
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
Special Meeting, April 11, 2019

Call to Order, Sandy Watson

The Transylvania County Planning Board met in special session on Thursday, April 11, 2019, at 7:00 pm in the County Commissioners' Chambers. Members present were Vice-Chair Sandy Watson, Kimsey Jackson, Bob Twomey and Lauren Wise. Chair Mack McNeely and Steve Woodsmall were absent (excused). Staff members present were Transylvania County Planning and Community Development's County Planner, Joy Fields, and Program Assistant, Beth Webb. Also present were 11 members of the public. No media were present.

I. Welcome: Sandy Watson welcomed everyone.

II. Public Comment: Public comments were limited to three minutes. Mark Tooley, previous Planning Board member spoke first, stating that he was a member of the stakeholder group for the Comprehensive Bike Plan and as a representative for the Transportation Advisory Committee. He advised that the process of the bike plan development was broad with four meetings before the plan was written and four public input meetings after it was written. There was good conversation at the meetings and he advised that this is a standalone plan that will fold into the Comprehensive Transportation Plan. Transylvania County has become a destination for bikers and biking is part of our tourism and economy. We need to do as much as we can to become more bike friendly. Having a plan will help to apply for grant money and incorporate bike projects with NCDOT road projects. The development of a bike plan fits well with the 2025 Comprehensive Plan and supports the economy. Mark encouraged the Transylvania County Planning Board to vote to adopt it.

John Wayne Hardison provided a copy of an Economic Impact Study from Brevard College (pages 19 – 22), taken during the Assault on the Carolinas event in past years. There were two concerns expressed by the planning board last month: 1.) How does it stimulate our economy? and 2.) Safety? This plan will address the safety on the road. We would be foolish not to push it forward to address the safety on the road. The Economic Impact Study Brevard College prepared by interviewing 200,000 riders and 85,000 non-riders (page 22). 30% of cost is spent locally for music, shirts, water bottles, etc. This event is not just for the bikers, they also bring their kids and spouses, who are doing things while the event is taking place. The participants are spending money on lodging, food and shopping in our local stores, it is a big economic stimulant. Dale's Pale Ale (Oskar Blues) located in this area for one reason – biking. Bob Twomey asked what the student's procedures were for obtaining the information. John Wayne brought the study as a resource and was not involved in the development of the study.

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John Ditillo is a full time resident of Transylvania County and lives in Connestee Falls. The Connestee Falls Cycling Club was formed two years ago. There are currently 60 members on the email distribution list, and it is probably the largest indigenous group of cyclists in the county. They are all older, but very active. With older residents, their list of activities has gotten shorter and they are limited to walking, swimming and cycling. Mountain biking is no longer doable for them and out of the 60, only 20 of them are willing to ride on the roads, but many of them participated in the input sessions. They would like multi-use trails. They will ride on the Brevard Area Trail and the Doodle Trail in Pickens. When doing so, bikers eat, drink, and shop in other areas. They would like to maintain and improve their health, but bikers are uncomfortable with the current biking infrastructure in the county. Transylvania County's population is getting older and they would like to see improved infrastructure. Specifically development of the Ecusta trail. Please support the bike plan.

