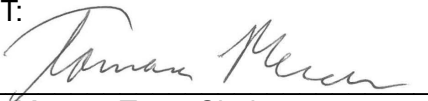
## **5. Other Business**

Mr. Eller reviewed a request regarding annexation. He said the request was withdrawn for tonight, but staff anticipates the application brought before the Board for April.

There being no further business and without objection Chairman Pace requested adjournment.

*Without objection Mr. Endries moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 p.m. Carried Unanimously.  
5-0*

ATTEST:

  
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Tamara Mercer, Town Clerk