Sam Salman, owner of The Hub, went to Brevard College and has kids in the Transylvania County school system. His business was started on bicycles. He has 16 employees who are paid a living wage and want to be here, but they need bicycle infrastructure to keep them here. Over the past years, he has spent time traveling with his family looking at other areas and Brevard is being left behind because of a lack of pedestrian infrastructure. People want to be outside. With over 100,000 tourist yearly, people ask in the HUB if there are safe places to ride. Not having a Bike Plan to guide infrastructure development is deterring tourists and sending them to other areas. It is becoming a problem to ride because you are afraid to ride. We need the pedestrian infrastructure. When people relocate they want infrastructure. They want bike paths, canoe access, and trails. Sam is currently building a development in Georgia around a bike path, canoe access, and trails. Bentonville, Arkansas is on the bike map due to the Walmart family. Biking is a true industry and is one of the fastest growing in the world. We need to provide an appealing place and safe travel. The bike plan is progress and an awesome framework with great potential. Safe travel, safe places for exercise are the types of infrastructure people want. We have no place to ride safely. We need to work on priorities. There are currently 50 bike races through the spring and fall. Pilot Cove Campground is booked for cyclists and it is often packed. Sam hopes that this is an easy shoo-in to get to the next level. Bob Twomey stated that we have several demographics of people who live here and people who ride here. Bob Twomey doesn't believe that it is going to bring people here to live. Sam advised that this county is behind for pedestrian infrastructure and that this is taking one item off the checklist for families and children. They want to see that when they get to a place that they will not need to rent a car, but it is a place where they can walk to things. Lauren Wise thinks that it will bring light industry to the area, which is one of the most important factors. We are staring at a real potential. Connectivity creates more opportunity. Sam stated that cyclists are teaming up to build affordable housing. Cycling has created enough money to help fund housing, which is direct result of cycling in this area. Pilot Cove has over ten cabins and there will probably be at least 21 more added in the next year.

James Brooks thanked the Planning Board for taking the time to consider and talk through the bike plan. No one wants bikes in their way and no one wants to be afraid of being hit by a car. Adopting a plan is nothing to be afraid of. No bite, no bark. Nothing mandates anything about spending any money on the plan. In the future, when roads are upgraded the plan will allow action. Lots of data in the plan, but one piece of data is that DOT is willing to put forth 100% of the cost of bike lanes. Will only do so if this plan is in place. Be careful to not pretend that this is something that it isn't. Adopting a plan is not going to take away from other needs.

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Nick Pearl is a bike rider and has almost been hit by a car riding on US 64 near the shooting range, where the median goes from 5 feet to nothing. Riding a bike is cheaper for gas and it's good exercise. He was trying to commute to daycare and work before almost being hit by the car. He works as a teacher, but also as a bartender and made almost as much bartending last weekend during the Assault on the Carolinas as he would in a month teaching. Oskar Blues is a great place to work. Adding infrastructure will add jobs to the community. He and his wife have traveled all across the country through different cities trying to decide where to raise their family and chose Brevard because of the forest. Creating infrastructure will bring jobs and there is a need for that. The area needs to have amenities for people to fall in love with. Emphasis here is for the roads that don't have the areas to bike. Highway 276 from Connestee is very dangerous. We need to create safe interaction. NCDOT willing to put money into these projects and it is a win-win.

Nancy Depippo – semantic in one word adoption doesn't equal endorsement. This is the framework for future projects. During the development of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan, the public was asked, "In the next ten years, what would you like to see most?" 21% responded, bike infrastructure, number one bike plans. In the Comprehensive Plan Parks and Recreation all of Transylvania County 57% walking, biking and greenways. Per the Chamber of Commerce, the Ecusta Trail is top priority. Getting ahead with NCDOT requires an adopted plan. Henderson County unanimously adopted their plan last week.

Sandy Watson, Vice Chair, advised all that they will have time to speak at the end of the meeting and thanked everyone.

- III. **Approval of Agenda:** Sandy Watson asked if everyone received the agenda. Kimsey Jackson made the motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Bob Twomey and carried unanimously.
- IV. **Approval of Minutes:** Lauren Wise moved to approve the meeting minutes for March 21, 2019 as presented. The motion was seconded by Kimsey Jackson, and carried unanimously.
- V. **Subdivision Approvals and Updates:** Joy Fields notified the Planning Board that there were twelve (12) plats reviewed between the dates of March 20, 2019 – April 10, 2019, including: six (6) recombination of previously approved lots, three (3) greater than 10 acres, one (1) existing lot reviewed as review officer, and two (2) single-lot inherited by a will, which was in fact only one single-lot inherited by a will that had an error by the surveyor and had to be reviewed twice.
- VI. **Old Business:**
 - A. **Transylvania County Bicycle Plan (Consider Recommendation for BOC)**

Bob Twomey stated if we can bring this to generate jobs and housing and manufacturing, then we have no choice but to bring this into this county. Most of the bike plan will be for the local people and may have limited impact on income and tax base and hotel occupancy. He is not convinced that a bike plan is going to bring people in. If they come here to live and enjoy the bike infrastructure, they will be working outside of the county. Bob Twomey can't go against this plan if it will bring something into this county. Bike plan will be integrated into the river trail system. Bob helped to put in river campgrounds and it has its good points.

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Everyone who is in favor of the rails to trails needs to understand that people living along the railroad easement have rights. Development of the rails to trails will have to be considerate on that. Folks who worked on the bike plan know it was no easy document to put together. Bob stated that this board has looked over the bike plan and fine-tuned it. Doesn't think it's a bad thing. Regret we have to do this because of no other industry in this county. No infrastructure.

Sandy Watson feels like Bob in regards to the amount of work that has been put into this plan. There is an absolute necessity to have a plan. Biking is our biggest industry now. People are making money, which is an economic boom. Allowing families to exercise together. Having safe space for riding. Feel that now it's the roads that need to be addressed. We can talk to NC DOT about what is needed now. Every road will be different.

Kimsey Jackson questioned, if NC DOT improves doesn't the County pay some of the cost? Joy Fields advised if bicycle infrastructure is built in conjunction with road improvements the county covers 30% of the cost of the construction materials for the bicycle infrastructure. During the Transportation Advisory Committee meeting on Tuesday, we heard North Carolina has to spend 4% of the federal funds they receive on alternative transportation projects. To date, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure has been competing statewide for those funds. In the next round of funding, alternative transportation projects will only be competing within the NC DOT Division. By having a bike plan in place we will be able to access those funds.

Kimsey stated that he is not totally in favor of this. Our biggest need is infrastructure, no water and sewer outside of the city. Would like to see money spent on that. Believes in bringing industry to the county. Agrees with Bob on what he said. Concerned we don't have a problem bringing people in to spend money. Our real problem is infrastructure and affordable housing. Ecusta Trail is a great use of someone else's property. Some of the right of way is on easements and will revert to property owner if the rail line is no longer used for rail. Can't turn down a situation when a plan is in place and we will get money to improve the road system.

Lauren Wise stated that this is part of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan. Core concerns are economic stimulus. If the Ecusta Trail ever happens, it is just one part of the Comprehensive Bike Plan. Stimulus happens because of this bicycle infrastructure. Putting away the bike part is really powerful. Bob agrees we have to do what we have to do. We know where we have to go.

Bob Twomey motioned to recommend adoption of the Transylvania County Bike Plan to the County Commissioners, the motion was seconded by Kimsey Jackson. The motion carried unanimously. Bob said we try to look at all sides. Lauren appreciates the public input. Sandy thanked the public for coming.

B. Noise Ordinance (Review and discuss)

Joy Fields advised the Planning Board that they have a lot of information on the noise ordinance. At the last meeting, the County Attorney, Misti Bass, provided a presentation. There were three things that were looked at with decibel levels: 1) Clarity for what the noise ordinance will allow, or not allow, 2) content neutral exemptions and restrictions, and 3)

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distance and duration of objectionable noise, if noise is intermittent over a certain amount of time. Ordinance has to be understandable and determining a percent of time violating a decibel level and the distance the sound measurement is taken helps make the regulations clear. In an attempt to address these issues, numbers were provided as a starting point for if something is an objectionable offending noise (page 3). The Planning Board would like to have access to a decibel meter. Joy will ask the Sheriff's department or City of Brevard's Police Department to help.

Noise Regulations:

- Section 2.2.2 wording should read, "Sound measurements shall be taken at the complainant's property, closest to the source of the offending noise."
- Section 2.2.4 wording should read, "The offending noise level will be considered a violation if it exceeds the decibel limit for a duration of more than fifty percent (50%) during the time of sound measurement."
- Section 2.2.5 wording should read, "A violation shall have occurred if the offending noise level exceeds the ambient noise level by more than: 15 decibels so that the total noise level is over 65 decibels between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.; or 20 decibels so that the noise level is over 75 decibels between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m."
- Section 2.2.6 wording should read, "If, due to the nature of the offending noise level, no determination of an ambient noise level is practicable, then a violation shall have occurred if the offending noise level exceeds: 65 decibels between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.; or 75 decibels between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m."

Exempted Noises:

- Section 2.2 Change to either Commercial Service Operations or Fabrication or Industrial from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on weekdays and 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on weekends for which building permits have been issued or construction operations not requiring permits due to ownership of the project by an agency of government; provided all equipment is operating in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and with all standard equipment manufacturer's mufflers and noise reducing equipment in use and in properly operating condition."
- Section 2.7 wording should read, "Noise from lawnmowers, weed trimmers, edging machines, or other similar small-engine yard maintenance equipment, properly equipped according to manufacturer's specifications, and used for a period not to exceed two hours between 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on the weekend."
- Section 2.8 Leave this section in as is.
Dogs will take a bit, we will leave it where we are. Sandy Watson stated we are missing two people and we would like their input.

C. Small area plan update (Update)

- Cedar Mountain has reissued the call to be on the Small Area Planning Committee. Seven applications were received for Cedar Mountain, but not all live within the potential boundaries of Cedar Mountain. The Board of Commissioners is advertising for additional applications.
- Dunn's Rock originally had a meeting planned for April 18, 2019, but changed their request and asked if Joy could attend in July to provide an introduction to the small area planning process. Planning Board members interested in

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attending are welcome. During the planning process planning board members are able to attend the meetings with the public.

- Planning Board members asked to be made aware of the meetings.

VII. New Business

A. Planning and Community Development Update

- Joy Fields met with the consultant contracted to conduct the survey of African American heritage-related resources in Transylvania County. There was the CLG grant, which paid for the hiring of the consultant. A meeting was held earlier tonight and they are working to finalize an event. The Kick-off event will let communities know that this is happening.
- Transportation Advisory Committee and members of the working group have begun the process of developing the Comprehensive Transportation Plan. The first working group meeting took place this week, 25 attended to begin looking at all types of transportation.
- The Transportation Advisory Committee also looked at the draft bike plan.
- County commissioners approved the issuance of a Request for Proposals to develop workforce housing on county owned land. Calvert Workforce Housing Project will be the title. Staff will be accepting proposals from developers starting April 18th.

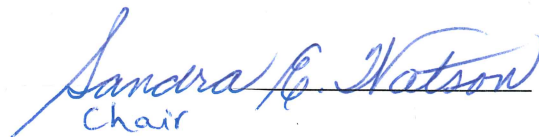
VIII. Public and Board Member Comments

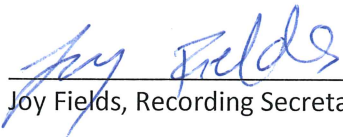
- Bob Twomey thinks we did well. Discussion before the bike proposal was top of the line.
- John Wayne Hardison questioned the Noise ordinance and whether it excludes any equipment? Mr. Hardison stated that an average wood chipper is 115 decibels. When they are using it for under brushing, it can be non-stop for 8 to 10 hours. A chain saw is 105 decibels, but it is intermittent. John Wayne also commented that it might be difficult or discriminatory to enforce the later time-period for lawn maintenance on the weekend that would differ from a weekday because workers have different work schedules and not everyone has a Monday through Friday work schedule (i.e. nurses, law enforcement, etc.). Bob Twomey stated there will be certain things we can't exempt. Fire wise program make woodlands around houses forest fire resistant.
- Lauren Wise advised that currently their email addresses are not on the website and people need to know who to reach out to the planning board. Joy will question IT and get back to the planning board.

IX. Adjourn

The next meeting is scheduled for May 16, 2019 at 7:00pm and there being no further discussion, Sandy Watson moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Kimsey Jackson and carried unanimously.

MINUTES APPROVED


Sandra C. Watson
Chair


Joy Fields, Recording Secretary & Planner